SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT: MYTH OR REALITY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate

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By

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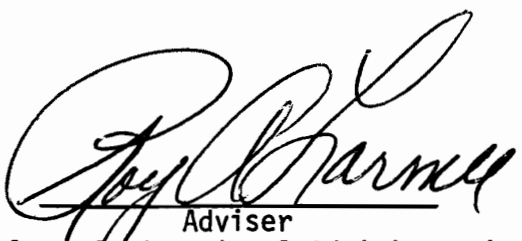* * * * *

The Ohio State University

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Of the 15,183 superintendents of public schools in the United
States, roughly 10% or 1,500 turn over their positions every year
(AASA, 1980). Those that vacated that position either: 1) took
another superintendency elsewhere; 2) took a different position in
another educational organization; 3) took a different position in the
same organization; 4) left the profession for retirement; or 5) left
the profession for another career. Those superintendents who left
their position did so for a variety of reasons including: 1) economic
factors; 2) working conditions; 3) perceived incompetencies; 4) career
ceilings; 5) family and other related conditions; 6) mid-career planned
changes; or 7) being recruited out. The purpose of the study is to
determine the extent, if any, that the phenomenon of the burn-out
syndrome is a factor in a superintendent's decision to leave the super-
intendency.

Background to the Problem

Christina Maslach (1976, p. 16) (1978, p. 56) defines burn-out as
the loss of concern for the people with whom one is working. In

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addition to physical exhaustion (and sometimes even illness), burn-out
is characterized by an emotional exhaustion in which the professional
no longer has any positive feelings, sympathy, or respect for clients
or patients. The burn-out syndrome is a reaction to job-related stress
that results in the person becoming emotionally detached from people,
treating people in a dehumanizing way and becoming less effective on
the job.

Herbert Freudenberger (1974, p. 159) (1977, p. 26) uses Webster's
definition of the verb "to burn out." It means "to fail, wear out, or
become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or
resources." According to Freudenberger, the burn-out syndrome includes
changes in behavior patterns with symptoms such as cynicism, negativism,
and a tendency to be inflexible and almost rigid in thinking. This
often leads to a closed mind about change or innovation. The person may
begin to discuss subordinates in intellectual and jargon terms, and
thereby distance himself/herself from any emotional involvement. A form
of paranoia may set in whereby the person feels others are out to make
life more difficult for him/her. The paranoid state may also lead to a
feeling of omnipotence (Freudenberger, 1977, p. 90).

Another sign is that the person may take on a superior "know-it-
all" attitude that borders on the condescending. The "burned-out"
person hardly communicates with others and tends to become a loner or
withdrawn. On the other hand, the person may go to the other extreme
and hardly do any work because he/she is socializing most of the time.
Other signs are feelings of being bored with work; all is becoming too
routine. The individual may begin to verbalize a sense of helplessness

as well as hopelessness. The home life tends to deteriorate; frequent arguments and threats of divorce become more common. There is also a direct relationship between absenteeism, psychosomatic complaints, frequency of actual illness and burn-out. The symptoms of burn-out manifest themselves in every area of the person's life--functioning with people; relationship to the organization; and life outside the organization, including his/her emotional attitude and bodily complaints (Freudenberger, 1977, pp. 90-91).

Michael Daley (1979, p. 375) defines burn-out as the inability to handle continued stress on the job that results in demoralization, frustration, and reduced efficiency. LeRoy Spaniol and Jennifer Caputo (1979, pp. 1-2) say burn-out is "wearing yourself out doing what you have to do" and "the inability to cope adequately with the stresses of our work or personal lives." They also feel burn-out is being locked into a job routine and find it can last for years. In addition, Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 14-15) have ascribed burn-out to three levels:

> First Degree: At this level the signs and symptoms are experienced very mildly. They may be occasional and short-lived. What we ordinarily do to take care of ourselves removes the symptom. We may distract ourselves, rest for awhile, take a break from our work, or simply relax. Whatever we do is usually successful, and we can return to what we need to do.
>
> Second Degree: When this level occurs, our symptoms are more regular, last longer and are more difficult to move out of. What we ordinarily do to take care of ourselves does not work as well. After an evening's sleep, we may still be tired. Even a weekend may not be enough to deal with our signs and symptoms. We find that it takes extra effort to take care of ourselves.

> Third Degree: At this level our signs and symptoms
> are continuous. We may develop physical or
> psychological problems such as ulcers or depression.
> What we ordinarily do to take care of ourselves
> seems useless for dealing with our signs and
> symptoms. Even medical and/or psychological
> assistance may not bring quick relief. Existential
> and philosophical concerns may arise. We may
> question the value of our work or even life itself.

Most writers seem to use the term "stress" as a part of their definition of burn-out. Hans Selye (1978, p. 60) defines stress as the "rate of wear and tear on the body caused by living." It's the body's nonspecific response to any demand placed on it, whether that demand is pleasant or not. Karl Albrecht (1979, p. 47) says pressure are those features of a situation that may be problematic for the individual and that amount to demands for adaptation of some kind. He defines stress as a specific set of biochemical conditions within the person's body, conditions that reflect the body's attempt to make the adjustment. In other words, Albrecht says pressure is in the situation, stress is in the person. Anthony Riccio (1978), a professor in The Ohio State University College of Education, suggests that educators "look at the reality factor" as a means of combating teacher stress. He feels teacher education curriculum needs to be revamped to take into consideration the stress future teachers face.

A debilitating and painful response to stress is the burn-out syndrome (Mattingly, 1977, p. 127), which is defined as a phenomenon of physical and psychological exhaustion. The person who is burning out cannot be identified by checking off a list of symptoms or behaviors and tabulating a burn-out score. Burn-out, as it is currently understood, is a subtle pattern of symptoms, behaviors, and attitudes that

are unique for each person. However, it appears that some components of the experience occur with regularity.

Although there is not yet a large body of research on burn-out, there is a sizeable body of literature on the related concept of dehumanization. Most of this work is either entirely theoretical or is based on uncontrolled field observations, but it provides a number of relevant insights into both the successful development of "detached concern" and the failure of burn-out.

The process of dehumanization is generally defined as one that produces a decreased awareness of the human attributes of others and a loss of humanity in interpersonal interactions (Maslach and Pines, 1977, p. 101). This outcome is believed to be accomplished through the use of such psychological mechanisms as intellectualization, denial, withdrawal, and isolation of affect. In contrast to a humanized relationship (which can be characterized as a subjective, personal, and emotional one), a dehumanized relationship is more objective, analytical, and lacking in emotional or empathic response. In discussing the dehumanization process, writers such as Maslach and Pines (1977, p. 101), and Freudenberger (1974, p. 160), have pointed to its adaptive function. Basically, it protects the individual against any kind of emotion that is painful, overwhelming, debilitating, inhibiting, or that interferes with some necessary, ongoing behavior. However, dehumanization can also have deleterious consequences. By not responding to the human qualities of other persons, the individual can find it possible to act in antisocial or inhumane ways toward others. Moreover, the person who dehumanizes others experiences less emotion,

less empathy, and fewer personal feelings; and thus dehumanizes himself or herself as well.

The field studies of Maslach and her colleagues (Maslach, 1976, p. 18) (Pines and Maslach, 1978, p. 236) concentrated on the behavior of the professional staff in coping with job stress. These studies consisted of questionnaires, interviews, and field observations of several different professional groups, including social welfare workers, psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, poverty lawyers, prison personnel, and physicians. The data revealed a similar pattern of dehumanizing responses for the people in these professions. They all reported similar changes and feelings in their perception of their clients or patients and in their feelings about them. Maslach and Pines (1977, pp. 103-104) reported that the people in these professions used a comparable set of verbal and non-verbal techniques to achieve this type of dehumanization. Such techniques included the following:

1. Use of certain types of language. Some of these terms were derogatory labels; others were abstract labels denoting the professional's functional relationship with the person.

2. Compartmentalization. Professionals often made a sharp distinction between their job and their personal life. By leaving their work at the office and not reliving it once again at home, they confined the emotional stress to a smaller part of their life.

3. Intellectualization. Professionals tried to "objectify" the situation by recasting it in more intellectual (and less personal) terms.

4. Withdrawal. Professionals tried to minimize their involvement in stressful interactions in a number of ways such as: spending less time with

the other person, standing further away, not
making eye contact, and communicating with the
other person in more impersonal ways.

5. Social techniques. Professionals experiencing
stress often turned to others for advice,
comfort, tension reduction, help in achieving
distance from the situation or in intellectu-
alizing it, and a sense of diffusion of respon-
sibilities.

(Maslach and Pines, 1977, pp. 103-104).

Attributes of the Superintendency that may be Significant to a Study of Burn-Out

The following attributes pertain to the superintendency and alone

or in combination may play a role in the burn-out syndrome (Cuban, 1976,

pp. 97-98) (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 128-131) (Merrow, Foster and Estes,

1974, pp. 23-28) (Wilson, 1979, p. 10, pp. 29-30):

- The dedication of the superintendent is an essential
requirement for professional practice.

- The superintendent needs to view himself/herself as
a successful person.

- The superintendent must process an enormous amount of
information with great speed.

- The superintendency is marked with a seemingly inevitable
role conflict.

- The superintendent practices in the proverbial "pressure
cooker", with an extreme intensity of interaction being
part of the structure of his/her daily work.

- The results of the superintendent's pressurized and com-
pressed decision-making process are directly open to the
view of many people.

- The superintendent is acutely aware of his/her function as
a model for the personnel in his/her district.

- The ability to resonate with others' feelings and give
careful but spontaneous and integrated responses is
fundamental to the superintendency.

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- The ability to tolerate ambiguity is essential for the superintendent to be able to engage in the creative application of his/her skills.

- The superintendent must also sustain his/her professional identity with limited reinforcement from social and community sources.

- The more organized the superintendent, the greater the chance of routinization of the job which leads to boredom.

- The higher one rises in the organization, the smaller the population at which to draw a support group.

- Exposure to severe stress is inherent in the structure of the superintendency.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine what impact, if any, the phenomenon of burn-out has on a superintendent's decision to voluntarily leave the superintendency--to either take another position within education or to embark on a new career outside of education.

This study addresses the following questions:

1. Does the burn-out syndrome exist among public school superintendents today?

If yes or maybe, then:

2. How does the phenomenon of burn-out evidence itself in the superintendency today?

3. Are there common characteristics among those persons in the superintendency who are experiencing burn-out?

4. How does the phenomenon of burn-out impact on a superintendent's decision to leave the superintendency?

Significance of the Problem

A major portion of the research and information available on the phenomenon of burn-out is focused on the subordinate role (teachers, nurses, social workers, etc.). A preliminary review of the literature corroborates this observation and indicates that the phenomenon of executive burn-out has been studied little, if at all. Yet many practicing administrators and observers of the educational scene in this country would agree that some of the 15,000 superintendents of public schools show symptoms of what is often called burn-out. Although valid and reliable data are not available about the number of superintendents who are fired or who voluntarily resign, or who accept another position as an advancement or in lieu of being fired, most indices indicate that the actual involuntary and voluntary turnover of superintendents in the United States is probably staying at about the same level--about 10% a year. However, there is concern that these individuals who are leaving the superintendency might be doing so at an increasingly earlier age. The first highly visible index was the rapid turnover of superintendents in big cities which began in the mid 1960's (Dolce, 1976, p. 1). This rapid turnover has been succeeded by what appears to be a progressive shortening of the length of employment of superintendents in the same school district (Cuban, 1976, PDK Fastback, p. 7).

The tendency to be myopic about the situation and assuming that school administrators are being subjected to types of pressures which are not exerted on executives outside the realm of elementary and secondary education, would probably be wrong. A strong case could be

made that superintendents constitute a subset of the entire class of managers and administrators who appear to be under pressure in both the public and private sectors. Shortly after the rapid turnover pattern among big city superintendents began occurring, the turnover pattern among college and university presidents became more noticeable. Initially, even after the period of widespread student unrest, the turnover pattern has continued and the average length of employment as president in a single institution has continued to be shortened (Dolce, 1976, p. 1).

By focusing on the superintendent who is not of retirement age and had voluntarily given up the superintendency for another position or for another position outside of education, it is felt that a better understanding of the phenomenon of executive burn-out might be achieved that can be of benefit to both the public and private sectors. In this study, an attempt is made to understand both individual and organizational constraints that play a factor in this phenomenon. Place-bound and career-bound superintendents have been studied by Carlson (1972, pp. 39-48) and Wilson (1979, p. 18), but does one have a renewal function that is not found in the other? The loss of capable, qualified leaders in education is a concern to the future of public schools.

Methodology and Procedure

The study is in the form of a case study. Van Dalen (1973, p. 209) suggested that in a case study situation the researcher gathers pertinent data about the present status, past experience, and environmental forces that contribute to the individuality and behavior of the unit.

> A case study is similar to a survey, but instead of
> gathering data concerning a few facts from a large
> number of social units, the investigator makes an
> intensive study of a limited number of represent-
> ative cases. A case study is narrower in scope but
> more exhaustive and more qualitative in nature than
> a survey. Because word descriptions reveal a
> wealth of enlightened information that a quanti-
> tative study might not be able to produce, the case
> study is often used to supplement the survey method.
>
> (Van Dalen, 1973, p. 209).

Commenting on exploratory studies, Scott (1965, p. 267) suggested
that "the exploratory study is one in which the primary purpose is to
gain familiarity with some problem or to achieve new insights which can
guide further research."

Baldridge (1971, p. 176) warned the investigator of the case
study's strengths and weaknesses. He suggested that the case study has
two major weaknesses. First, the case study lacks "contrasting situ-
ations." Second, the case study poses the problem of "generalization."

Three major strengths of the case study method also were offered
by Baldridge. These strengths were: 1) the case study allows many
different techniques to be applied in the same direction; 2) it is
carried out in the field with the "sights, sounds, and smells of the
real situation hitting the researcher in the face"; and 3) the case
study is useful in exploring the "processes" of an organization. This
is a descriptive study of superintendents who exhibit certain burn-out
tendencies that may have affected their decision to give up the super-
intendency.

As Van Dalen (1973, p. 194) notes, the first step in conducting descriptive research is the collection of data. Data collection was conducted in the following sequence:

1) The first part of the study was concerned with defining superintendent burn-out. This was accomplished by sending a questionnaire (Appendix A) to the 49 executive directors and the 49 presidents of the American Association of School Administrators' state affiliates across the United States. They were asked to respond to the following three questions: a) Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out? Yes, No, Maybe; b) If you believe there is such a phenomenon, how do you define superintendent burn-out?; and c) What common characteristics do you think exist among superintendents who burn out?. In addition, the following two optional questions were asked: a) Can you suggest criteria that would be helpful to determine if a superintendent is experiencing burn-out?; and b) Any comments you would like to make relating to the phenomenon of burn-out would be helpful.

2) These questionnaires were returned and from the combined responses (Appendix B), a definition of superintendent burn-out was derived (Chapter III), along with a list of common characteristics of superintendents who burn out (Table 3).

3) An expert panel consisting of The Committee, other members of the faculty of educational administration at The Ohio State University, professors of educational administration at five major state institutions in Ohio, the Executive Director of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, and the Executive Director of the Ohio School Boards Association were asked to submit a list of names of

superintendents or former superintendents of public schools in Ohio
(Appendix C) meeting the following criteria:

a) Has voluntarily or is voluntarily stepping down
from the position of superintendency.

b) Is or has done so within the last five years.

c) Has or had at least seven years before retirement
age of 60 before this step was taken.

d) Could have retained the current superintendency
and could probably take another superintendency elsewhere.

e) Meets some of the characteristics illustrated in
the definition of superintendent burn-out.

No one person has all the signs and symptoms of burn-
out (Spaniol and Caputo, 1979, p. 14).

4) Ten individuals were given taped in-depth interviews
(Appendix E) to attempt to ascertain the degree, if any, the phenomenon
of burn-out played in their decision to leave the previous superin-
tendency. The candidates were selected in rank order of those whose
names occurred with the greatest frequency as submitted by the expert
panel, in the following two areas:

a) Those who left the superintendency for a career
outside of education.

b) Those who left the superintendency for another
position within an educational organization.

In addition, two pilot interviews were made--one with a person on
the expert panel list and another with a former superintendent of

schools in the doctoral program at The Ohio State University. The
pilot interview with the superintendent from the expert panel list gave
comparable results with the other ten and was included in the interview
population, resulting in a total of eleven superintendents interviewed
for the study.

The top individuals in each category were sent a letter (Appendix D)
and then called to see if they had questions and were available for an
interview. If they were not available for an interview, the next in
line was called until five in each category met the criteria and agreed
to the interview.

The sample was a form of nonprobability sampling called purposive
sampling, which Kerlinger (1973, p. 129) indicates is characterized by
the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative
samples by including presumably typical areas or groups in the sample.
The interviews were semi-structured. That is, an interview guide
(Merton, 1956, p. 3) was developed based upon the preliminary analysis
of the "Superintendent Burn-Out Questionnaire" and the "Maslach Burn-
Out Inventory" (Maslach and Jackson, 1977, pp. 1-8). Bingham and Moore
(1959, p. 8) indicate that even where facts are readily available from
other sources, perhaps more accurately than they could be determined
from an interview, it is frequently important to find out how the
individual feels about the facts and how they seem to affect his
opinions, attitudes, and behavior. The interview is often the only
means available to obtain these subjective facts of attitude preference
and opinion, as well as objective facts known only to the individual
being interviewed. Due to the nature of the research problem, the
questions asked in the interview sessions were necessarily general and

open-ended in nature, thus allowing respondents to define their feelings in their own terms (Lofland, 1971, p. 76). Interviews were tape-recorded and information pertinent to the study was transcribed. The identity of all interviewees was kept confidential in any reporting of the data or their analysis.

Interviews were conducted during June 1980. Letters outlining the proposed study were sent to each prospective interviewee (Appendix D). This was followed by a phone contact to establish an appointment for the personal interview or the phone interview and to answer any questions the interviewee might have about the study. All the interviewees resided in Ohio and were personally interviewed.

The use of intensive interviewing techniques for data collection and the limited resources available to the investigator necessitated the use of a small sample of respondents. This limited the stability of responses, the generalizability of findings, and the analysis of subgroups. These limitations were offset by the depth of understanding which the interviews provided. As Lortie (1975, p. 9) states, "Understanding the subjective world of people within a given field of work calls for long, detailed and open-ended interviews which are costly in time and money; the benefits of intensity are purchased at the cost of scope. Yet, it is surprising how much one can learn about an occupation without using complex measures."

Data Analysis

Since this study was descriptive and exploratory, data analysis was primarily limited to the use of descriptive statistics. Several

methods of data analysis were employed in two stages to arrive at a description of the effect of the phenomenon of burn-out on the super-intendent's decision to vacate the position.

The first stage of analysis involved the tabulation of character-istics of burn-out from the literature (Tables 1 and 2) and the data amassed from the "Questionnaire on Superintendent Burn-Out" (Appen-dix B). From this questionnaire, a definition of superintendent burn-out was established, and a list of common characteristics that the executive directors and presidents of the state AASA affiliates felt existed among superintendents who burn-out was recorded (Table 3). These characteristics and other criteria from the burn-out literature were used to determine the format of the interview guide.

The second stage of data analysis dealt with the interview data. Certain characteristics of superintendent burn-out could be described in terms of measures of central tendency and frequency. The interview data was subjected to content analysis. This technique called for the notation of the frequency with which particular responses were given. Due to the use of a semi-structured interview guide rather than a structured schedule of highly specific questions, this analysis could not be based upon preexisting response categories. The categories of responses emerged from an initial analysis of the interview data.

The final stage of analysis involved what Lofland (1971, p. 7) described as the "qualitative analyst's" search to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and patterns found among a set of participants. Thus, the interview data was analyzed for patterns in

the outlooks, perceptions and attitudes shared by superintendents as reflected in the data.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by its type. Since it was descriptive in nature, its results were not able to state cause and effect relationships.

The study was limited by the willingness of the participants to respond to the research openly and honestly. The size of the sample imposed constraints upon what can be said about the findings and to whom they might be generalized. The external validity of the study was limited in the sense that the findings cannot automatically be generalized to superintendents throughout the nation. Yet, unless Ohio is a unique setting, reference can be made from the study about the phenomenon of burn-out elsewhere. However, no attempts are made to generalize to similar situations or systems in other states.

Another limitation of the study was the absence of a control group. No attempt was made to check the results of this study with a "normal" population of superintendents. In addition, no attempt was made to check the perceptions of family, subordinates, and school board members against the superintendent's responses.

Collection of the data by interview restricts the quality and quantity of the data collected. Interviewer bias and ability to acquire the right rapport are fundamental problems of interviews (Van Dalen, 1973, p. 333).

This limitation reflects the complexity of the study's purpose. The phenomenon of burn-out is broad and nebulous. What comprises its major characteristics is a matter of some conjecture. Naturally, the answers one gains were to a large extent determined by the questions asked. The questions asked made it possible, if not probable, that other dimensions of superintendent burn-out escaped undetected. This, of course, is a problem fundamental to research. However, due to the complexity of identifying and operationalizing even those character-istics which this study focused upon, recording and analysis of their existence was a subjective affair at best.

An Overview of the Study

The findings which resulted from this investigation are presented in the following manner:

In Chapter Two, a Review of Related Literature is reported in four parts--definitions, characteristics, sources and stages of burn-out.

In Chapter Three, Findings Pertaining to the Study are described. This includes the findings and analysis of the data obtained from the AASA state affiliates, executive directors and presidents, and from interviews with superintendents or former superintendents of schools.

The study is concluded in Chapter Four with Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations for Practice and Recommendations for Further Study.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE ON BURN-OUT

Several books and numerous journal articles have been written about various dimensions of the phenomenon of burn-out. In this chapter, the results of a review of that body of literature are reported. The review was undertaken specifically to identify definitions, characteristics, and sources of the burn-out syndrome.

The word "burn-out" came into the professional literature in 1974, with the first of psychoanalyst Herbert J. Freudenberger's articles on staff burn-out in "alternative" help-giving facilities that exist outside the established institutional structures of society and that depend on dedicated volunteer help (Freudenberger, 1974, pp. 159-165). It soon was recognized that the concept of burn-out applied equally well to the salaried or self-employed professional in an "establishment" position. More recent articles have addressed themselves to burn-out in teachers (Bardo, 1979, pp. 252-254), (Dubrin and Others, 1979, pp. 56-62), (Hendrickson, 1979, pp. 37-39), (McGuire, 1979, pp. 49-53), (Moe, 1979, pp. 35-36), (Reed, 1979, pp. 67-70), (Scribens, 1979, pp. 34-35), (Sparks, 1979, pp. 37-39), (Walsh, 1979, pp. 254-pp. 254-256); police officers (Ellison and Genz, 1978, pp. 1-7), (Maslach and Jackson, 1979, p. 58, 62); lawyers (Maslach and Jackson,

1978, pp. 52-54); nurses (Shubin, 1978, pp. 22-27), (Skinner, 1979, pp. 8-10), (Storlie, 1979, pp. 2108-2111); mental health workers (Cherniss and Egnatios, 1978, pp. 309-318), (Lamb, 1979, pp. 396-398), (Larson, Gilbertson and Powell, 1978, pp. 563-565), (Mendel, 1979, pp. 75-83), (Pines and Maslach, 1978, pp. 233-237), (Soloman, 1979, p. 177); principals (Lee, 1980, p. 6), (Seligmann and Huck, 1978, p. 20); day care staff (Daley, 1979, pp. 443-450), (Freudenberger, 1977, pp. 90-99), (Maslach and Pines, 1977, pp. 110-113), (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 127-137), (Seiderman, 1978, pp. 6-9); counselors (Tiedeman, 1979, pp. 328-330), (Van Auken, 1979, pp. 143-144), (Warnath, 1979, pp. 325-328), (Warnath and Shelton, 1976, pp. 172-175); and ministers (Collins, 1977, pp. 740-742), (McCann, 1980, pp. 15-16).

As the history of research and writing on the subject suggests, burn-out initially was associated with "front-line" clinical settings (crisis centers and drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs) where untrained workers put in long hours providing direct services for an overload of clients. Burn-out was easiest to observe in such settings because its effects were most readily apparent there.

Although in a field as new as burn-out, a review of literature is likely to become obsolete almost as soon as it is published. One cannot write about this subject without acknowledging the major contribution made by two social psychologists from the University of California at Berkeley--Christina Maslach and Ayala Pines. In addition to their articles on burn-out (cited earlier) in specific occupational categories, they have broadened the concept so as to make clear its implications for anyone who works with people. Maslach has written

several general articles on burn-out in the helping professions
(Maslach, 1976, pp. 16-22; 1978, pp. 111-124; 1978, pp. 56-58). For
research and diagnostic purposes, she has developed (with Susan E.
Jackson) the Maslach Burn-Out Inventory, a questionnaire which meas-
ures four dimensions of burn-out--emotional exhaustion, negative
attitudes toward recipients, negative self-evaluation as a helper, and
emotional distance from recipients (Maslach and Jackson, 1978). Pines,
in a particularly informative study of "occupational tedium" co-
authored by Ditsa Kafry, gives a comprehensive picture of the emotional
and institutional realities affecting those who work in the social
services. These services range from over-involvement of the ego to
large amounts of paperwork, low salaries, poor relationships with
administrators, poor supervision and leadership, and bureaucratic
inertia (Pines and Kafry, 1978, p. 500).

Most of the research and information available on the phenomenon
of burn-out is focused on the subordinate role, with executive burn-out
being studied very little, if at all (Koff, Laffey, Olson, Cichon,
1979, p. 1). However, some general definitions and characteristics of
burn-out are offered and may fit all levels of work.

Definitions of Burn-Out

Burn-out has generally been defined, with the exception of the
executive role, as a wearing out, exhaustion, or failure resulting
from excessive demands made on energy, strength, or resources
(Freudenberger, 1974, p. 159 and 1977, p. 90). This definition links

burn-out to work tasks, and it implies a developmental or gradual time dimension, that is, "excessive demands" derived from task structures; one does not suddenly "wear out" or "become exhausted". Freudenberger (1975, pp. 73-78) offered a detailed definition focusing on the individual. The individual's role at work plays a part in this, but the individual himself/herself bears responsibility for burn-out as well. Freudenberger described the dedicated, need for control, authoritarian or committed (work is everything) person who takes on too much, too often, too intensely. According to Freudenberger, this intense, high energy, compulsive person with high, if not unreachable expectations, often burns out.

However, a definition that is more specific to a particular job situation, takes into account the nature of the stressors involved and identifies the major characteristics of burn-out, may be more useful. According to such a definition, burn-out is a reaction to job-related stress that varies in nature with the intensity and duration of the stress itself. It may be manifested in workers becoming emotionally detached from their jobs and may ultimately lead them to leave their jobs altogether (Daley, 1979, p. 375). This indicates that burn-out emerges from a qualitative shift away from the original meaning and purpose of work. Gillespie (1980, p. 7) says this connotes an idea similar to the Florence Nightingale syndrome in nursing where the idealism of helping gets jolted by the realities of dealing with the motley aspects of illness. Here burn-out might be triggered by an incident, for example, an abusive patient or client, rather than precipitating overtime. Also, the focus on meaning, purpose and

estrangement implies a state of mental apathy more than physical exhaustion.

Using this definition, it is possible to conceptualize burn-out as a dynamic process and to identify various stages in its development. Maslach (1976, p. 16) views burn-out as a reaction to job-related stress that results in the person becoming emotionally detached from others, treating others in a dehumanizing way, and becoming less effective on the job. The source of this stress is the interpersonal contact between the person and others (Maslach, 1978, p. 56).

When you burn out, your emotional center goes. There's nothing that you really care about. You don't have any optimistic feelings, only negative ones (Maslach, 1976, p. 20). This conceptualization includes a dimension of negativism. This is different from apathy which generally is used to mean a lack of caring or concern; it is neither positive or negative. Maslach viewed burn-out as a syndrome of feelings and behaviors which are a response to chronic sources of emotional tension and stress. Distancing from clients and work is described both as a sign of burn-out and also as a means of coping with stresses of work. Like Freudenberger, Maslach concurs that a feeling of not having control over one's work leads to burn-out. Maslach's important contribution was clearly raising the issue that stress and burn-out come not only from personal traits of staff, but also from organizational and situational variables as well.

Job burn-out is defined by Cary Cherniss (1980, p. 71) as a situation where a person has been experiencing high levels of stress and hasn't been able to cope with them. Such a person gets more and

more discouraged and finally just gives up and withdraws from things. So, according to Cherniss, burn-out is really a reaction to a stressful job. However, Cherniss, Egnatios, Wacker and O'Dowd (1980, pp. 1-2) also define burn-out as it refers to three changes in professional attitude and behavior: 1) a decline in trust, sympathy, and tolerance for clients, including a tendency to view them increasingly as objects or cases rather than as real people; 2) a decline in idealism, hope, and optimism; and 3) increasing compartmentalization of and withdrawal from work as one turns to other, non-work related aspects of life for the fulfillment of higher order needs.

Robert Veninga (1979, p. 7) has been studying burn-out as part of his investigation of the relationships between work and health. He defines burn-out as "a debilitating psychological condition caused by work-related frustrations, resulting in lower worker productivity and morale."

Burn-out is a phenomenon or state of mind representing the extreme points on a scale of dissatisfaction, rather than the presence of physical and emotional exhaustion (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 7). To reduce or prevent burn-out, Gillespie and Cohen (1980, pp. 8-10) suggest the following can be done: 1) reduce the client-to-staff ratio; 2) shorten the number of work hours; 3) change the function of staff meetings; or 4) provide in-service training.

Robert Kahn (1978, p. 61) defines burn-out as: a syndrome of inappropriate attitudes towards clients and towards self, often associated with uncomfortable physical and emotional symptoms ranging from exhaustion and insomnia to migraine headaches and ulcers.

Deteriorations of performance is a frequent additional element in the syndrome.

"Burn-out" was the term used by Jerry Edelwich (1980, p. 14) to refer to a progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people as a result of the conditions of their work. His approach to burn-out divides the process into stages of enthusiasm, stagnation, frustration, apathy and intervention (Edelwich, 1980, p. 42).

Burn-out is the inability to cope adequately with the stresses of our work or professional lives. Burn-out reduces the amount of energy available for constructive problem solving, creating innovative work, excitement and enjoying (Spaniol and Caputo, 1979, pp. 1-3). It is potentially harmful to others in our personal work environment because accident proneness and susceptibility to illness increase with burn-out. Lastly, burn-out is psychologically and physically harmful to ourselves; it can lead to behaviors and feelings which are self destructive.

"Career burn-out" is a syndrome that affects most working people at one time or another, and one that is being termed a distinct malady of the working world. Stress, boredom, and job dissatisfaction all contribute to career burn-out, according to Bies and Molle (1980, pp. 32-33).

Dale McCann (1980, p. 15) writes about burn-out in ministers and says that idealism and enthusiasm for their work sometimes causes them to overextend themselves. They may attempt to give too much, to too many people in need. When the physical and emotional circuits become

overloaded, a fuse seems to burn out and the whole system is shut down. That's burn-out, and it often is the best ministers who experience it.

The president of the National Education Association describes teacher burn-out as a condition that results from stress, tension, and anxiety in its victims. It is caused by the many horrendous problems that plague teachers, and they receive little help in dealing with it. Problems of violence and vandalism, disruptive students, inadequate salaries, involuntary transfers, interfering parents, oversized classes, excessive paper work, and a multitude of others contribute to teacher burn-out (McGuire, 1979, p. 5).

Mendel (1979, p. 75) defines burn-out in health care as the failure, wearing out, and exhaustion of professionals and parapro-fessionals who provide health care. This definition compares closely to Herbert Freudenberger's definition of burn-out.

Burn-out is the state that may include feelings of exhaustion, development of chronic negative attitudes about oneself and/or clientele, and lowered job performance (Perlman and Hartman, 1980, pp. 4-5).

A condition of burn-out exists when a person is attempting to per-form a job by merely going through the motions. The individual con-tinues to function and more than likely still maintains the skills which enabled him or her to originally perform the job, gain employ-ment, and even meet licensing and certification requirements (Ricken, 1980, p. 21). The malady, once thought to be the province of assembly line workers whose repetitive tasks institutionalized boredom, now

appears to be a factor in every stratum of skilled and unskilled employment.

In an article on staff burn-out, Seiderman (1978, p. 6) defines the term to mean the depletion of personal resourcefulness, flexibility and positive energy that individuals ordinarily possess as members of a staff. If left unchecked, burn-out leads almost inevitably to staff turnover or, in the extreme, to the destruction of the program.

Burn-out follows a confrontation with reality in which the human spirit is pitted against circumstances intractable to change. The end result is professional autism (Storlie, 1979, p. 2108). Mandated actions are carried out, but the emotional investment that transforms a task into an art form is missing. Storlie conducted a survey with nurses working in intensive care units and asked them to choose words to describe burn-out. Stagnant, ineffective, bitter, visionless, and resigned were the terms most often used by the nurses.

Lagana (1978, p. 5) uses the term "fade-out" and defines it as an emotional and physical condition which occurs from unwarranted stress which results in lack of caring, concern, personal detachment and dehumanized relationships with others. Fade-out can be seen as a type of impersonal aloofness and distancing which occurs in human relationships when the intensity of the relationships become seemingly unbearable. The way Lagana defines fade-out, it appears that he is describing burn-out as defined by Maslach and others.

Perhaps Edelwich (1980, pp. 13-14) says it best when he relates, "Burn-out among professionals is much easier to observe and to describe than it is to define. It is many things, and many people. . . ."

Characteristics of Burn-Out

The definitions of burn-out, as reported by various authors, were given previously. Because the burn-out definitions are based on characteristics either studied or observed by the respective authors, and are unique to that definition of burn-out, no attempt will be made to collectively group the authors' responses until the end of this chapter (Table 1). If there is an obvious natural grouping of characteristics that occur, they have been reported that way.

Maslach (1977, pp. 3-4) (1978, pp. 113-114) indicates burn-out involves the loss of concern for the people with whom one is working. In addition to physical exhaustion (and sometimes even illness), burn-out is characterized by an emotional exhaustion in which the professional no longer has any positive feelings, sympathy, or respect for others. A very cynical and dehumanized perception of clients often develops, in which they are labeled in derogatory ways and treated accordingly. Consequently, there appears to be a deterioration in the quality of care of service that the client receives. The professional who burns out is unable to deal successfully with the overwhelming emotional stresses of the job, and this failure to cope can be manifested in a number of ways. For example, burn-out appears to be a factor in low worker morale, impaired performance, absenteeism, and

high job turnover. A common response to burn-out is to quit and get
out, either by changing jobs, moving into administrative work (and
away from direct contact with patients or clients), or even leaving
the profession entirely.

Furthermore, burn-out is correlated with various indices of
personal stress. People experiencing burn-out often increase their
use (and abuse) of alcohol and drugs as a way of reducing their tension
and blotting out their strong emotional feelings. They report more
mental illness, saying that they have become "bad people" who are cold
and calloused, and some of them seek counseling or psychiatric treat-
ment for what they believe to be their personal failings. If emotional
stress cannot be resolved while on the job, then it is often res-
urrected at home. People experiencing burn-out often report increased
marital and family conflict. Often, after an emotionally trying day
spent with clients or patients, the helping professional simply wants
to get away from all people for awhile, but this desire for solitude
usually comes at the expense of family and friends (Maslach, 1977,
p. 4).

Freudenberger (1977, p. 26) has suggested that burn-out develops
within the person via a process so gradual he or she is unaware it is
happening and may even refuse to believe anything is wrong. One of the
primary warning signals of burn-out can be seen in people who are
exerting increasing amounts of effort but seem to be accomplishing
less (Costello and Zalkind, 1963, p. 127) (Freudenberger, 1977,
pp. 26-27). If such persons were to continue in this manner, they
would soon become exhausted, isolated, and dysfunctional within their

organization. Viewed collectively, these symptoms of burn-out might

be noted as low worker morale, high rates of absenteeism, and high

rates of turnover.

The problem of burn-out is manifested in a variety of forms, and

this is indicative of the many ways in which different individuals can

respond to the same type of stress. The following are some examples

of behavior that has been characterized as typical of burn-out

(Maslach, 1976, pp. 17-18) (Maslach, 1978, pp. 56-58) (Collins, 1977,

pp. 740-741) (Daley, 1979, p. 375):

> The person makes a sharp distinction between his or
> her personal and professional selves by, for example,
> not discussing work at home.
>
> The person minimizes his or her involvement with
> others by keeping physically distant from them or by
> sharply curtailing the interviews.
>
> The person becomes a petty bureaucrat, going strictly
> by the book and viewing others as cases rather than
> as people.
>
> Working excessive overtime.

Mattingly (1977, p. 131) indicates the person who is burning out

is usually aware of only a vague and inarticulated personal distress

for which he/she has no name. These feelings manifest themselves in a

variety of ways, for example, in a reluctance to go to work, a non-

specific dissatisfaction with one's level of practice reflected in

feelings that one should be achieving more or handling crisis situa-

tions with greater skill and success. Along with these vague feelings

of personal/professional dissatisfaction comes a growing fatigue.

Perhaps at first the worker just feels a need for a nap after work, but

gradually the fatigue becomes more serious, and the person begins to make changes in his behavior and social patterns. Persons have reported limiting their social contacts and withdrawing from people and activities they had previously found rewarding.

Persons who are burning out frequently feel overstimulated and very sensitive even in their personal environment, according to Mattingly (1977, p. 131). Many continue to exercise the same level of vigilence at home as required in the work setting. For example, they may be sharply aware of the sounds made by their own children and urgently analyze their meaning.

These people who are burning out continue to have growing doubts about their professional practice. They feel inadequate to and over-whelmed by the tasks that confront them and know that they are becoming rigid in some respects, which they feel helpless to control. They are less understanding and empathic and sometimes behave in ways that are not congruent with their self image. They probably go through this experience alone, assuming that they are weak and somehow unfit for the work they have undertaken and suffer a severe fracture of their professional identity (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 131-132).

There may be a logical progression of factors contributing to worker burn-out. A worker who is not burned out probably has, according to Gillespie and Cohen, high levels of communication; a sense of mutual support and teamwork; strong confidence in professional judgment; positive feelings toward work; high degree of involvement with clients; and possesses creative decision-making/problem solving ability. They are impassioned, professional workers. Those factors that lead to

burn-out would be the opposite--low levels of communication; sense of

isolation and loneliness; low confidence in professional judgment;

negative feelings towards work; disengagement from clients; routination;

and inflexible decision making. They are "burned-out" workers

(Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 4).

Freudenberger (1977, p. 26) states:

> People who are in the throes of burning out often
> fail to see their situation as stemming from inside
> themselves. Instead they find fault with everything
> and everyone around them, complaining about the
> organization and reacting cynically to whatever is
> suggested or attempted by others.

Nonetheless, there are physical and psychological reactions which

have been associated with burn-out. People experiencing burn-out have

reported that they seem to be tired all the time and cannot seem to get

enough sleep. Muscles seem to become flaccid and weakened with mild

increases in exercise. The old cold seems to linger on and on; head-

aches seem to crop up during the day. Burn-out victims have reported

these symptoms to physicians only to find absences of physiological

causes (Emener, 1979, p. 56).

Additionally, however, psychological and behavioral symptoms of

burn-out have also been observed. Freudenberger (1975, pp. 78-79)

suggests several signs of burn-out: (a) the person who used to be the

talker, the contributor at staff meetings, now remains silent, sits in

the corner, and says nothing; (b) the person appears to be resentful,

disenchanted, fatigued, bored, discouraged, and confused; (c) the

burn-out victim appears edgy, quick to be angry and frustrated at what

would ordinarily be something of mild relevance and importance; and

(d) the burn-out victim begins to feel that just about everyone is out
to "screw him."

Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 15-18) give the following personal
signs and symptoms of burn-out:

Fatigue - This may be experienced as tiredness,
feeling worn out, sleeping more than usual or
feeling a lack of energy on or off the job.

Worry - Taking our problems home with us--in our
head, or spending an unusual amount of time
thinking about the job when not at work are ways
of experiencing worry. It may involve depression
and feelings of hopelessness.

Inability to Make Decisions - Even small decisions
may be difficult to make. We may find ourselves
avoiding responsibility because we feel overwhelmed.

Guilt - Some people begin to experience guilt
about the ways in which they are providing ser-
vices. They express it as a heightened sense of
responsibility for the lives or behavior of their
clients. They may experience themselves as being
"hooked" or having no choice, yet unable to meet
their own expectations.

Physical Symptoms - We may experience our burn-out
as migraine, backaches, tension, stress or pain in
some part of our body. As we begin to burn out,
our body begins to feel its effects. We may tend
to experience burn-out in a characteristic part of
our body, which we return to with each bout of
burn-out.

Alienation - We may find ourselves feeling isolated
both personally and physically, from our peers and
friends. As we burn out, we tend to withdraw more
into ourselves and lose contact with others. We
may find our energy is going into our burn-out
rather than into professional associates. We may
even discover ourselves losing contact with close
friends and family, because maintaining contact
takes more energy than we have available. The
alienation may be further increased by finding it
difficult not to talk about 'problems,' thus
turning off friends and associates who would like
to have fun with us as well as problem solve.

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Cynicism/Griping - Feeling overwhelmed can often
lead to cynicism/griping among professionals.
Cynicism/griping is a way of dealing with problems
we cannot face directly, so we may find ourselves
complaining instead. Griping can be very useful.
It can be an excellent way of letting out feelings.
When it is our primary way of dealing with our
problems, it does not tend to be very useful
because it rarely involves 'owning' the part we
play in our own problems. Not 'owning' problems
makes it very difficult to solve them. Along with
the cynicism/griping may be an awareness of our
early enthusiasm and later dissatisfaction. We
feel frustrated that our commitment and expectations
have not been fulfilled, and we strike out at our
agency or its staff.

Anger/Resentment - We may find ourselves having a
short fuse or being 'snappy' to people around us.
These feelings may focus on clients, administrators
or peers. At times the anger/resentment may be
internalized and we may find it difficult to get
angry at others directly. We may feel paralyzed
when hurt or frustrated and unable to fight back.

Accident Proneness - We may find ourselves bumping
into chairs, desks or other objects. When we are
burning out, we pay less attention to our environ-
ment and are more likely to hurt ourselves or
others. Even serious accidents such as car
accidents may be linked to burn-out.

Cherniss (1980, p. 71) indicates probably the most common symptom

of burn-out is exhaustion--emotional as well as physical. Another,

Cherniss states, is a feeling that one just can't go any further.

There are more subtle symptoms, too, such as cutting corners at work

or losing one's idealism. The latter reaction shows up particularly

among young professionals who are new to their jobs. Cherniss (1980,

p. 71) reports that people who experience burn-out tend to have a lot

of health problems. The physical symptoms include headaches, problems

sleeping, and gastrointestinal disturbances. Those are all reactions

to stressful and frustrating work situations. People who are bored or

frustrated at work show differences in blood chemistry. They tend to have more ulcers, also.

We are just becoming aware, though, of the kind of spill-over effort that burn-out and dissatisfaction in work can have within the family. People who are burned out are more likely to have marital problems. There is much more tension within the family from the stresses that they bring home from the job. However, Cherniss reports, people need some kind of job stress. Not only to perform well, but to be satisfied in their work. If there were no stress connected with jobs, people soon become bored and apathetic. So a certain amount of pressure is desirable. In responding to it successfully, people feel much better about themselves and about their jobs (Cherniss, 1980, p. 71).

Some possible agents of worker burn-out have been published in commentaries and case studies. The potential sources of burn-out reported in the literature include role stress or conflict, professional recognition, large case loads, inadequate working space, insufficient salary, and the sedentary nature of the job. The most frequently mentioned area of concern derives from the professional's interaction with clients. Other influential sources of burn-out are recognized as aspects of organizational structure (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 7).

One reason for burn-out, Veninga (1979, p. 7) reports, is that people follow self-defeating scripts. They are as follows:

> 'I'm going to succeed even if it kills me' - Too
> often this script becomes a self-fulfilling pro-
> phecy and workaholics drive themselves to death.

> For the workaholic, all of life becomes work. One
> of the basic principles of mental health is that
> work, recreation, and companionship be kept in
> balance. For the workaholic, this balance is lost.
>
> 'Trust only yourself' - Those who are unable to
> delegate responsibility soon suffer from informa-
> tion overload and are prime targets for burn-out.
>
> 'Everyone should see the world as I see it' -
> People who are following this script are likely to
> come into conflict with their co-workers and to
> feel that their own ideals are being thwarted.

It is possible to become burned out without following any of these

unhealthy scripts, Veninga (1979, p. 8) reports. Sometimes people can

be worn down from the demands placed upon them by the organizations.

They may be given responsibility without authority, or responsibility

without resources, or responsibility without commensurate rewards.

Any of those conditions can cause a person to burn out.

McCann (1980, p. 15) describes the burned-out syndrome in minis-

ters and says it will manifest itself in a variety of ways and in

nearly every area of people's lives. Physically, they will feel con-

stantly drained of energy. They don't sleep well. A number of minor

ailments will plague them--colds, chronic backaches or headaches, or

allergies. Mentally, they are bored. Their mind now wanders during

meetings and conversations that they once found interesting. Their

creativity has dried up. They just don't feel like planning.

Emotionally, they are frustrated. Their contact with others is charged

with feelings of anger and suspicion. They experience long periods of

depression. Where they once showed compassion, they now have become

calloused. In this state of emotional upset, they may consider

changing their lifestyles, engaging in affairs, or even divorcing their wives. Socially, they drive people away by becoming irritable and harsh. They are tired of people and they show it. They try to avoid all close personal relationships. Their home lives suffer from neglect or petty arguments. All self esteem and self confidence has faded. They feel just like hollow bodies.

McCann (1980, p. 16) indicates that burn-out is discussed in the Bible. While the burn-out syndrome has only recently been identified and labeled, it is not a new problem. Many great servants of God experienced it. At the age of forty, Moses suffered burn-out and was later revived by God's call from a bush that would not burn out. A classic example of effective burn-out therapy is seen in God's treatment of Elijah. After calling down fire on Mount Carmel, Elijah experienced a severe attack of prophet burn-out. God let him get away from a place of action and get some rest. God supplied him with food and gave him a helper in Elisha. And as a climax to it all, Elijah had a personal encounter with God that renewed his spirit (McCann, 1980, p. 16).

Lagana (1979, p. 12) suggests the following signals for "fade-out":

1. Constant physical exhaustion.
2. Constant feeling of not caring.
3. See self as a failure.
4. Short tempered with family and others.
5. Tend to live on crutches (alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, etc., sleeping long hours).
6. Use regular direct coping style - confrontation.
7. Regular indirect coping style - withdrawal.
8. Negativism toward peers.
9. Negativism toward life and society.
10. Tend to ignore stress signals/symptoms/clues.

Lagana (1979, pp. 5-8) states that human beings tend to unconsciously cope with stress in ways that are impersonal. He lists some unconscious "fade-out" tendencies that are used, as follows: 1) using inhumane labels, i.e. "crazies"; 2) using technical and scientific terms, i.e. slow learners; 3) using abstract terms, i.e. "my gang"; 4) rationalization of a volatile situation as negativism being a natural evolutionary reaction to a crisis; 5) invisible separation between personal and professional life; 6) withdrawal from others; 7) reduction of time with conflict and confrontation; 8) furniture arrangement for intimidation; 9) escaping behind rules; 10) going by the book without flexibility; 11) increase in negative gripe sessions; (12) using sick humor; 13) sublimation by excessive use of candy, coffee, etc.; 14) using crutches such as alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; or 15) crying.

Potential burn-out can be signaled by the person who begins to merge himself and his life with the institution. This is a particular danger for a young person. A staff member may begin to spend increasing amount of off-duty time at the institution. There can be signs that the appropriate boundaries between a caring person and his agency and clients are beginning to break down, according to Mattingly (1977, p. 133).

Rigid and inflexible attitudes with a stubborn resistance to change have also been linked with the burn-out phenomenon (Freudenberger, 1975, p. 90). One effect of excessive exposure to stress is that narrowing and rigidification of perception. In other words, as stress reaps its toll and exhaustion sets in, the person literally

cannot depart from a set schedule and treatment approaches without paying a very high and personal price. Workers may find themselves unable to be effective and confident in situations that require flexibility and innovation and may feel an increased need for specific regulations to guide their professional practice.

The rigidification of perception can also be reflected in the worker's language. People who are burning out often develop a very limited, but frequently applied, evaluative vocabulary with regard to their clients (Mattingly, 1977, p. 134). As exhaustion sets in, the individual is no longer able to process the complex data of the dynamic situation. Rather, partial perceptions are quickly channeled into preconceived categories that allow the exhausted person to survive psychologically and render some service.

In response to the impending feeling of exhaustion, workers frequently substantially underevaluate or overevaluate their professional perogatives and capacities. An individual may engage primarily in one or the other of these misjudgments or alternate between the two as situations change. Burned-out people often experience painful self doubt and uncertainty about their professional practice (Mattingly, 1977, p. 134). They worry a great deal about real or imagined errors and begin to judge themselves against ideal standards of practice.

Overestimation and excessive reliance on scheduled activities were graphically described by one burning-out person, who was interviewed by Mattingly (1977, p. 134). This individual had a regularly-scheduled swimming time at a local college that had been enjoyable and

productive for several months. An ice storm struck the area, news media carried many notices advising that roads were extremely hazardous and warned people to stay at home. This person dutifully loaded her van with six teenagers and started down a long treacherous hill. After all, the schedule called for it.

Another aspect of overestimation is loss of trust in other members of the working team in the assumption of a self-sufficient attitude that really "I can do it better than anyone else," or "if I want it done right, I'll have to do it myself." This isolates the individual from the support of colleagues, creates resentment, and results in the exhausted individual requiring himself/herself to expand even more energy (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 134-135).

Many of the characteristics of burn-out reported deal with negative changes in work-related attitudes and behavior in response to job stress. Cherniss (1978, p. 6) lists these changes as a loss of concern for the client, and a tendency to treat clients in a detached, mechanical fashion. Other changes, he reports, include increasing discouragement, pessimism, and fatalism about one's work; decline in motivation, effort, and involvement in work and increasing apathy; negativism; frequent irritability and anger with clients and colleagues; preoccupation with one's own comfort and welfare on the job; tendency to rationalize failure by blaming the "clients" or "the system"; and resistance to change, rigidity, and loss of creativity.

In addition to these negative changes in thought and behavior related to the job, Cherniss (1978, p. 6) reports the following physical and behavioral signs of burn-out. These are similar to those

previously reported by Emener (1979, p. 56) and include chronic
fatigue; frequent colds, flu, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances,
and sleeplessness; excessive use of drugs; decline in self esteem; and
marital and family conflict. "Of course, not all of these symptoms
need to be present for us to say that a person is burning out. Some
may be present and some not, depending on each particular case,"
(Cherniss, 1978, p. 6).

Pines and Kafry (1978, p. 504) use the term "tedium" as a general
experience of physical, emotional, and attitudinal exhaustion that
often results from the gradual process of daily drudgery and chronic
work stresses. The victim of tedium experiences feelings of depression
and burn-out, is often run-down or tired, and has few "good days."
Pines and Kafry found tedium to be negatively linked with work satis-
faction and with liking for the job. It was positively linked with
the desire to leave the job.

Seiderman (1978, p. 7), in a study dealing with staff burn-out,
found the early signs to include repeated lateness, an increase in
absenteeism due to illness, or a general decrease in the energy level
of the workers. At the same time, there may be a perceptible increase
in complaining. At staff meetings, a great deal of time is spent on
making minor decisions regarding job details. Workers seem to be
slightly less flexible and accommodating than they were formerly.
Others are discussed more in psychopathological terms, and labels are
usually assigned. The basic reason these are indications of incipient
burn-out is there is no cause for staff attitudes and behavior to have
changed, but they have.

According to Seiderman, as the condition proceeds along its course, there is more boredom, more gossiping between staff members, petty arguments and irritability. A condition of low morale sets in. The idealism of earlier times is gradually replaced by a cynicism. There is much more intra-staff tension, although staff members will usually unite in their criticism of administration. There is open questioning of the motivations of fellow workers--a tell-tale sign of hostility and jealousy. Even the program itself comes under attack. Workers begin to resist any added chores or responsibilities above the minimum (Seiderman, 1978, p. 7).

In the final stages of burn-out, staff members become so negative that they either resign or are terminated. Those that hang on are so thoroughly demoralized, unhappy, or bitter that they cannot do much more than go through the motions of providing basic care. It is not an exaggeration to say that some even become rather sadistic toward others. At this point in the process, one often sees a staff revolt, frequently aimed at the administrator or at certain working conditions, usually money. Sometimes the board, acting out the desperation of the staff, changes administrators or improves the specific working condition. Rarely does this lead to permanent improvement. After a brief period of satisfaction, the staff reverts to its former level of functioning, and many of the same problems continue to confront the staff, the new administration, and the board (Seiderman, 1978, pp. 7-8).

Skinner (1979, pp. 8-9) gives the danger signals of burn-out as the following:

Feeling tired all the time. It's the kind of fatigue
a good night's sleep or a three-day weekend doesn't
relieve. We dread having to go to work. There's
nothing to look forward to on the job. Frustration
clouds everything we do at work. Our workloads
begin to seem impossible; we know we are no longer
giving of ourselves at a psychological level. We
just don't care anymore.

We sense our failure on the job, and this spills over
into our home lives. In fact, life at home is just
one more hassle. Family and marital conflicts be-
come more frequent and intense. We cannot control
our emotions. We are quick to anger and are irri-
table.

We develop negative, cynical attitudes toward others.
It becomes the other's fault for the trouble he is
in and for the problems he is adding to our already
overwhelming workload. This negative, blaming
attitude is the key to the burn-out syndrome, and
the most accurate sign that burn-out is taking
place.

If the process is allowed to continue, the person's
life begins to be out of control. If we reach this
point, we are unable to control our emotions. Our
concentration is poor. Everything is out of focus.
This is the terminal stage, the point of complete
breakdown. Most of us leave the job before this
point is reached. These are personal, lonely
feelings we seldom share with others. Maybe we
don't talk about them because we don't understand
what is happening.

There are outward, observable behaviors that clue us
in to the dangerous levels of burn-out, and these
are signs we can see in others as well as in our-
selves. Most of these signs can be found in the
ways we use to detach ourselves from others. We
use scientific jargon.

Still another way we prevent ourselves from
becoming emotionally involved is to hide behind the
rules and regulations. One of the most obvious
signals, of course, is when we do only a minimum
of work, performing only those tasks that absolutely
have to be done. We become work-avoiders.

The person under stress suffers a high incidence
of physical complaints. Resistance to disease is

low. We develop symptoms of colds and flu which
linger. We more frequently have headaches, back-
aches, muscle tension, stiff necks, ulcers, high
blood pressure and insomnia. We lose work days
because of these problems. We are often tardy.
Some of us turn to alcohol and drugs which then
become major problems.

(Skinner, 1979, pp. 8-9).

Burn-out is disillusionment, a lack-luster performance, a demean-
ing attitude toward others, and preoccupation with the technical
aspects of the job (Shubin, 1978, p. 24). Storlie (1979, p. 2108) con-
siders burn-out a highly personal happening--the literal collapse of
the human spirit. One sees apathy rather than caring, distance rather
than involvement, self-protection rather than openness and suspicion
rather than trust.

A particularly interesting study because of its implications for
administration and executive positions is reported by Kahn (1978,
p. 61) in an article entitled "Job Burn-Out: Prevention and Remedies."
This laboratory experiment has come to be known as the "Executive
Monkey Experiment":

It is not an ideal title because the function is
not actually executive nor are the participants
executives; rather the experiments involved pairs
of animals, one of which was made 'responsible'
for the well-being of another. Pairs of monkeys,
separately caged but visible to each other, were
engaged in six-hour work tasks. During the work
period, an electric shock was scheduled for
application at regular intervals, sometimes as
brief as every 20 seconds. One of the monkeys
had access to a lever that was preventive. If
the monkey hit that lever in time, the shock was
avoided not only for the animal that hit the
lever, but for the other as well, hence the term
'helping' or 'executive' monkey for the animal
whose behavior could prevent the shock. The two
animals thus escaped punishment or were punished

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together but only one of them, the helper or
executive, could have prevented the shock. All
of the executive monkeys died of gastrointestinal
lesions in periods ranging from nine to 48 days.
None of the equally-shocked nonexecutive or
client monkeys died and none showed gastro-
intestinal lesions.

The serious nature of burn-out on organizations is reported as
follows: burn-out is like the measles. Although individuals suffer
the malady, it can be contagious in an environment that encourages its
growth (Savicki and Cranley, 1979, p. 88).

Perlman and Hartman (1980, p. 6) indicate that administrators have
related the contagious aspects of burn-out; as one staff seems to
suffer, others begin to commiserate, communicate and also suffer from
burn-out.

Lee (1980, p. 6), in a study of principals, explains what alarms
him--principal burn-out causes teacher burn-out, and then in turn,
teacher burn-out causes student burn-out. So, in essence, when one
group is burned out, everyone loses.

Burn-out seems to be contagious (Cherniss, 1978, p. 16). Workers
who burn out are likely to become cynical, negativistic and pessi-
mistic. When they interact on the job with others who are under the
same stress, they can quickly turn an entire group into a collection
of burn-outs (Cherniss, 1980, p. 72). Schwartz and Will (1961,
pp. 564-583) found that when a dedicated and energetic psychiatric
nurse returned to a mental hospital ward where burn-out among staff
was high, she quickly succumbed herself.

Thus, in any setting where a large percentage of the staff are
burned out, new staff entering the setting are at risk. This would

indicate that an understanding of the sources and causes of burn-out is important for both the individual and the organization.

Sources or Causes of Burn-Out

The previous section referred to the characteristics found in burn-out. This part deals with the sources and causes of burn-out, as reported by the various authors. Again, there is some overlapping of the causes and symptoms, as reported by authors, but because they are unique for each definition of burn-out, they have been reported individually but collectively compiled in Table 1.

There are many theories on what causes burn-out, and there probably are elements of truth in all of them. They focus on three different levels: the individual, the organizational, and the societal. While individual and societal causes are important, ultimately they seem to contribute less to burn-out than do organizational factors (Cherniss, 1978, p. 8).

Looking at the individual, Freudenberger (1974, pp. 161-162) argued that the dedicated and committed are most prone to burn-out. Also, those who have a strong desire to be accepted and liked by their clients are particularly susceptible, according to Freudenberger. In Cherniss's research (1978, p. 8), he found that the professional group most prone to burn-out also tends at first to be the most idealistic and committed--these are poverty lawyers working in legal aid and public defender offices. The burn-out problem seems to be severe within this group, and their tendency to initially think of themselves

and their work in heroic terms certainly seems to be a contributing factor. On the other hand, Freudenberger's hypothesis seems to be almost a truism, for burn-out by many writers' definition is the loss of commitment and idealism over time. Those who are not dedicated or committed to begin with are obviously less at risk than those who are. The more idealistic one is initially, the more idealism one has to lose.

There are other possible causes of burn-out at the individual level that have barely been investigated. These include:

1. How realistic one's initial expectations are. The more unrealistic they are, the greater the risk of disillusionment and burn-out.

2. The extent of one's non-work commitments and gratifications. The more one lives exclusively for one's work, the greater the risk of burning out.

3. Career goals. Social activists (those who wish to bring about social change through their work) seem to be more at risk.

4. General coping skills and resources.

5. Previous success in challenging jobs.

6. Initial self-esteem.

7. Awareness and insight concerning the burn-out problem.

(Cherniss, 1980, p. 9).

Turning from the individual to the other end of the spectrum, there are societal and historical factors, such as the following, that seem to contribute to burn-out in the helping professions (Cherniss, 1978, p. 9):

A. There is the growing reliance on formal institutions and certified professionals for the delivery of service and care in our society. At one time, most of the help people received was provided through community-based, informal social networks, such as the extended family, the neighborhood, policeman, the local church, etc. People still rely on these informal mechanisms for help with quasi-legal, medical, social welfare, and mental health problems. However, the trend has been for formal institutions to develop and attempt to assume total responsibility for dealing with these problems. This has led to a great increase in the number of helping professionals and agencies, but this increase has usually lagged behind demand.

B. There is the 'spirit of the times' or zeitgeist as it is referred to by historians. Burn-out seems to increase in settings whose purposes are no longer supported by the zeitgeist. For instance, in the late sixties, crisis centers were new, exciting, alternative institutions. They were special because they were new, they challenged the status quo, and the prevailing spirit of reform in our society at the time supported such a break in tradition. These centers tended especially to serve the youth population which was flowering (in every sense of the word) at the time. Today, crisis centers persist and probably do an even better job than they did in the past, but they no longer are 'special' in the way they once were. Because they have become more accepted by the establishment, both opposition and support for these programs are weaker than formerly.

C. There is the professional mystique which is a set of expectations shared by most members of our society about what professional work is like. There are six which seem to be central:

   1. Credentials--competence.

   2. Clients generally are trusting, cooperative, and grateful.

   3. Professional work is varied, stimulating, and intellectually absorbing.

4. Relations with other professionals are
    collegial.

5. Professionals are relatively autonomous in
    their work.

6. Professionals remain compassionate and
    committed.

There is some truth to all of these expectations; however, for
the growing number of professionals in this society who work in large,
bureaucratic institutions, these expectations often tend to be
exaggerated and misleading. As a result, most professionals begin
their careers with unrealistic expectations, and they experience severe
"reality shock" when they find that things are not as they imagined
they would be. This contributes to greater stress and ultimately more
burn-out.

Although individual and societal causes of burn-out are important,
the ones that most directly contribute to the problem and that are most
susceptible to change are those at the level of the work organization.
A lack of resources and power are major sources of stress, anxiety,
and depression in individuals. When the lack of resources and power
is chronic, a phenomenon called "learned helplessness" develops. The
individual just concludes there's nothing he or she can do to make
things better and gives up trying. This phenomenon seems to be
similar to burn-out (Cherniss, 1978, p. 12).

Understimulation is as stressful for organisms as overstimulation.
Thus, lack of challenge, variety and intellectual stimulation in a job
may also contribute to stress and burn-out. Any failure to achieve
gratification of personal needs through one's work contributes to

dissatisfaction, stress, and thus burn-out. It is easy, of course, to

criticize administrators and supervisors. Probably in many cases where

insensitive administration or supervision occurs, the cause is burn-out

in the administrator. Supervisors and administrators in human service

organizations also are exposed to considerable stress and over time;

many probably change in negative ways as a result. Unfortunately, all

of the research on burn-out has focused on staff. Maybe future

research will look at the plight of the administrator and the problem

of burn-out in that group (Cherniss, 1978, p. 16).

Emener (1979, p. 56) lists what he considers the three top causes

of burn-out: 1) responsibility without necessary authority to accom-

plish tasks; 2) responsibility without necessary resources to get the

job done; and 3) a lack of meaningful recognition for one's efforts and

accomplishments.

Robert Ricken, a school administrator, feels one cause of teacher

burn-out is security as perceived by those with a union mentality.

Without blaming anyone--union, board, or state legislature--Ricken

feels the condition extant today deprives all workers of the need to

prove their worth to the institution. One may legally function at the

most minimally-acceptable performance level. This reality is one cause

of worker burn-out (Ricken, 1980, p. 22).

Ricken (1980, pp. 22-23) also indicates the second decade of an

inflationary economy has deprived workers in general and teachers more

specifically of an atmosphere of growth, innovation, and enthusiasm.

The education process has become restrictive and painfully controlled.

Although studies indicate that national test scores have declined in

both innovative and traditional school districts, the economy and more conservative attitudes have dictated a return to a more centrally-directed educational environment. Student and teacher input in the innovative process is, more often than not, called for after the fact so that the district's power structure can say these factions were involved. Faculty suggestions are rejected unless they fit a controlled game plan. Teacher alienation, distrust, and suspicion have replaced commitment, enthusiasm and cooperation.

There is an analogy with the '50's when students were told, "Yours is not to reason why, yours is just to learn and sigh." The teachers of today are turning off because they are now employed in an environment in which they may answer the district's question but not question the answers (Richen, 1980, p. 23). It is obvious the teachers' creativity has been moth-balled, and thus another indicator of burn-out has been activated.

Cherniss and Egnatios (1978, p. 311) found that the four major sources of frustration and work alienation in mental health staff were: 1) a feeling of inadequacy in performing many activities, especially if the staff had received poor training and supervision; 2) a lack of direct and immediate feedback concerning results in many work activities; 3) excessive paper work; and 4) role conflicts, poorly defined objectives, sudden changes in personnel and rules, the need to consider constantly and deal with "politics," and other organizational issues.

Too much stress is bad, and leads to burn-out when it reaches exceptionally high levels and when the person affected comes to feel

that he or she can't do anything about it. It's a sense of helpless-
ness and hopelessness that contributes to burn-out rather than the
stress itself. According to Cherniss (1980, p. 71), one of the biggest
factors is simply lack of control over one's work and environment.
Administrators frequently feel that they must deal with so many con-
stituencies, so many pressure groups, so many regulations, that they
have little control over their own organizations. It's that lack of
control, the sort of thing a teacher might feel in an inter-city class-
room with 30 active kids, that is a major factor that can contribute
to burn-out. Cherniss (1980, p. 72) reports that burn-out is found
not only in older people, but also in younger people, specifically
those who have finished their training and are in their first jobs.
He finds that within the first six months to a year many young people
begin to experience burn-out in their jobs; they become frustrated,
discouraged, disillusioned, and go through that syndrome of withdrawal
that is characteristic of burn-out.

Many of these people, Cherniss (1980, pp. 1-4) feels, have what
he calls "the professional mystique," a set of beliefs that we, as a
society or culture have about professionals and their work. We expect,
for instance, that once a professional finishes training and earns
credentials, he or she is going to be competent. Of course, the new
professionals themselves expect to be competent. They feel inadequate
when they begin experiencing and confronting situations they haven't
been prepared for. The problem lies not only with their own unreal-
istic expectations, but also with our expectations as a culture that
once someone becomes a "professional," he/she will immediately know

how to deal with any problem. Cherniss (1980, p. 72) feels that people in situations with a high degree of stress, where they expected to perform at high levels, where the expectations are unclear or unrealistic, places where workers have little control over what they do or how they do it, contribute to the employee's burn-out. So he feels the emphasis has to be on what employees can do to structure jobs and work settings to make them more meaningful to workers. Workers need to feel that they have been given some control over their own lives.

When the worker is able or feels compelled to discuss his/her feelings of burn-out, he/she is often met with the attitude of denial on the part of workers, colleagues, and agency. Some talented people have reported that their work, while becoming somewhat less flexible and creative during this period, remained at a high level of quality. Some people have a well-developed ability to isolate the effects of stress experienced from professional contacts. Thus, no concrete evidence of their pain was visible and their feelings were ignored. The discussion of burn-out seems particularly threatening to many organizations. They often prefer to allow the person to bear the burden of inadequacy in his chosen career (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 131-132).

A particularly damaging experience at this point is for the supervisor to insist that the employees clearly must deal with their own personal problems, which are, of course, a source of difficulty and interfers with their work. If they choose to reject the suggestion that they work on their personal problems, they are left with an even more troubling feeling that something beyond their control is happening

to them, and they feel helpless. Mattingly (1977, p. 133) indicates
many persons have private and seldom expressed feelings that they are
"going crazy."

Mendel (1979, pp. 78-81) lists withdrawal, labeling, boredom and
feelings of helplessness as characteristics of burn-out for therapists
who work with chronically mentally ill patients. The cause of burn-out
that Mendel points out is the lack of public support--either financial,
social, or psychological--for programs that provide supportive care.
He found those attitudes (reflecting lack of public support) when he
talked with legislators regarding budget allocations and with
professional school personnel about training for supportive care.

Job-related stress is not caused by a simple stimulus or category
of stimuli. Rather, objects, emotions, or personal interactions that
produce tensions in the individual all fall under the general heading
of the causes of job-related stress. However, the problem inherent in
defining stressors on an individual basis is that a person's percep-
tions of stress are related to his or her personality. In other words,
what may provoke a stress reaction in one individual may not do so in
another. This implies that the remediation of stress must be con-
ducted on the basis of individual diagnosis and that plans to prevent
burn-out must be individually tailored to each person (Daley, 1979,
p. 376).

Nevertheless, certain common elements relating to stress do exist
among people. Because of this, some stressors produce tension in the
management of workers, and this enables the administrators of organiza-
tions to develop programmatic strategies for reducing burn-out. The

following factors in the person's environment might prove stressful to
people:

- Barriers to the attainment of goals, which generate
  frustration.

- Uncomfortable working conditions.

- The necessity of reconciling incompatible demands.

- Ambiguous role prescriptions.

(Daley, 1979, p. 376).

To understand fully why people become emotionally burned out and
how frustration concerning the attainment of goals contributes to
this, one must first understand why individuals choose the professions
they do. Although people seek out work to obtain certain types of
rewards, whether financial or emotional in nature or related to status,
all job seekers are not interested in the same rewards. They, there-
fore, look for employment in a particular profession or job on the
basis of their perception of the likelihood that their own needs will
be met (Lawler, 1973, pp. 89-96). Rosenberg (1957, pp. 18-22), for
example, has pointed out the contrast in the values held by those
entering business because they prefer economic rewards and those
seeking other careers that generally place worth on working with
people.

There is more to any job than just dealing with people. People
frequently refer with disdain to the inordinate amount of paper work
they have to complete and to the fact that they have to "chauffeur"
others around, and they often complain about the number of irrelevant
meetings they have to attend. To them, direct service is the only

important feature of their job and the one they enjoy most (Daley, 1979, p. 377).

Another problem confronting the person is frustration about completing the job. Many people like to take pride in a job well done. Unfortunately, because of pressures stemming from large loads and arbitrary deadlines, they are frequently unable to see a project through to completion (Daley, 1979, p. 377).

Probably the most frustrating problem faced by workers is the lack of a tangible index of success for use with other people. Clearly, the workers make decisions about what constitutes success or failure, but these evaluations are based on subjective criteria. The worker is, therefore, often uneasy about his/her competence. To compound this problem, almost everyone feels qualified to offer critical comments about the appropriateness of workers' decisions and does not hesitate to do so. This criticism is a devastating blow to the workers, particularly the new ones who are basically insecure about the soundness of their decisions anyway (Daley, 1979, p. 377).

Research has identified factors associated with burn-out, some producing it, others inhibiting it. Contextual factors inherent in the nature of the worker's job include characteristics of the job, role conflict, needs satisfaction, the nature of the client, and working conditions (Daley, 1979, p. 445). Pines and Kafry (1978, pp. 502-504) investigated job characteristics relative to burn-out and occupational tedium. These included variety, autonomy, success, significance and feedback. Of these, only the amount of feedback showed a significant correlation to tedium, a concept similar to burn-out. This finding

indicates that workers who receive little feedback tend to burn out faster.

Role conflict is a particularly strong stimulus to burn-out for people who must deal with people both inside and outside of the organization (Kahn, 1978, pp. 61-62). In dealing with clients and professionals inside the organization, the person's behavior is governed by professional protocols. With outside groups, professionals get into conflict because the outsiders neither understand the protocol, nor understand the values on which the protocol is based (Daley, 1979, p. 446).

Personal factors stem from the idea that individuals seek work in a particular field on the basis of their perception of the likelihood in obtaining rewards, either financial, status-related, or emotional (Daley, 1979, p. 446). Unfortunately, workers spend only a small part of their time actually working directly with other people. The rest of the time is spent in transportation, paper work and administrative tasks. The limited time for direct individual contact creates a gap between the idealized concept of the worker's role and what occurs in real life. This discrepancy is not uncommon for young professionals and has been termed "reality shock" (Olesen and Whittaker, 1968, pp. 43-46) (Styze, 1972, p. 298).

"Reality shock" creates stress that may lead to burn-out and turn-over, since people don't get the anticipated rewards from working with other people. Generally, a certain amount of turn-over in any field seems desirable, since it includes those who made incorrect career choices (Shapiro, 1976, p. 14).

When an employee quits, he or she ends all formal ties with a particular company. However, the employee may not necessarily be relinquishing a set of job duties, since the same kind of job may be assumed elsewhere. Resignation implies rejection of the organization but not necessarily rejection of the job (Hom, Katerberg, and Hulin, 1979, p. 282). Albrecht (1979, p. 129) indicates some organizations have turn-over rates in the neighborhood of 20%.

Another factor in burn-out is work overload (Kahn, 1978, p. 62). Overload does not consist merely of too many things to do but can be caused by tasks too difficult for the person. High difficulty is a problem for new workers lacking a wide variety of skills. Inability to handle difficult tasks often result in frustration.

Older workers have lower rates of burn-out and turn-over (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977, p. 5) (Price, 1977, pp. 28-29, 54). The implication of this finding is not clear since age is correlated with maturity, length of services, administrative responsibility, and experience--themselves factors in burn-out and turn-over.

Males tend to burn out more frequently than females, according to one finding, although this is somewhat questionable (Price, 1977, pp. 28-29, 35). However, Albrecht (1979, p. 98) indicates stress-linked diseases show a clear preference for males as victims over females, and men in this country die, on the average, almost eight years earlier than women. However, as more and more women enter the work force and as more of them rise to challenging and high pressure jobs, we can expect their rates of stress-linked diseases to rise to approximate those of their male counterparts (Albrecht, 1979, p. 102).

Job responsibility appears to be strongly associated with burn-out; professionals having mainly administrative duties burn out less frequently than line workers (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977, p. 5) (Price, 1977, pp. 28-29, 35). This finding is consistent with those on turn-over, but the exact effect of job responsibility is not clear, since it is correlated with tenure and age, both powerful factors in burn-out.

Educational level has a minor predictive power on burn-out. Masters level people tend to burn out less frequently than workers with lower degrees (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977, p. 5) (Price, 1977, pp. 28-29, 35). However, professionals with doctorates enjoy good pay, job security, and a sense of security in their professional standing; they do face the problems of overwork, isolation, doubts about the value of their work, and possible family and health problems that may lead to burn-out (Edelwich, 1980, p. 24).

Organizational factors in social worker burn-out are: caseload size, formalization of rules, centralization of authority, span of supervisory control, job design, and work relationships (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977, pp. 36-39) (Pines and Kafry, 1978, pp. 499-502). The number of people over which one is responsible is a gross measure of overload (Kahn, 1978, p. 62). The inability to provide adequate service to all of a person's clients is a powerful source of frustration and burn-out (Daley, 1979, p. 447).

If workers feel that their suggestions are influential in shaping policies, they are less likely to feel powerless and alienated. The variety and types of task/job design affect burn-out rates. People

like paper work and administrative tasks the least (Pines and Kafry, 1978, p. 504).

Work relationships are another important factor. Availability of time-outs, peer and supervisory support, and sharing all work reduce the likelihood of burn-out (Pines and Kafry, 1978, p. 505).

The work of Maslach and Pines (1977, pp. 100-113), Freudenberger (1975, pp. 90-98), Mattingly (1977, pp. 127-137), and Fogel (1978, pp. 8-9) reveals that workers experience a great deal of emotional stress while on the job. They note the reasons contributing to this stress stem from the various tasks demanded of them. The helping professions are marked with conditions of role conflict and ambiguity. Even in agencies that maintain a high standard of service, there is an ongoing conflict between client care and custodial or managerial requirements. Social workers are good examples--they perceive their role as therapists, but also as custodian, mother or father figures and baby sitters (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 128-130). People apparently tire from the confusion and ambiguity associated with the different and conflicting roles they must assume. According to Warnath and Shelton (1976, pp. 172-175), excessive loads and long working hours further promote worker burn-out. When a worker's load is increased, a sense of cognitive or emotional overload often results (Pines and Maslach, 1978, pp. 233-237). Pines and Maslach also discovered that the larger the ratio of patients to staff, or teacher to student, the less staff members liked their jobs.

A service provider seeks positive reinforcement from clients in the form of change in the client's life, or, sometimes, simply from a

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client acknowledging the value of service rendered (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 2). People make an emotional investment by trying constantly to be open and in touch with others' needs. Pines and Kafry (1978, pp. 500-501) have found when positive reinforcement is lacking and there is no indication of change in the person's life, a feeling of negativism and dissatisfaction occurs. This results from workers perceiving their efforts as insignificant and unproductive. Gillespie and Cohen (1980, p. 2) have found that the thought that one wasn't of help to whomever he was responsible for, may eventually create a burnout.

Gillespie and Cohen (1980, p. 6) conducted a study where workers were asked in an open-ended question to list the primary dissatisfactions or frustrations of their job. Their response was classified in the following categories:

1. Lack of recognition (low pay, indifference or negative reinforcement from supervisor, lack of respect from clients or supervisor).

2. Overload of responsibility (excessive case load, repetitive paper work, emotional burden).

3. Lack of training (on-the-job training ignored, lack of consultation with supervisor).

4. Lack of prestige (worker or agency perceived as low rate).

5. Powerlessness (inability to create change with clients or with the agency).

Gillespie and Cohen then refined this set of categories to include:

1. Overloaded responsibility (too many tasks, excessive personal or professional demands, large caseloads).

2. Lack of recognition (little respect from agency or supervisor, lack of positive reinforcements, too little monetary compensation).

3. Poor communication (problems with supervisor, needs neglected, or ignored by supervisor and administration).

The broad area of dissatisfaction resulting from aspects of organizational structure is very important. The lack of challenging and stimulating work has been seen as a contributing source of burn-out (Maslach and Jackson, 1978, p. 53) (Pines and Kafrey, 1978, pp. 499-507). Because challenge and pride have been described as fundamental ego needs and related to employee satisfaction and performance, their being absent or socially constrained may be a catalyst to burn-out. Another structural feature feeding into burn-out is a limited range of income available to front line workers. In modern society, one's worth is often judged more on financial earnings than on the quality of service delivered. This may be another reason why people feel their salary does not adequately compensate for the amount of responsibilities attached to job demands (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 3).

Inadequate worker-supervisor relationships are characterized in a general way by poor communication. One consequence for workers of an inadequate relationship with their boss is a sense of isolation from others; one may feel a lack of support and believe that she or he is fighting a lonely battle. Freudenberger (1977, pp. 94-95) and Gillespie and Cohen (1980, p. 3) site that a lack of recognition and low professional confidence can produce negative feelings about their work, and workers affected in this manner are likely to become

increasingly disengaged from their clients. They are also likely to fall into a pattern of routine where actions and thinking become inflexible and lead often to a closed mind about change. This manifests a "robot-like" performance (Mattingly, 1977, pp. 133-134).

Findings show overloaded responsibility and lack of recognition being perceived almost an equal number of times by workers as a primary dissatisfaction. Poor communication was also mentioned, and communication thus surfaces as less important in responsibilities and recognition but clearly significant as a causal agent of worker burnout (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 7).

Supervisors are often indifferent to workers. Also, supervisors do not appear to give workers much, if any, time to express dissatisfactions. As a result of either possibility, the person has potential to become even more dissatisfied than in the beginning (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, p. 78). This suggests an interactive ranking of burn-out --workers attempt to alleviate dissatisfactions by consulting with their supervisors, and the indifference or resistance received feeds back to increase dissatisfaction. Worker burn-out then may be seen as a phenomenon or state of mind representing the extreme points on a scale of dissatisfaction. This definition is different from others in that it would not indicate the presence of exhaustion (Gillespie and Cohen, 1980, pp. 7-8).

Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 4-8) list the following personal sources of burn-out:

- Not setting limits.

- Not paying attention to our own needs and wants.

- Not communicating our feelings.

- Isolating ourselves physically and psychologically.

- Political nature of work.

- Powerlessness.

- Ignoring positive attention from others.

- Lack of professional identity.

- Becoming overinvolved.

- Professional survival skills.

- Inability to live with the 'grey areas' of life.

In addition, Spaniol and Caputo have found that there are sources of organizational burn-out, as follows:

- Not including staff in policy-making procedures.

- Lack of a structure that allows people to share strong positive and negative feelings.

- Lack of positive feedback.

- Lack of ability to personalize workspace.

- Not sharing wants and needs and not encouraging others to do the same.

- Lack of adequate supervision.

- Dead-end jobs.

- Lack of skill-based training.

- Few external rewards.

- Limited vacation time.

- High client/staff ratio.

(Spaniol and Caputo, 1979, pp. 9-13).

Larson (1978, p. 565) says without a doubt, management sets the tone for staff, and the avoidance of burn-out will be significantly dependent on the administrative environment. Managers must be willing to allow, indeed to encourage, staff to work within a nurturing as well as functional environment. There must be a commitment to the professional's as well as the client's need for group identification, individuality, autonomy, and self-respect. It is up to the manager, then, to structure the work environment to allow staff differentiation, if not to set the stage for its occurrence.

Because of the multiple causes of burn-out and the individualized responses to the factors that produce it, what causes burn-out in one person may be a challenge motivating another. It is unlikely that a single approach will be effective in its prevention. However, waiting for signs of burn-out to appear before taking preventive action will probably doom the effort to failure.

Stages of Burn-Out

Several authors have indicated that burn-out occurs in stages. One of these examples has been reported earlier (Spaniol and Caputo, 1979, pp. 14-15).

Edelwich (1980, pp. 28-30) indicates people experiencing burn-out go through four stages:

Enthusiasm - This is the initial period of high hopes,
high energy, and unrealistic expectations, when one
does not yet know what the job is all about. It is
when one does not need anything in life but the job,
because the job promises to be everything. Over-
identification with clients and excessive and
inefficient expenditure of one's own energy (including
voluntary overwork) are major hazards of this stage.

Stagnation - Here one is still doing the job, but the
job is no longer so thrilling as to substitute for
everything else in life. Enough of the reality has
come through to make one feel that it might be nice
to have leisure time, a little money to spend, a car,
some friends, a lover, a family, a home. The
emphasis now is on meeting one's own personal needs,
and the issues of money, working hours, and career
development now become important.

Frustration - At this point one calls into question
one's effectiveness in doing the job and the value
of the job itself. What is the point of trying to
help people when they do not respond? What is the
point of trying to help people when 'the bureaucracy'
frustrates one's best efforts? The limitations of
the job situation are now viewed not simply as
detracting from one's personal satisfaction and
status, but as threatening to defeat the purpose of
what one is doing. Emotional, physical, and
behavioral problems can occur at this stage.

Apathy - This is the typical and very natural defense
mechanism against frustration. It occurs when a
person is chronically frustrated on the job, yet needs
the job to survive. Apathy is the attitude that 'a
job is a job is a job.' It means putting in the
minimum required time (as against the overtime that
is gladly undertaken during the stage of enthu-
siasm), avoiding challenges, and seeking mainly
to keep from endangering the secure position
that compensates, however, inadequately, for the
loss of job satisfaction.

Intervention is whatever is done in response to or in anticipation
of enthusiasm, stagnation, frustration, or apathy. This is the fifth
stage. Intervention breaks the cycle. It may mean leaving the field
or changing jobs within the field. It may mean modifying one's job

description and restructuring one's relations with clients, sub-
ordinates, peers, and superiors. It may mean going back to school to
obtain better credentials, or just to stimulate one's interest and
curiosity. It may mean expanding one's life outside the job. It may
mean taking a vacation, arranging for more time off, or moving out of
a residential facility. It may mean simply looking around for the
nearest "workshop high," where one may feel good about the presentation
or the new knowledge gained but lasts for only a period of time.
Obviously, some interventions are more effective than others in the
long run, and the trick is to find the ones that produce lasting change.

There are two things to bear in mind about this cycle. First, it
is highly contagious. If the counselor is enthusiastic, the clients
are enthusiastic. If the teacher stagnates, the students stagnate.
If the nurse is frustrated, the patients are frustrated. If a trainer/
supervisor is apathetic, he or she will produce apathetic social
workers.

Second, the progression is not linear and not inevitable. Rather,
it is cyclic; it can repeat itself any number of times. The same
person may go through the complete burn-out cycle several times in
different jobs, or even in the same job. On the hopeful side, the
cycle can be interrupted by a decisive intervention at any point
(although it is much harder to break through apathy than stagnation or
frustration) (Edelwich, 1980, pp. 29-30).

As a quick review of the four stages of burn-out, we can turn each
stage on its head so as to indicate the aim of intervention in that
stage (Edelwich, 1980, p. 245):

1. Enthusiasm-Realism. This is the best time for
    intervention--before the damage is done.

2. Stagnation-Movement. Here is where further educa-
    tion and other interventions designed to get a
    stalled career going again are especially useful.

3. Frustration-Satisfaction. In this stage the
    energy of discontent creates the possibility of
    change.

4. Apathy-Involvement. If a person cares enough to
    be disappointed, is there a way to turn that
    feeling around?

Maslach and Jackson report that burn-out is a syndrome of
emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among indi-
viduals who do "people work" of some kind. The initial stage of the
burn-out syndrome is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion. As
their emotional resources are depleted, workers feel they are no longer
able to give of themselves at a psychological level. A subsequent
stage is a development of negative, cynical attitudes and feelings
about one's clients. This callus or even dehumanized perception of
others can lead staff to view their clients as somehow deserving of
their troubles (Ryan, 1971, pp. 38-42). Such negative reactions to
clients are not inevitable consequences of emotional exhaustion; these
two types of burn-out appear to be somewhat independent. However, the
prevalence among human service professionals of this negative attitude
towards clients has been well documented (Wills, 1978, pp. 968-1000).
A third stage of the burned-out syndrome is a tendency to evaluate
oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients.
People in this phase of burn-out feel unhappy about themselves and
dissatisfied with their accomplishments on the job.

Costello and Zalkind (1963, p. 126) have described a model repre-
senting human behavior under stress that is an appropriate paradigm
of burn-out. They state that environmental stressors interact with
aspects of the individual's personality to produce tensions, which may
vary in intensity and duration.

As stress increases in both intensity and duration, stronger
mechanisms of resistance develop within the individual. In the initial
stage of this reaction, termed the "alarm state," an emergency mobiliza-
tion of the body's defense mechanisms takes place. This may result in
either increased striving to maintain levels of aspiration and effec-
tive performance, or in internal conflict produced by the continual
inability to obtain objectives, which in turn leads to frustration.
According to Costello and Zalkind's model, this stage may then progress
into what is termed the "resistance state," in which the individual's
energies are constantly exerted to manage stress. This state may
correspond to the stage of detached concern that has been identified
by Maslach.

Finally, the resistance state gives way to exhaustion, which
represents a breakdown in the individual's adaptive capability. At
this stage, the worker is no longer able to manage job-related stress,
and frustration and severe anxiety consequently develop. The worker
is now faced with two choices: either get out of the job or break
down. Many workers get out at this point by leaving their agency or
seeking less stressful jobs within it.

The process just described is probably familiar to the principal
in a school. The initial stage of the outlined reaction to stress is

exemplified by the behavior of the new teacher who expends excessive amounts of energy to do a good job. These teachers inevitably spend evenings and weekends trying to complete what is basically an open-ended job. They put in large amounts of overtime and soon approach exhaustion, only to become frustrated by the additional tasks that demand their attention.

Many people, especially those who have not made a career commitment to the profession of education, choose to leave their teaching job at this point rather than compromise their values concerning quality of service. Those who remain in teaching often move into a resistance state and become petty bureaucrats, isolated and inflexible. Characteristically, these people become cynical and tend to view students as cases rather than people.

Finally, the stress experienced by people reaches a point where they must leave their situation. Some choose to remain with their organization and effect an intradistrict transfer; many others simply quit.

Unfortunately, when tension increases beyond a certain level or persists over a long period of time, its negative effects on people's behavior can be seen. This, a process that is beneficial to employees' performance in its initial stages becomes the vehicle for burn-out if left unchecked (Daley, 1979, p. 376).

However, it should not be assumed that burn-out is a linear phenomenon or the resultant build-up of job-related stress that continues unchecked. Periodic rewards or rest periods replenish workers' energies and slow them to reduce the degree of burn-out that they

experience. Burn-out seems to be characterized by peaks of stress reduced by periods of rest. To prevent burn-out, the rest periods must be long enough to allow the effects of stress to dissipate (Daley, 1979, p. 444). Nevertheless, these rewards tend to become less effective as the worker's length of time on the job increases. It is, therefore, necessary either to increase the number of rewards and rests given to people or periodically remove them from sources of stress.

Table 1 was developed by identifying and listing the many characteristics of the burn-out syndrome that various authors have noted. Three components appeared to be common in the theoretical conceptualization of burn-out (Perlman and Hartman, 1980, p. 34). They were: physiological, those dealing with physical symptoms; affective-cognitive, those focusing on attitudes and feelings; and behavioral, those focusing on behaviors symptomatic of burn-out. The literature on burn-out was analyzed to determine if the identified characteristics "fit" into the three components. The characteristics and symptoms identified by the various authors are synthesized, as shown in Table 1.

The synthesized list from the 20 authors, who gave characteristics and symptoms of burn-out, is shown in Table 2. As Table 2 illustrates, the characteristics and symptoms of burn-out that occur in the literature with the greatest frequency are low job performance, followed by physical exhaustion, rigidity to change, decreased communication, physical symptoms, loss of concern, and cynicism.

The findings of the study are presented in the next chapter. Table 8 in Chapter IV contains data which relates the similarities of

burn-out reported by the AASA state affiliate executive directors and the authors of burn-out. Chapter IV also includes <u>Summary</u>, <u>Conclusions</u>, <u>Recommendations for Practice</u> and <u>Recommendations for Further Study</u>.

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS/SYMPTOMS OF BURN-OUT REPORTED IN LITERATURE

	BIES	CHERNISS	CALEY	EDELWICH	FREUDENBERGER	GILLESPIE	KAHN	LAGANA	MASLACH	MATTINGLY
PHYSIOLOGICAL (FOCUSING ON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS)										
PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS		X		X	X		X	X	X	X
ULCERS		X					X			
HYPERTENSION					X		X			
BACKACHES										
HEADACHES		X		X	X		X			
FREQUENT COLDS/FLU		X		X	X					
EXHAUSTION/TIREDNESS DECREASED ENERGY/FATIGUE		X		X	X			X	X	X
SLEEPLESSNESS		X			X		X			
SLEEPING MORE THAN USUAL					X			X		
AFFECTIVE - COGNITIVE (FOCUSING ON ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS)										
LOW MORALE/SENSE OF FUTILITY		X	X		X				X	X
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION/ LOSS OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL		X					X	X	X	X
LOSS OF CONCERN AND FEELINGS/APATHY		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
CYNICISM/NEGATIVISM		X			X	X	X	X	X	
REDUCED SELF CONCEPT		X					X		X	X
LOSS OF PATIENCE/IRRITABLE		X			X			X		X
SUSPICIOUSNESS/PARANOIA		X			X					
INABILITY TO COPE WITH UNWARRANTED STRESS	X	X	X					X		X
FEELINGS OF ANGER/BITTER- NESS/RESENTMENT/DISGUST		X			X					X
DEHUMANIZING CLIENTELE/ LABELING		X						X	X	X
DEPRESSION				X	X					
RIGIDITY TO CHANGE/LOSS OF FLEXIBILITY		X			X	X	X	X		X
FEELINGS OF "LOCKED IN"/ CAREER DEAD-ENDS			X	X						
LOSS OF IDEALISM/ DISILLUSION		X		X	X	X				X
FRUSTRATION		X	X	X	X					
BOREDOM	X	X			X	X			X	
INCREASED WORRY						X				X
INABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS						X				X
GUILT FEELINGS/FEELINGS OF FAILURE			X					X		X
ALIENATION					X	X				
FEELING POWERLESSNESS				X	X	X			X	X
BEHAVIORAL (FOCUSING ON BEHAVIORS SYMPTOMATIC OF BURN-OUT)										
LOW JOB PERFORMANCE/ LOW JOB SATISFACTION	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
INCREASED ABSENTEEISM					X				X	X
SPENDING MORE TIME ON JOB FOR SAME OR LESS RESULTS			X		X				X	X
LOSS OF ENTHUSIASM FOR JOB		X		X	X					
INCREASED DRUG USE		X		X	X			X	X	
HIGH ALCOHOL USE		X		X				X	X	
INCREASED MARITAL AND FAMILY CONFLICT		X		X	X				X	
LACK OF FOCUS ON JOB/LACK PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES		X		X		X				
DECREASED COMMUNICATION/ WITHDRAWAL		X	X		X	X		X	X	X
HIGH JOB TURNOVER/LEAVE POSITION			X		X				X	

TABLE 1.   (Continued)

	MENDEL	McCANN	McGUIRE	PERLMAN	RICKEN	SEIDERMAN	SKINNER	SPANIOL	STORLIE	VENINGA
PHYSIOLOGICAL (FOCUSING ON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS)										
PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS		X					X	X		
ULCERS							X	X		
HYPERTENSION							X			
BACKACHES		X					X	X		
HEADACHES		X					X	X		
FREQUENT COLDS/FLU		X					X			
EXHAUSTION/TIREDNESS DECREASED ENERGY/FATIGUE	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
SLEEPLESSNESS		X					X			
SLEEPING MORE THAN USUAL								X		
AFFECTIVE - COGNITIVE (FOCUSING ON ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS)										
LOW MORALE/SENSE OF FUTILITY		X				X			X	X
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION/ LOSS OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL		X			X		X			X
LOSS OF CONCERN AND FEELINGS/APATHY		X					X		X	
CYNICISM/NEGATIVISM				X		X	X	X		
REDUCED SELF CONCEPT		X						X		X
LOSS OF PATIENCE/IRRITABLE		X				X	X	X	X	
SUSPICIOUSNESS/PARANOIA		X			X				X	
INABILITY TO COPE WITH UNWARRANTED STRESS			X	X				X		
FEELINGS OF ANGER/BITTERNESS/RESENTMENT/DISGUST		X				X	X	X	X	
DEHUMANIZING CLIENTELE/LABELING	X					X	X			
DEPRESSION		X						X		
RIGIDITY TO CHANGE/LOSS OF FLEXIBILITY					X	X	X	X	X	
FEELINGS OF "LOCKED IN"/CAREER DEAD-ENDS			X					X		
LOSS OF IDEALISM/DISILLUSION						X			X	
FRUSTRATION		X					X			X
BOREDOM	X	X				X				
INCREASED WORRY								X		
INABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS		X				X		X	X	
GUILT FEELINGS/FEELINGS OF FAILURE							X	X		
ALIENATION					X			X		
FEELING POWERLESSNESS	X									
BEHAVIORAL (FOCUSING ON BEHAVIORS SYMPTOMATIC OF BURN-OUT)										
LOW JOB PERFORMANCE/ LOW JOB SATISFACTION				X	X		X	X	X	X
INCREASED ABSENTEEISM						X	X	X		
SPENDING MORE TIME ON JOB FOR SAME OR LESS RESULTS										X
LOSS OF ENTHUSIASM FOR JOB		X			X			X		
INCREASED DRUG USE							X			
HIGH ALCOHOL USE							X			
INCREASED MARITAL AND FAMILY CONFLICT		X					X			
LACK OF FOCUS ON JOB/LACK PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES							X		X	
DECREASED COMMUNICATION/ WITHDRAWAL	X	X					X		X	
HIGH JOB TURNOVER/LEAVE POSITION		X			X	X	X			

TABLE 2. TABULATED RESPONSES FROM THE LITERATURE
ON CHARACTERISTICS/SYMPTOMS OF BURN-OUT

Characteristics/Symptoms	Number Of Responses
1. Low Job Performance/Low Job Satisfaction	15
2. Physical Exhaustion/Tiredness/Decreased Energy/Fatigue	14
3. Rigidity To Change/Loss Of Flexibility	11
4. Decreased Communication/Withdrawal	11
5. Physical Symptoms - Headaches (7), Frequent Colds/Flu (5), Ulcers (4), Hypertension And Backaches (3)	10
6. Loss Of Concern And Feelings/Apathy	10
7. Cynicism/Negativism	10
8. Emotional Exhaustion/Loss Of Emotional Control	9
9. Low Morale/Sense Of Futility	9
10. Loss Of Patience/Irritable	9
11. Inability To Cope With Unwarranted Stress	8
12. Feelings Of Anger/Bitterness/Resentment/Disgust	8
13. Boredom	8
14. Reduced Self Concept	7
15. Dehumanizing Clientele/Labeling	7
16. Loss Of Idealism/Disillusion	7
17. Frustration	7
18. High Job Turnover/Leave Position	7
19. Inability To Make Decisions	6
20. Feeling Powerlessness	6
21. Increased Absenteeism	6
22. Loss Of Enthusiasm For Job	6
23. Increased Drug Use	6
24. Increased Marital And Family Conflict	6
25. Sleeplessness	5
26. Suspiciousness/Paranoia	5
27. Guilt Feelings/Feelings Of Failure	5
28. High Alcohol Use	5
29. Lack Of Focus On Job/Lack Of Purpose And Priorities	5
30. Depression	4
31. Feelings Of "Locked In"/Career Dead Ends	4
32. Alienation	4
33. Sleeping More Than Usual	3
34. Increased Worry	3

In addition, there were two responses from the various authors for
each of the following characteristics: overconfidence/taking unusually
high risks; stagnation; feeling of being everything to everyone/
omniscient; accident proneness; and increased complaints about job.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS PERTAINING TO THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to determine what impact, if any, the phenomenon of burn-out had on a superintendent's decision to leave the superintendency, to either take another position within education or to embark on a new career outside of education. The study is composed of two major parts: the first deals with a definition of burn-out and characteristics of superintendents who burn out; the second part treats what impact, if any, burn-out had on the superintendents' decisions to leave their superintendencies.

Determination of Burn-Out Criteria

There are currently 49 state affiliates of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), each having an executive director and a president. Each was sent a letter and a questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire contained the following questions:

1. Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out? Yes, No, or Maybe.

2. If you believe there is such a phenomenon, how do you define superintendent burn-out?

3. What common characteristics do you think exist among superintendents who burn out?

> Optional: Can you suggest criteria that
> would be helpful in using to determine if a
> superintendent is experiencing burn-out?
>
> Optional: Any comment you would like to make
> in relation to the phenomenon of burn-out.

Of the 98 questionnaires mailed, 61 were completed and returned--
a return rate of 62%. In addition, several were returned unanswered
with notes stating the recipient was on vacation or out of town and
would not be back before the return deadline.

For the question, "Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-
out?," the results were as follows:

Yes Responses:	Executive Directors	21	
	Presidents	20	
	Total	41, or	67% of Total Responses
No Responses:	Executive Directors	2	
	Presidents	3	
	Total	5, or	8% of Total Responses
Maybe Responses:	Executive Directors	5	
	Presidents	10	
	Total	15, or	25% of Total Responses

From the "yes" responses of the AASA state affiliates, executive
directors and presidents, it can be stated that at least a majority of
these groups consider the burn-out syndrome to exist among public
school superintendents today. It was decided to keep the executive
director responses separate from the president responses, because
executive directors are hired into that position as a full-time job,
whereas presidents are elected into that position from the active

superintendents' ranks. Because of that difference, it was decided to ascertain if the two groups perceived the problem differently. There were a total of 28 executive directors and 33 presidents who completed the questionnaire. All the responses received from the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents are found in Appendix B.

From the total of 41 "yes" responses from the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents, each definition was broken down and analyzed to determine the type and quantity of factors presented. In addition, 14 useable responses were utilized from the respondents who answered "maybe" for the question, "Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out?" Interestingly, two useable definitions were given by respondents who had answered "no, superintendent burn-out does not exist." As indicated by the responses (Appendix B), there were few apparent differences between the way executive directors and presidents defined superintendent burn-out. The definitions given were analyzed as to patterns of response, and those appearing with the greatest frequency were tabulated and eventually composed the following composite definition of superintendent burn-out:

> Superintendent burn-out is the condition or
> state when a superintendent has lost enthusiasm,
> interest and satisfaction in the job. The
> superintendent is no longer able or cares to
> cope with the stresses/pressures of the position,
> the time demands or the challenges. The super-
> intendent is no longer able to respond in a
> positive manner to advance the cause of education
> and begins to question his/her desire to remain
> in the position. The symptoms are both physical
> and psychological.

This definition indicates how the AASA executive directors and presidents feel the phenomenon of burn-out evidences itself in the superintendency today.

All characteristics of the burn-out responses were broken down and like items were grouped and ranked by number of similar responses. Table 3 contains those findings which are the 15 common characteristics found among those persons in the superintendency who are experiencing burn-out, as determined by the responses of the AASA executive directors and presidents.

Once superintendent burn-out was defined and the major character-istics identified, it was then possible to proceed to the second stage of the study. It should be noted that when the term "AASA state affiliate directors" is used, it refers to the executive directors and presidents of the 49 AASA state affiliates. For the remainder of this study, whenever the term "superintendents" is used, it refers to the superintendents and former superintendents who were interviewed.

The next stage of the study deals with the selection of superin-tendents interviewed in the study.

Selection and Interviewing of Superintendents

As previously reported, the first part of this chapter dealt with the process of obtaining information about superintendent burn-out from the 98 executive directors and presidents of the AASA state affiliates. The questions they were asked to respond to were: a) Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out?; b) If you believe there is such a

TABLE 3.   CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPERINTENDENTS EXPRESSING BURN-OUT

Listed in Order of Frequency of Responses
(1st Line - Executive Directors; 2nd Line - Presidents)

1. INABILITY TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES AND MAKE DECISIONS   (17 RESPONSES)

- SHIFTS RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWN ACTIONS TO OTHERS, MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING TASK
  COMPLETED THEN TO TAKE THE TIME TO DO IT RIGHT, CONTINUALLY POSTPONE DECISIONS,
  LACK INITIATIVE, TRYING TO ACHIEVE TOO MANY TASKS IN AN INAPPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF
  TIME, FEEL OVERWHELMED SO AVOIDS RESPONSIBILITIES, ALWAYS REACTING, IMPETUOUS
  ACTIONS, LACK OF FOCUS IN SETTING GOALS, CONSTANT TURMOIL AT WORK.

- LACK OF ABILITY TO KNOW WHEN IT'S THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PROBLEM, INABILITY TO
  CONCENTRATE, HESITANT OR RELUCTANT TO MAKE DECISIONS, INDECISIVENESS, INABILITY TO
  SWITCH GEARS AND ORGANIZE, TASK BECOMES HARDER SO IT'S PUT OFF, PROBLEM SOLVING NO
  LONGER POSSIBLE, GIVES FEWER RECOMMENDATIONS, UNREALISTIC IN ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS.

2. SHOWS LOSS OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL AND INCREASED WORRY   (15 RESPONSES)

- MENTAL DEPRESSION, TENSE, UNABLE TO RELAX, WORRIED, FEELING OF GUILT FOR NOT BEING
  ABLE TO PERFORM CERTAIN DUTIES.

- DEPRESSION, EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS, EMOTIONAL LIMITATIONS, MARKED CHANGE IN NORMAL
  BEHAVIOR, LACK OF SELF CONTROL, LOSS OF PATIENCE, INTOLERANT, HYPER, WAKE UP AT
  NIGHT WITH JOB ON THE MIND, NERVOUS CONDITION.

3. LOWERED SELF CONCEPT   (13 RESPONSES)

- FEELING INSECURE, DETERIORATION OF SELF-CONCEPT, FEAR, LACKING IN SELF CONFIDENCE.

- FEELING LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR EFFORTS, FRIGHTENED, FEARFUL, FEELINGS OF
  INFERIORITY, EXPRESSING ANXIETY OR APPREHENSION, QUESTIONS OWN ABILITY, INSECURITY.

4. FEELINGS OF PESSIMISM AND FRUSTRATION   (13 RESPONSES)

- PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE, LOST SENSE OF HUMOR, CRITICAL OR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD
  OTHERS, CAN'T GET A HUMOROUS OBJECTIVE LOOK AT THEMSELVES, NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD
  FEDERAL PROGRAMS, FEELING FRUSTRATED THAT COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN
  FULFILLED.

- FRUSTRATION WITH SINGLE ISSUE GROUPS, NEGATIVISM, A LOW TOLERANCE FOR FRUSTRATION,
  NEGATIVE CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AND DISPOSITION, UNABLE TO FIND MANY GOOD THINGS TO SAY
  ABOUT WORK, SENSE OF FUTILITY.

5. DECREASE IN ENERGY LEVEL   (13 RESPONSES)

- TIREDNESS, FEELING WORN OUT, DWINDLING COMPETITIVENESS, DECREASE IN DRIVE AND ENERGY,
  DECLINE IN TIME AND ENERGY FOR CREATIVE PLANNING, LACK OF ENERGY.

- SLEEPING MORE THAN USUAL, TIRED, DECREASE IN ENERGY, NONCOMPETITIVE.

6. FEELING ALIENATED   (13 RESPONSES)

- WITHDRAWAL, FEELING ISOLATED, PARANOIA, SUSPICION OF OTHERS.

- LOSING CONTACT WITH CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY, GREAT FEELINGS OF LONELINESS, NOT
  HUMANISTIC TO OTHERS, PARANOIA.

7. OVERLY CONSCIENTIOUS   (12 RESPONSES)

- TRIES TO BE TOO MANY THINGS TO TOO MANY PEOPLE, OVERLY HUMANISTIC, OVERLY SENSITIVE,
  TENDS TO PERSONALIZE PROBLEMS, BECOMES TOO CLOSE TO THE JOB, GREAT CONCERN FOR COUNTY,
  STATE, FEDERAL ISSUES AND ORGANIZATIONS, OBSESSED WITH SEEKING SUPPORT OF OTHERS.

- FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE TO SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS, TAKE THINGS PERSONAL, PERFECTIONISTS,
  WORKAHOLICS.

TABLE 3.   (Continued)

8. FEELINGS OF ANGER AND RESENTMENT   (12 RESPONSES)

    - DISGUST, DISCOURAGED, QUICK TEMPER, "SHORT FUSE", PETTISH AT TIMES.

    - BITTERNESS, IRRITABLE, UNCARING, BELLIGERENT, ANGRY.

9. UNDUE PRESSURE FROM COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL BOARD   (12 RESPONSES)

    - PRESSURE FROM COMMUNITY CRITICISM, CAN'T COPE WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS, DREADS MEETINGS
      WITH BOARD, HAVING DIVIDED BOARDS, NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS BY SCHOOL BOARD, FAILURE
      TO GET OR HAVE SUPPORT OF STAFF.

    - FEELING STRESS FROM BOARD AND COMMUNITY, LACK OF SUPPORT FROM BOARD, ADMINISTRATION
      AND COMMUNITY, EXPERIENCING DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS, HAVING FRACTIONATED BOARDS,
      DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOARDS OF EDUCATION OR CERTAIN MEMBERS.

10. PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS   (11 RESPONSES)

    - PHYSICAL ILLNESS, MEDICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS ULCERS, HEART ATTACKS, OVER EATING,
      DRINKING, SMOKING.

    - CHEST PAINS, POOR EYES, ILLNESS, PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS FROM TOO MUCH STRESS, ALCOHOLISM,
      EXCESSIVE WEIGHT.

11. EXHIBITS LOW LEVEL OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB   (11 RESPONSES)

    - LACK OF EAGERNESS TO SERVE, LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB, APATHY TOWARDS THE JOB,
      DECREASE IN COMMITMENT TO POSITION, DISINTERESTED, BOREDOM.

    - LOSS OF INTEREST, ENTHUSIASM, DOESN'T LOOK FORWARD TO GOING TO WORK EACH DAY, LOSS
      OF ENTHUSIASM, UNENTHUSIASTIC.

12. RIGIDITY TO CHANGE   (11 RESPONSES)

    - LACK OF OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS, AUTHORITARIAN TYPES NOT OPEN TO CRITICISM AND
      DIVERSITY OF VIEWS, PREOCCUPATION WITH THE STATUS QUO, UNRECEPTIVE TO INNOVATION
      AND CHANGE, IGNORES THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

    - MAINTAIN RATHER THAN CHANGE PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES, CAN'T CHANGE WITH THE TIMES,
      MORE AUTOCRATIC, IMMOBILITY IN THINKING, ATTITUDES AND PHILOSOPHIES NOT COMPATIBLE
      WITH TODAY'S REALITY.

13. WISHING FOR OR SEEKING ESCAPE VIA ANOTHER JOB   (11 RESPONSES)
    OR EARLY RETIREMENT

    - WANTING TO GO TO ANOTHER JOB WITH LESS RESPONSIBILITY - INCLUDING ONE IN PRIVATE
      INDUSTRY, UNDUE CONCERN WITH EARLY RETIREMENT AS A WAY OUT, FEELING THAT MORE ARE
      LEAVING AT AN EARLIER AGE AND DESIRE TO ALSO DO SO, FEELING OF BEING IN THE SAME
      POSITION TOO LONG.

    - DESIRE FOR EARLY RETIREMENT TO DO SOMETHING ELSE, TALK AND THINK MORE ABOUT RETIRING
      EARLY, DESIRE TO "RIDE OUT" PRESENT CONTRACT, SEEK A POSITION WITH LESS RESPONSI-
      BILITY, GIVING MUCH CONSIDERATION TO ANOTHER TYPE OF WORK, EXPERIENCING DIS-
      SATISFACTION WITH JOB, FIND WAYS TO BE OUT OF THE DISTRICT, CAN'T WAIT TO GET AWAY
      TO A MEETING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT, EXPERIENCING MUCH PROFESSIONAL UNHAPPINESS.

14. CLOSE TO RETIREMENT AGE   (7 RESPONSES)

    - LESS THAN FIVE YEARS BEFORE RETIREMENT, TRY TO "HANG ON" UNTIL RETIREMENT, TENDENCY
      TO LIVE IN THE PAST AND DISCUSS PAST ACHIEVEMENTS.

    - GRAY HAIR, APPROACHING THE LAST 10-15 YEARS OF THEIR CAREER IN EDUCATION.

15. DECREASE IN OR LACK OF SPECIFIC JOB SKILLS   (5 RESPONSES)

    - DIMINISHED PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS, INABILITY TO RELATE TO OTHERS.

    - LACK OF DIMINISHED HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS, BUSINESS SKILLS, TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS,
      DELEGATING SKILLS, PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS, COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

phenomenon, how do you define superintendent burn-out?; and c) What common characteristics do you think exist among superintendents who burn out?. In addition, two optional questions were asked: a) Can you suggest criteria that would be helpful to determine if a superintendent is experiencing burn-out?; and b) Any comments you would like to make relating to the phenomenon of burn-out would be helpful.

The composite definition of superintendent burn-out derived from the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents was reported earlier in this chapter, as well as the 15 characteristics of superintendent burn-out (Table 3).

Selected members of the faculty of educational administration of state institutions in Ohio, members of the faculty of educational administration at The Ohio State University, directors of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio School Board Associ-ation, and members of the State Department of Education were sent letters (Appendix C) asking them to be members of an expert panel. Each individual on the expert panel was asked to submit a list of names of superintendents or former superintendents of public schools in Ohio meeting the following criteria:

1. Has voluntarily or is voluntarily stepping down from the position of superintendency.

2. Is or has done so within the last five years.

3. Has or had at least seven years before retire-ment age of 60 before this step was taken.

4. Could have retained the current superintendency and could probably take another superintendency elsewhere.

5. Meets some of the characteristics illustrated in the definition of superintendent burn-out.

(No one person has all the signs and symptoms of burn-out.)

The lists of superintendents from the panel members were to consist of two groups: a) those who left the superintendency for a career outside of education; and b) those who left the superintendency for another position within an educational organization.

Fourteen of the panel members submitted a total of 77 names of superintendents or former superintendents they felt met the stated criteria. This list was then refined by extensive personal and telephone communication between the author and members of the expert panel, to ascertain to what degree the nominees met the criteria. The top 10 selected were those that qualified and were nominated with the highest frequency. The names of the nominators on the expert panel and the names of the superintendents and former superintendents nominated, as well as personal remarks, have been kept anonymous in this study. Table 4 shows the criteria used in selecting the top five in each category. The letters, i.e. A, B, C, etc., indicate the nominators; the numbers, the nominees.

The nominees numbered one through ten were selected to be interviewed. Subject Number 38 was selected for the second pilot interview and eventually became Subject Number 11. After examining the top 10 interviewees, it became apparent that this pilot interview was similar and could be incorporated into the study. Also interviewed as the

TABLE 4. OVERVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT NOMINATIONS RECEIVED FROM THE EXPERT PANEL

Y = YES
? = MAYBE
N = NO

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	NOMINEES	DID NOT VOLUNTARILY STEP DOWN	LEFT MORE THAN FIVE YEARS AGO	HAD LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS BEFORE THIS MOVE	COULD NOT HAVE RETAINED THE SUPERINTENDENCY—PROBABLY NOT ABLE TO TAKE ANOTHER	DOES NOT MEET CHARACTERISTICS OF BURN-OUT	LEFT EDUCATION FOR ANOTHER CAREER	REMAINED IN EDUCATION	DID NOT TAKE ANOTHER POSITION	LEAVING SUPERINTENDENCY AT END OF SCHOOL YEAR 1979-80	NOT SURE OF NEW POSITION
	?					Y	Y		Y		Y	Y		1						X				
									Y	Y		Y	Y	2						X				
	Y					?	Y			Y	Y			3							X			
Y	Y		Y			?			Y			?		4									X	X
Y	Y			Y		Y						Y		5						X			X	
Y	Y		?			Y								6							X			
Y	Y		Y			?						Y		7							X			
?	Y		?			Y		Y						8							X			X
Y	Y			?		Y								9									X	X
Y	Y		Y			Y	Y							10							X			
	Y		?			?			Y			Y		11							X			
N				Y		?						?	N	12	X				X		X			
	Y		?											13										
	?								Y		Y	?		14						X				
						N					Y	N		15					X		X			
						N	Y							16			X			X				
									Y			?		17						X				
			Y									Y		18						X				
		Y												19							X			
Y														20							X			
	Y					N	Y					?		21			X						X	
								Y				Y		22							X			
												?		23							X			
N	?					?								24				X					X	
		?				?								25				X					X	
						?								26				X					X	

TABLE 4.   (Continued)

Legend:
- Y = YES
- ? = MAYBE
- N = NO

NOMINATORS A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	NOMINEES	DID NOT VOLUNTARILY STEP DOWN	LEFT MORE THAN FIVE YEARS AGO	HAD LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS BEFORE THIS MOVE	COULD NOT HAVE RETAINED THE SUPERINTENDENCY—PROBABLY NOT ABLE TO TAKE ANOTHER	DOES NOT MEET CHARACTERISTICS OF BURN-OUT	LEFT EDUCATION FOR ANOTHER CAREER	REMAINED IN EDUCATION	DID NOT TAKE ANOTHER POSITION	LEAVING SUPERINTENDENCY AT END OF SCHOOL YEAR 1979-80	NOT SURE OF NEW POSITION
	?													27							X			
N	?	Y	N	Y		N					Y	?		28					?	X				
N	Y		?			N		Y				Y		29					?	X				
						N	Y	Y			Y	N		30			X			X				
N	Y					N		Y				N		31			X						X	
	Y		Y			N						Y		32			X					X		
	?		Y											33					X		X			
	?		N				?					Y		34			X						X	
			N			?								35		X				X				
?	?		N			?						N		36			X						X	
	?													37			X			X				
						?		Y			Y	?	Y	38						X				
						N	Y	Y				?		39					X	X				
						?						?	?	40					X	X				
						N		Y				N		41					X	X				
						N		Y				N		42					X	X				
						N					Y	N		43				X			X			
N						N		Y				N		44					X		X			
						N		Y				N		45					X		X			
	Y					N								46			X						X	
						N		Y				N		47			X						X	
						N		Y						48			X						X	
	Y					N						N		49			X						X	
	Y					N								50			X						X	
						N	Y					N		51			X		X			X		
						N	Y					?		52			X					X		

TABLE 4.   (Continued)

Y = YES
? = MAYBE
N = NO

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	NOMINEES	DID NOT VOLUNTARILY STEP DOWN	LEFT MORE THAN FIVE YEARS AGO	HAD LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS BEFORE THIS MOVE	COULD NOT HAVE RETAINED THE SUPERINTENDENCY--PROBABLY NOT ABLE TO TAKE ANOTHER	DOES NOT MEET CHARACTERISTICS OF BURN-OUT	LEFT EDUCATION FOR ANOTHER CAREER	REMAINED IN EDUCATION	DID NOT TAKE ANOTHER POSITION	LEAVING SUPERINTENDENCY AT END OF SCHOOL YEAR 1979-80	NOT SURE OF NEW POSITION
						N	Y							53			X						X	
						N	?							54			X						X	
						N	Y							55			X						X	
						N	Y							56			X						X	
						N	Y							57			X						X	
						N	Y							58			X						X	
N	?					?								59					X			X		
N						?		Y						60			X					X		
		Y												61			X							
									Y					62					X					
									Y					63				X				X		
		Y												64					X					
Y														65			X			X				
											Y			66			X							
							?							67			X							
							?					N		68			X							
							Y					N		69			X							
							Y							70			X							
										?				71						X				
										?				72			X							
										?				73						X				
										?				74			X							
	?													75						X			X	
	?		N											76					X				X	
	?													77					X			X		

first pilot interview was a former superintendent currently in residence
at The Ohio State University and not on the list. He was not included
in the study population. Subject Number Three (Table 4) signed a
contract for a new superintendency before he was to have been inter-
viewed and was, consequently, replaced with an alternate, Number 11.
Other alternates considered were Numbers 13, 14, 28 and 29. These were
not interviewed because the top ten appeared to meet the stated criteria
better. Other lower ranking possibilities were 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23,
27, 39 and 40. The rest of the nominees were eliminated for not meeting
the criteria stated earlier. This type of sample is a purposive sample
which Kerlinger (1973, p. 129) indicates is characterized by the use of
judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by
including presumably typical areas or groups in the sample.

The selected nominees were sent letters (Appendix D) indicating
the intentions of the study--that it dealt with the pressures and
stresses of the superintendency and how that impacted on the superin-
tendent's decision to leave that position. Telephone contact was made
with these people to ascertain their willingness to participate in the
study and to establish a date and time for the interview. All agreed
to participate. As stated above, one nominee signed a new contract to
become a superintendent, so was later eliminated after the phone
contact was made.

The interviews were conducted between the dates of June 9 and
June 26, 1980. All interviewees agreed to be tape-recorded and all
signed the Human Subjects Consent Form. At no time during the contact
letter, phone call or interview was the term "burn-out" used by the
author.

The length of the shortest interview was one hour and four minutes and the longest was two hours and 55 minutes. The average interview length was one hour and 45 minutes.

All subjects were white males and six had doctorate degrees. The remaining five had obtained an educational level of Master's, plus additional hours.

Three of the interviewees were in positions in business at the time of the interviews. Three were acting superintendents--one was going into business, and the other two were uncertain at the present time but wanted to get into some aspect of business. Four were presently in positions of education other than the superintendency, and one had left mid-year two years ago and is currently looking for a position in higher education.

The interviews were semi-structured. That is, an interview guide was developed based upon the preliminary analysis of the "Superintendent Burn-Out Questionnaire" from the executive directors and presidents of the AASA affiliates and the "Maslach Burn-Out Inventory" (Maslach and Jackson, 1977, pp. 1-8). Changes in the original instrument were made after the initial pilot interview. Some questions were eliminated and others were modified to provide clearer questioning. The questionnaire used in the last pilot interview was the same one used in the ten interviews. Due to the nature of the research problem, the questions asked in the interview sessions were general and open-ended, thus allowing respondents to define their feelings in their own terms (Lofland, 1971, p. 76).

The interview guide (Appendix E), "Superintendent Interview Questions," consisted of 33 questions with some having sub-questions. The responses to five questions, Numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, and 33 were not initially keyed to any of the characteristics, but were of such a nature that responses, with the exception of Number 1, determined what characteristic they would be assigned. The other questions corresponded with the 15 characteristics as shown in Appendix F, Table 10.

All interviews were conducted in person and on weekdays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All interviews went very smoothly and the respondents seemed happy, if not pleased, to be able to tell someone how the pressures and stresses of the superintendency impacted on their decision to get out. While short objective responses were adequate for some items on the interview guide, the opportunity to question, clarify, and discuss in some depth greatly improved the quality of the responses.

As stated earlier, in no correspondence--either written or oral-- was the term "burn-out" used. It was felt this term might have a negative effect on the interviewee, and he may not respond as openly to the questions. Interestingly enough, two people who were interviewed indicated during the formal interview that they were burned out. One even gave the author an article on burn-out that he had cut from the paper over the previous weekend. This interviewee said the term "burn-out" used in the article should be the title for what the author needed to be studying.

After every interview, the recorder was turned off, and the author would visit or have lunch with the interviewee. A minimum of 15 extra

minutes was spent with each person, and without exception, the inter-
viewee would give additional comments or change key things they had
said during the interview. Two used the term "burn-out" at this time
as what they had and a prime reason they left the superintendency. So
without the author ever using the term, four of the 11 volunteered the
term "burn-out" as a major reason they left.

The following data were collected during the interviews and sub-
jected to content analysis. Like statements were grouped so that
response patterns could be identified and reported. The notation of
frequency with which particular responses were given, and the cate-
gories of responses that emerged from each question are as follows:

1. <u>What district were you last superintendent? Can you tell something
   about the district? Was it rural, suburban or urban? What was the
   approximate number of students?</u>

Table 5 contains data regarding the size of the 11 districts the
superintendents were in during their last superintendencies. The
smallest district represented had 1,750 students; the largest had
slightly over 17,000 students. The average number of students repre-
sented was 7,086. There were three county superintendents in the
study, one superintendent of an exempted village, and the remaining
seven were city superintendents in districts ranging in size from
3,100 to 17,000 students.

TABLE 5.   SIZE AND TYPE OF DISTRICTS REPRESENTED
BY SUPERINTENDENTS INTERVIEWED

Number Of Districts	Number Of Students	Type of District
0	Less than 1,000	
1	1,000-1,999	County (Rural)
1	2,000-2,999	Exempted Village (City)
1	3,000-3,999	City
2	4,000-4,999	City; County (City)
0	5,000-5,999	
2	6,000-6,999	City; City (Suburban)
1	7,000-7,999	County (Suburban)
0	8,000-8,999	
0	9,000-9,999	
1	10,000-10,999	City
0	11,000-11,999	
0	12,000-12,999	
0	13,000-13,999	
0	14,000-14,999	
1	15,000-15,999	City
0	16,000-16,999	
1	17,000-17,999	City
0	More than 18,000	

2. <u>How many years were you a superintendent? In the last position?</u>

The superintendents' responses to this question are found in
Table 6. The 11 superintendents interviewed spent an average of 14.1
years as a superintendent, 6.5 years in their last superintendency, and
had held three different superintendencies.

TABLE 6. QUANTITATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPERINTENDENTS IN STUDY

Interview Number	Total Years As A Superintendent	Years In Last Superintendency	Number Of Different Superintendencies
1	27	17	4
2	4	4	1
3	12	6	2
4	14	9	2
5	9	3	3
6	10	8	2
7	12	3	4
8	14	2	4
9	18	3	5
10	14	5	3
11	21	12	3

For Question 3 and each of the remaining questions, a superintendent's response (numbered 1-11) was randomly drawn and reported as part of the data, so the reader has the opportunity to understand the types of responses given. That number was then returned, receiving an equal chance of being drawn for the next response (Kerlinger, 1973, pp. 120-121) (Van Dalen, 1973, p. 321). Within each question, the response drawn was included after the response category it most closely resembled. It should be noted that in most cases, the response patterns will total more than 11, because the superintendents frequently gave in their responses several items that were separated out into different categories.

3.   What was it about being superintendent that attracted you to it?

Nine superintendents responded that they were attracted to the superintendency because the position would give them an opportunity to provide leadership and make change. Six responded that they wanted to move into a more challenging position, and four responded that the higher salary was the attraction. In addition, two responded that the opportunity to work with people of similar likes was what attracted them to the position.

> I wanted to be able to implement important and
> significant programs as a leader. I could
> "release" people and encourage and motivate them
> in the instructional process. I liked the
> opportunity to work with people of similar likes.
> (Superintendent 11).

3A.   Can you recall what you expected life to be like as a superintendent?

The superintendents were evenly divided in three categories in their responses to this item. Three responses each fell in the following: 1) "I expected to be the 'boss' and have great support"; 2) "I thought it would be smooth, exciting and provide me with a means to make a lot of money"; and 3) "It was about as I expected." Two responses were, "I expected to improve education."

> I thought I could do something for kids.
> (Superintendent 9).

3B. How was the superintendency different than what you expected?

Six superintendents indicated that the position was more pressure
than they thought it would be. Three responded the quality of board
members was worse than expected.

> I found a decline in the quality of board members.
> This really turned me off. I was burned out.
> This, plus the deterioration of quality of the
> board--I lost enthusiasm. The adrenalin doesn't
> even flow any more when I think of the position.
> (Superintendent 8).

Three responded that they had to handle a lot more conflict than
they thought they would. In commenting on this item, two of the super-
intendents indicated that negotiations were harder than they expected;
two responded they had no idea it would be so routine and boring; and
one was emphatic about not expecting the negative change in community
attitudes in relation to supporting operating levies.

4. What were the most rewarding things about working as a school super-
intendent?

Seven superintendents responded that they liked working with
people and seeing them grow. Four said that working for the improve-
ment of education was very rewarding; another four responded--passing a
levy or bond issue; and three said they really enjoyed the superin-
tendency and would make the same choice again.

> I really enjoyed it and would make the same choice
> again. I enjoy working with people and see them
> grow. We had a lot of employees advance in
> positions. The improvement of educational programs
> in a period of rapid growth was especially reward-
> ing. (Superintendent 1).

Two indicated the salary was the most rewarding aspect of the position.

5. <u>What were the least rewarding things about the superintendency?</u>

Constant financial problems caused by inept legislators and constant bond levies tied with poor quality of board members, at six responses each.

> Working with 'stupid' board members. They'll pass a 30 million dollar budget in 30 seconds (no discussion), then question a $1.98 bill for nails--sheer stupidity and waste of time. They're always politicking with petty local things. (Superintendent 10).

The next category of responses considered the least rewarding by the superintendents interviewed was negotiations or collective bargaining with three responses, followed by too many meetings with two responses. Each of the following had one response: 1) Health problems, such as high blood pressure, caused by too much pressure in the position; 2) Too much conflict of all types; and 3) Having kids in the same district.

6. <u>Concerning workload, what, in your estimation, is the number of hours you devoted to the superintendency during a typical week? How many evenings in a typical week did you obligate to work related to the superintendency? Saturdays? Sundays? What time in the morning did a typical work day start? What time did it end?</u>

Seven superintendents indicated 60 plus hours every week was devoted to the position. A typical response was:

> No less than 60 hours per week.
> Usually four evenings per week.
> Sometimes Saturdays and Sundays.

8:00 A.M. or 8:15 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. or
   6:00 P.M. for supper, plus after that was
   typical.
(Superintendent 5).

Three said they put in between 50 and 60 hours, and one person

reported less than 50 hours per week. Five responded they had at

least four evenings per week obligated to work related to the superin-

tendency, while four had three evenings, and two superintendents said

they devoted two or less evenings to the position. In addition, six

reported they worked on Saturdays, five said they worked on Sundays,

and five superintendents responded they usually did not work on week-

ends.

7. When did you first seriously consider leaving the superintendency?
    Why did you leave?

The range on this was from two weeks to two years. A year to a

year and half was the most common response given by the superintendents.

After I had been here for a little while, I
wanted more responsibility but realized going to
a bigger district would not be anything different.
The routine and boredom would be the same, so I
decided to stay here until I was of retirement
age, which I am now and then I would get out of
it. I'm enough of a 'whore' that I didn't want
to give up the pension. Probably the better
thing for me would have been to go out and find
something else to do, but I was so close to
retirement that I said I would stay with it until
I received the pension, so I wouldn't fall on my
ass somewhere else. (Superintendent 4).

The reasons the superintendents decided to leave were varied.

Five responded with school board problems and pressures. Four indicated

they wanted to get out while they still had their health and were still

young enough to do something else. Two reported tough problems in negotiations, and two responded the job was beginning to have more minuses than pluses. One younger interviewee said he was seeking permanence and couldn't have it in the superintendency.

Two reported during this interview question that they were burned out and two more made the same comment after the recorder was turned off. Nine of the superintendents interviewed gave varied character-istics of burn-out in answering why they left, as follows:

> I felt I was catching too much flak from others.

> I had a lot of personal things to work out.

> Routine and boredom.

> I was disenchanted with it all. I just burned out.

> Pressure from the school board.

> School finance problems, negotiations, time required, legislative mandates, litigation, poor staff relationships--I just wanted out. The magic was lost.

> I burned out. I simply didn't give a damn.

> A long fight with the Board of Education over my contract--it was a hassle.

> The board made it impossible to do what needed to be done.

All of these responses indicated, in part, how the phenomenon of burn-out impacted on the superintendent's decision to leave the super-intendency.

8. How did you feel about the goals of the district? Did you set personal and organizational goals?

All 11 respondents indicated they felt good about the goals of the district, usually because they had a major role in setting them.

> I felt very good about them. We did it very early
> and described very tangibly what we wanted done to
> improve the district. . .improved all facilities.
> Took a little money and spent it on teacher ingen-
> uity. . .gained positive attitudes. (Superin-
> intendent 3).

Four of the respondents said they had experienced increasing problems with setting personal and organizational goals. They reported their lack of personal goals was becoming a problem for them. Two superintendents referred to the organizational goals as setting policy that "was good for the kids."

9. Did you feel constraints on time? How did you handle them?

Six superintendents reported frequent or severe restraints on time.

> Frequently. I didn't alleviate them; I tried to
> weigh in my mind which took precedence. I had
> trouble turning people down. I was a servant
> of the community. When the crunch came, I had to
> put in more hours and weekends. (Superintendent 7).

The other five superintendents reported feeling no constraints on time. Those superintendents handled time restraints by delegating authority, time management techniques, working fast, or short circuit-ing things to gain time. Two reported the way they handled it was just to put in more time.

10. <u>Were there situations in which you had little or no control? Can
    you describe them? How did you alleviate them?</u>

Ten of the 11 superintendents responded "yes," there were situa-
tions in which they had little or no control. Four respondents
answered legislative action dealing with the financing of schools.
Three said they had no control over levy campaigns.

> Yes. Trying to pass a levy; we would get out with
> people, have lots of advisory committees, etc., then
> the levy would fail. A lot of it didn't have any-
> thing to do with us. It hurt trying to be honest
> and enthusiastic and then get turned down. We would
> rationalize and try to go back and do it again....
> (Superintendent 3).

School boards were reported by another three as a situation in
which they had little or no control. Two each responded measuring
people and performance evaluations, and teacher organizations and
negotiations were out of their control. One person responded court
decisions; another said race riots were situations in which he had
little or no control.

One person said "no," because the administrative staff worked well
with him, then proceeded to say he had little control over the gener-
ation of tax money, "It was hard to convince the people that as they
were paying higher taxes, the schools were actually getting less
money. . ."

Some responded they tried to rationalize why something failed;
another said at times, "I felt like a helpless wimp." One person said
he tried to compromise to alleviate the uncontrollable situations,
while another stated, "I walked away from them and dealt with the
things I had control over." One person responded, "A superintendent

needs one quality--he must be flexible. Because of the complexities of the profession, I had problems with this, and so did many of my colleagues."

11. <u>How did you feel about your ability to do a "good job" in your last year as a superintendent? How did that compare with your first years?</u>

Five superintendents indicated they felt they had less ability in the end to do a good job.

> I lost the idealism and enthusiasm I had in the first years. It became a routine job that I handled routinely. I was not at all innovative in the last year; even what I tried (innovatively) fell on its ass. I certainly lost any enthusiasm or interest I had when I first started. (Superintendent 4).

Four felt their ability remained about the same throughout the superintendency, and two felt because of experience, etc., they had more ability at the end than they did at the beginning.

12. <u>Did you feel you were positively influencing other people's lives through the superintendency? Did you feel you were appreciated by others for your efforts?</u>

The superintendents were almost equally divided in their responses to this item. Five responded they had felt they were positively influencing other people's lives and they were appreciated by others for their efforts. Five responded with some type of "maybe" answer.

> Administrators appreciated me. We had a feisty community with a 'lousy' paper that influences them. I'm cynical with public because it was O.K. as long as it didn't affect their kids. I had lots of lawsuits relating to drugs and discipline. I hold the general feeling that most people were against me. It's sad that things have

to be the way they are. Students don't show
respect any more. (Superintendent 6).

One person responded "no" to both questions, said it was immaterial
to him, felt he was indifferent to everyone else, and they were the same
to him.

13. <u>During your last superintendency, did you ever question your own
ability? If so, how often?</u>

Again, five superintendents responded they never questioned their
own ability.

No. I learned early on not to second guess
myself. (Superintendent 1).

Four indicated they frequently questioned their ability, and two
said at times, but very infrequently.

14. <u>Were there any aspects of the superintendency that frustrated you?</u>

This brought a unanimous "yes" response; all superintendents felt
there were aspects of the position that frustrated them. The results,
however, were varied. Seven responded the most frustrating items were
unionization and negotiations. Five said that legislation dealing with
school finance and not passing levies were most frustrating. Four
responded board members, while the following received three responses
each: 1) courts; 2) long worthless meetings/time away from home; and
3) working with rigid and inflexible individuals. All of the following
each received one response: poor communication, not being able to get
things done for kids, being a public servant--begging for money, ever
present stress and conflict, paper work, boredom from job, lack of

objective measuring scales for people, undisciplined kids, buses and bus drivers, and having to close buildings.

> The public servant--I hate to be in a position
> to 'beg for money.' That bothered me a lot.
> Maybe I was not a good positive salesman for
> kids. The money is scarce and you have to sell
> the need for it. It is different in the private
> sector--you advertise, etc.; they decide to buy
> or not buy your service. That bothered me a lot.
> The stress and conflict was impossible. Paper
> work - I resented it tremendously; another
> report to complete. I didn't like to face it.
> Paper work on top of paper work. Teacher
> negotiations and militant teachers were
> extremely frustrating. I never knew how much
> power they had. (Superintendent 2).

15. <u>Did you find that most of the people you worked with met your expectations and fit into your personal philosophy of education?</u>

Seven of the superintendents in the study responded with "maybe"--most of the people met their expectations and fit into their personal philosophy of education. Two said "yes," and two responded "no" to the same question.

> When a new coach came in, he picked his own staff.
> The superintendent has to take what's there.
> Sometimes I was lucky and got some good people,
> but it often didn't work out. If you had only one
> poor one, you could handle it, but many times you
> got four or five at minimum. No, I found most of
> the people I worked with not meeting my expecta-
> tions. (Superintendent 10).

16. <u>Was the superintendency a physically "draining" experience? Did you often feel tired or exhausted from work?</u>

Seven superintendents stated that it was a physically "draining" experience and they were always exhausted from work.

> Yes, I was always tired (referred to an article
> on burn-out that he gave to the author). It took
> me too long to understand the purpose of vacations
> and sick days. I would require people to take
> vacations or go home when they needed to. Every
> kind of battery needs recharging. I wish I had
> taken more time off and would advise others to
> do so. (Superintendent 8).

Two replied it depended on the time of the year; and two responded, "no," it wasn't a physically "draining" experience for them in the superintendency.

17A. How did you generally feel when you left after a day's work? Were you energetic? "Used up"?

Seven superintendents responded they were "used up" at the end of the day.

> Used-up and preoccupied (at dinner table, etc.); I
> would get really touchy. (Superintendent 2).

Two reported they were generally energetic at the end of the day, and two said it would depend on the day as to how they felt.

17B. How did you feel in the morning getting ready to face another work day? Were you refreshed? Fatigued?

One reported that if he had planned a trip out of the district, he was ready to go in the morning; but if he had a conflict situation waiting at work, he could and frequently did become ill and stayed at home. Four superintendents said that it depended—sometimes they were refreshed and sometimes they were fatigued when they got up in the morning.

> I reached a peak and stayed at the peak. But after
> a long high, I was always sick. I needed time.
> Flu would last for two weeks. (Superintendent 5).

Six superintendents reported that they were generally refreshed
in the morning and ready to start a new day.

18. <u>When you had a tough decision to make or faced a serious problem
    in the district, to whom did you turn? What were you seeking from
    these people (that person)? Did these people (that person) deliver
    the type of help you were expecting? What kind of help did you
    receive?</u>

Again, seven superintendents responded that they used their admin-
istrative assistants when making a tough decision or faced a serious
problem in the district. Six responded that they did not use the
school board, or very rarely, if at all. Three responded with each of
the following: 1) school board members; 2) used everything and every-
body; and 3) myself only.

> Myself - no one else. I would make it and try
> to sell it to others. I tried to lead them
> where I wanted them to go, without a great deal
> of success, I might add. Professional organiza-
> tions did not help. (Superintendent 4).

One person responded he used the school board president for the
purpose of seeking help.

19. <u>Did the tensions of the job affect your personal or family life?
    How? What did you do to relieve the tensions?</u>

Six superintendents stated that the tensions affected their
personal and family lives.

> Probably yes. I know I yelled at my wife more.
> I don't discuss anything at home, but that was
> probably wrong, and she could have helped me as
> a release of tensions. (Superintendent 9).

Three said "maybe," it did; and two responded "no," it didn't.
Most did nothing conscious to reduce the tensions. Two people said
they tried to spend more time with their families.

20. <u>Did you become personally involved with the problems of the</u>
    <u>district?</u>

Six of the superintendents said they became personally involved
with the problems of the district. Three responded sometimes, but not
often.

> I tried not to. The training at the uni-
> versity told me not to. It prepared me with
> a professional point of view so I didn't take
> things personally. I did lose it once in a
> while when popped; I would pop back, but not
> too often. (Superintendent 7).

Two responded "no," they did not become personally involved with
the problems.

21. <u>Did you worry about the superintendency hardening you emotionally?</u>
    <u>Did it?</u>

Again, six superintendents stated "no," the position didn't
harden them emotionally. Three said "yes," they did worry about it
hardening them, and "yes," it did harden them.

> Yes, yes. A lot of it is the loss of idealism,
> so it might be a function of age. We get more
> conservative. It is also a function of the
> system; you begin to want to tell people 'to go
> to hell.' When people are not educated in that
> area, but tell you how to run a school, it rubs
> you the wrong way and you want to tell them to
> go to hell--and frequently do. (Superintendent 6).

Two responded they did worry about it, and maybe it did harden
them emotionally.

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22A. How did you feel working with the school board? The community?

Five of the superintendents in the study indicated they generally

didn't like working with school boards, but there were some exceptions.

Four said they liked working with boards of education, and two

responded they completely disliked working with the school board.

Eight responded they liked working with the community; one said usually

he did; and one responded "no," he didn't feel good at all working with

the community.

> I had some good boards over the 15 years. I think
> here and elsewhere the caliber has really gone
> downhill in the last five to eight years. People
> of high intelligence and ability are avoiding
> school boards; women are becoming increasing
> involved and are less able to deal with the problems.
> The community was indifferent to me. Some I
> enjoyed, many were boring. Will move out of the
> community when I leave because I've had enough of
> them. (Superintendent 4).

22B. How did your board meetings go? Did this change any over the last
few years?

Six of the superintendents felt the board meetings were poor and

got worse in the last few years.   Three responded they were always good

and could see no change over the last few years. Two said it depended--

some were great and went smooth but if they were having difficulties

with the board, the meetings were bad and lasted much longer.

> Very good, we had our days and nights. Closing
> schools was a problem. Sometimes the teacher
> association wanted to make themselves known and be
> heard at the meeting. The president of the board
> needed to control this but didn't. Overall, it was
> smooth--lasted no longer than an hour to an hour and
> a half. They did their homework. When I first came,
> they wanted me to run the schools. In the last five

years, they had a philosophy to have community
involvement. This resulted in a different philosophy
with one board member--she was finally able to sway
the rest of the board. (Superintendent 11).

23. In your last year of the superintendency, can you describe your
    health?

When asked this question, four superintendents indicated they

suffered from high blood pressure and irritability that they could

ascribe directly to the stresses of the superintendency. Three indi-

cated they had migraine headaches because of the position.

> Migraine headaches came when I became a superin-
> tendent. Irritability (tension) always caused me
> problems in the superintendency. I had hemorrhoids
> from high blood pressure. I think I was usually
> O.K. physically, but emotionally I was messed up
> most of the year. I developed gout that might have
> been related to stress. Hemorrhoids and gout
> definitely came when I was a superintendent.
> (Superintendent 2).

Three superintendents reported insomnia after taking the position,

while three others responded that they suffered from heart problems

related to the stress of the superintendency. Two said that they ate

under pressure and were, consequently, overweight. Other symptoms

reported were back pains, hemorrhoids, gout, and lingering sicknesses--

colds or flu that just wouldn't go away.

24. How did your eagerness and enthusiasm for the job compare between
    your first and last years of the superintendency?

In responding to this question, eight superintendents stated that

their eagerness and enthusiasm for the job had definitely gone down.

> The excitement was gone! I wasn't interested
> any more. (Superintendent 7).

Three felt it remained about the same and had not increased or decreased. No one thought their eagerness and enthusiasm had gone up.

25. <u>Did you ever feel bored with the superintendency? Explain.</u>

The number of superintendents stating they never felt bored with the position was nine. Two said they did.

> Yes, for the last two years. I see the same
> people and problems. Different faces but all the
> problems are the same. I'm bored and need
> more of a challenge. I'm not making an impact.
> I want out now; I don't want to vegetate for
> 14 years and move three more times.
> (Superintendent 5).

One person responded that his district was constantly undergoing so much change; in that respect, it was very routine and he was bored with the constant change.

26. <u>How do you perceive the image of the superintendent of schools over the time you first entered it until the present time, as seen by the public? Teachers? Board of Education? Other administrators?</u>

Eight of the 11 superintendents in the study felt that the image of the superintendent of schools was definitely less than when they had started.

> With all of them, it has changed. At the
> beginning of my career, the superintendent was
> respected as the educational leader by all. All
> that has changed. Today most communities have
> lost respect for their schools in general. Not
> only the superintendent. Boards used to be made
> up of people with quality who were genuinely
> interested in good schools. In recent years we
> have political mavericks on the board. Sometimes
> they looked at anyone <u>but</u> the superintendent.
> They try to make everyone equal. The village
> idiot knows as much about running the school as

the superintendent who has spent a lifetime with
it. The relationship with the way the papers
handle it is bad. It's the times. (Superin-
tendent 10).

Three felt it had remained about the same; no one responded that
they felt the image was better now than when they had started.

27A. If you could have changed any institutional practice or policy, what would it have been?

Superintendents gave varying responses to this question. Three
persons responded they would have changed the legislative system of
school finances. Two would abolish boards of education. One would do
away with paper work; another would want conflict management and con-
frontations accepted and positively dealt with. One would have changed
the physical aspect of the school. Another indicated he would like to
get people interested in schools again. In addition, one felt a change
needs to be made in the attitude of the media. Yet another would do
away with collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining, but opportunity must be
presented for the staff to 'air' concerns. You
have to solve the resource problem and be able to
pass the costs onto the consumer. I was a demo-
cratic school administrator and I have always used
committees to talk about problems. I think the
present negotiated contract is incompatible with
the learning process and the source of most of
our problems. (Superintendent 11).

27B. Of the changes that were made in the system while you were super-intendent, when were most of these made?

The results of the responses of superintendents to this question
showed that six reported they made changes throughout their superin-
tendency; four said the changes came in the beginning.

> Most were from '74 on--a smooth curve for six
> years. This last year of being a lame duck for
> 14 months has slowed down any changes, and I've
> lost any power and effectiveness. (Superin-
> tendent 4).

One indicated he couldn't respond to the question because he couldn't remember when most of the changes were made.

28. <u>How do you feel the pressures of the superintendency compare to other occupations or professions?</u>

Seven superintendents responded they felt the pressures of the superintendency were higher than equal positions in other occupations or professions.

> They were a lot greater. Except some industries
> who can overnight lose a big contract and be
> wiped out. In industry, they have batteries of
> people to make specific decisions. In public
> schools, it's one or a few to make all of them.
> It's subjective and we make decisions in all
> areas. We make far more management decisions on
> everything in public schools. We're also in a
> fish bowl. (Superintendent 3).

Four superintendents thought the pressures were comparable, and no one stated they felt the pressures were less than other executive posi-tions.

29. <u>How many years did you have before retirement?</u>

In addition to this question, the age of the individual was asked (either when he left the position; or if still in the position, his current age).

> Wouldn't want to work till 65--am looking toward
> 30 years. Have eight years to go. Am 45 now
> and want out at 53 but not in the superintendency.
> (Superintendent 6).

The ages of the subjects interviewed were as follows: 52, 41, 40, 51, 39, 44, 53, 47, 53, 54, and 53. The average age was 47.9 years.

30. <u>Did you receive adequate and realistic education and training from the university to prepare you for the superintendency? Explain.</u>

Four superintendents reported "no," they felt their education and training was not realistic. Four said "maybe"--some was suitable, but other parts were irrelevant. Three responded "yes," it was an adequate and realistic education.

> Yes, as much as could be expected. So much is knowing yourself. I owe my Ph.D. degree to a professor at Ohio State--he was the reason I finally got it. (Superintendent 11).

31. (a) <u>What job skills do you feel are the most important for the superintendency?</u>

It was interesting to note that seven superintendents in the study reported the most important job skills for the position were human and public relations skills. Four responded that a knowledge of school finance was the most important.

> Through understanding of school finance--an 'expert'. Then, you have had to be 'crucified' to fill the requirements of most vacancy announcements. You have to be great in the personnel part, selecting the very best people--teachers, administrators, bus drivers, cooks--you have to be able to choose good people. 'Would I want that person teaching, driving, feeding my son?' You have to be perceptive--see motivation in people and why they do what they do. Nobody walks through the door without wanting something! You have to know when to cut through it. One of my faults is I want to cut through it very quickly.

Two each responded that delegation skills and the ability to analyze and organize were the most important. The following were also stated: managerial skills, communication skills, ability to know yourself, background in law, skill to select good personnel, and skills in curriculum.

(b) Which job skills do you wish you had a better "handle" on?

Two responded they wished they had a better "handle" on the area of finance and human relations. The following singular responses were also given: better able to motivate, manipulate and select people; better understanding of learning styles; better delegation skills; better communication skills; better skills in the area of negotiations; and conflict resolution skills.

> Job skills with a better 'handle'--not really
> any. I always had a plan, so I wouldn't get in
> over my head, professionally. My early plan was
> New York City, but everything else went pretty
> much according to plan. (Superintendent 8).

32. In your opinion, did you experience any mental or emotional exhaustion that was related to stress in the superintendency?

Of the 11 superintendents interviewed in the study, five responded "yes," they experienced mental or emotional exhaustion to a high degree as a result of the stress of the superintendency.

> Yes, I felt the build-up of paranoia. I still
> occasionally feel it. When put in situations of
> direct conflict, I feel myself getting physically
> and emotionally up in the air. I imagine things--
> blow it out of proportion. I could have had a
> mental breakdown. I didn't feel it before the
> superintendency, but still at times feel a

> 'conspiracy'. I would jump to conclusions--this
> disabled me from making good decisions, if at
> all. (Superintendent 2).

Two reported it occasionally, and four responded "no," they had experienced no emotional or mental exhaustion related to the superintendency.

33. <u>Do you think you might ever go back to the superintendency?</u> If answer is no, <u>why not?</u> If answer is yes, <u>under what circumstances?</u>

Interestingly enough, six superintendents said "maybe," they would go back. Three reported "no," they would not go back under any circumstances.

> No! They couldn't pay me enough! I'm no
> longer interested in the challenges that are
> there. I have a preference to shift gears down-
> ward at this time. No way will I ever go back.
> I don't want to go full bore. I don't have the
> reserves any more. (Superintendent 7).

One person responded "yes," he was planning on going back to the superintendency--he is currently an assistant superintendent and plans to move into the position of superintendent at a later date. Those that responded "maybe" or "yes" about going back to the superintendency indicated the following conditions would have to be met: five responded that they would look at the quality of the board--the board would need to know who would make the decisions; two would make sure there were no financial problems in the district, as they had experienced enough of them; and one would look for a superintendency only in a vocational district because he perceived the pressures and pace there at a greatly reduced level.

This concludes the summary of data obtained from the superin-
tendent interviews. A comprehensive list of characteristic terms used
by each superintendent interviewed was developed, and a comparison was
made between those terms and the superintendent burn-out character-
istics derived from the AASA state affiliate executive directors and
presidents (Table 3). This resulted in the final stage of analysis,
which Lofland (1971, p. 7) describes as the "qualitative analysis"
search to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and
patterns found among a set of participants. Each subject's response
pattern was analyzed as to its applicability for being selected into
an identified characteristic or component of a characteristic as
determined by the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presi-
dents' responses (Table 7).

Table 7 contains the 15 characteristics of burn-out as identified
by the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents and the
11 superintendents interviewed who expressed the characteristics of
burn-out. The superintendent was said to have the characteristics of
burn-out only if the attitudes expressed were in very nearly or direct
terminology with those identified by the AASA affiliate executive
directors and presidents, as shown in Table 3. The only exception to
this was characteristic Number 14, "Close to Retirement Age," as super-
intendents interviewed were included as having this characteristic if
at the time they left the superintendency, they were 50 or more years
of age.

Superintendent interview Numbers 1, 2, 5 and 11 were or are going
to leave the superintendency for a career in business. Numbers 3, 6,

TABLE 7. SUPERINTENDENTS INTERVIEWED AND THE BURN-OUT CHARACTERISTICS THEY EXPRESSED

Characteristic Number	Interview Number											Percentage of Superintendents Showing These Characteristics
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1		X				X				X		27%
2		X			X	X			X			36%
3		X			X	X	X		X	X		55%
4		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	73%
5	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			73%
6		X		X	X	X		X	X		X	64%
7	X	X			X	X				X	X	55%
8		X		X		X	X	X	X			55%
9		X		X		X		X	X	X	X	64%
10	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	64%
11		X		X	X	X	X	X		X		64%
12		X		X	X	X		X				45%
13	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		82%
14	X			X			X		X	X	X	55%
15		X				X	X					27%
Percentage of Burn-Out Characteristics Each Superintendent Exhibited	33%	93%	7%	53%	67%	87%	53%	60%	67%	53%	40%	

7, and 10 left the superintendency for another position in education. Superintendents Number 4, 8 and 9 left or are leaving the superintendency but are not sure what they will do in the future. One would like to be a professor in higher education, and the other two would like to get into some aspect of business.

Interestingly, the person showing the least number of characteristics of burn-out was the alternate, Number 3. Three people on the expert panel seemed to have an excellent grasp of burn-out and had a real sense of matching burn-out characteristics with people. Two of the three did not know or were unsure about this individual, Number 3, but one did know him and expressed the comment, "This is not a burn-out." Because this person (Number 3) still came in with a higher frequency from other members of the expert panel, and because it was not completely known if the three persons on the panel mentioned above were really selecting the superintendents exhibiting burn-out characteristics, it was decided to include this individual in the sample to see what his response would be.

This concludes the burn-out data amassed from the AASA affiliate directors and the superintendents interviewed. Chapter IV will include the following four parts: <u>Summary</u>, <u>Conclusions</u>, <u>Recommendations for Practice</u>, and <u>Recommendations for Future Study</u>. In the summary, a comparison of the literature on burn-out will be made with the characteristics of superintendent burn-out as derived from the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents and the superintendents interviewed.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine what impact, if any, the phenomenon of burn-out had on a superintendent's decision to voluntarily leave the superintendency, to either take another position within education or to embark on a new career outside of education.

The first part of the study was to determine if the burn-out syndrome exists among public school superintendents today, and if so, how is superintendent burn-out defined and what common characteristics are found in superintendents experiencing burn-out. This was accomplished by sending a questionnaire to the 49 executive directors and the 49 presidents of the AASA state affiliates across the United States. Sixty-seven percent of the AASA state affiliate directors responded that "yes", there is such a thing as superintendent burn-out. An additional 25% responded "maybe", the phenomenon of superintendent burn-out exists. Only 8% of the total response from the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents said "no"--burn-out does not exist. A composite definition of superintendent burn-out was derived from the total responses of the AASA state affiliate directors as follows:

Superintendent burn-out is the condition or
state when a superintendent has lost enthusiasm,
interest and satisfaction in the job. The
superintendent is no longer able or cares to
cope with the stresses/pressures of the position,
the time demands or the challenges. The super-
intendent is no longer able to respond in a
positive manner to advance the cause of education
and begins to question his/her desire to remain
in the position. The symptoms are both physical
and psychological.

The 98 AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents were
asked to give the common characteristics they thought existed among
superintendents who burn out. The resulting list of 15 common charac-
teristics of superintendent burn-out are shown in Tables 3 and 8 which
appear in Chapters III and IV.

This definition and the 15 characteristics of superintendent burn-
out were then given to an expert panel composed of persons familiar
with superintendents of schools in Ohio. This expert panel was asked
to submit a list of superintendents or former superintendents of public
schools in Ohio who have in the last five years, or are in the process
this year, of voluntarily leaving the superintendency. In addition,
they were to have been no older than 53 before they left the position.
These candidates were to have exhibited several characteristics of a
burned-out superintendent, as defined and characterized by the AASA
state affiliate executive directors and presidents (Table 3). The list
of candidates generated by the expert panel is found in Table 4,
Chapter III.

The ten individuals whose names occurred with the greatest fre-
quency and met the criteria were then given taped in-depth, semi-

structured interviews to ascertain the degree, if any, the phenomenon of burn-out played in their decision to leave the previous superin-tendency. The categories of responses that emerged from the interviews of the superintendents are shown in Tables 7 and 9. A search of the literature on burn-out was also completed, and the results are compiled in Tables 1 and 2.

In this chapter, data from the literature and from interviews with superintendents who comprised the study subjects are analyzed and related to the characteristics of superintendent burn-out, as reported by the executive directors and presidents of the AASA state affiliates (Table 8). Conclusions are drawn relative to each characteristic of superintendent burn-out, and recommendations are made for those persons in executive positions. A section containing recommendations for further study concludes the chapter.

Further Analysis and Summary

Similarities exist between the characteristics and sources of burn-out reported by various authors (Tables 1 and 2) and the characteristics of superintendents expressing burn-out (Table 3). The similarities of the different aspects of superintendent burn-out, as reported by the executive directors and presidents of the AASA state affiliates, and the various authors who have reported on the burn-out phenomenon are illustrated in Table 8.

In the following paragraphs, the similarities that are under-scored in Table 8 are examined to determine the patterns resulting from

TABLE 8. SIMILARITIES OF BURN-OUT
AS REPORTED BY AASA STATE AFFILIATE DIRECTORS AND AUTHORS
(Underscored Denotes Similarities)

1. INABILITY TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES AND MAKE DECISIONS

   - SHIFTS RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWN ACTIONS TO OTHERS, MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING TASK COMPLETED THEN TO TAKE THE TIME TO DO IT RIGHT, CONTINUALLY POSTPONE DECISIONS, LACK INITIATIVE, TRYING TO ACHIEVE TOO MANY TASKS IN AN INAPPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF TIME, FEEL OVERWHELMED SO AVOIDS RESPONSIBILITIES, ALWAYS REACTING, IMPETUOUS ACTIONS, LACK OF FOCUS IN SETTING GOALS, CONSTANT TURMOIL AT WORK.

   - LACK OF ABILITY TO KNOW WHEN IT'S THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PROBLEM, INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE, HESITANT OR RELUCTANT TO MAKE DECISIONS, INDECISIVENESS, INABILITY TO SWITCH GEARS AND ORGANIZE, TASK BECOMES HARDER SO IT'S PUT OFF, PROBLEM SOLVING NO LONGER POSSIBLE, GIVES FEWER RECOMMENDATIONS, UNREALISTIC IN ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS.

2. SHOWS LOSS OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL AND INCREASED WORRY

   - MENTAL DEPRESSION, TENSE, UNABLE TO RELAX, WORRIED, FEELING OF GUILT FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO PERFORM CERTAIN DUTIES.

   - DEPRESSION, EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS, EMOTIONAL LIMITATIONS, MARKED CHANGE IN NORMAL BEHAVIOR, LACK OF SELF CONTROL, LOSS OF PATIENCE, INTOLERANT, HYPER, WAKE UP AT NIGHT WITH JOB ON THE MIND, NERVOUS CONDITION.

3. LOWERED SELF CONCEPT

   - FEELING INSECURE, DETERIORATION OF SELF-CONCEPT, FEAR, LACKING IN SELF CONFIDENCE.

   - FEELING LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR EFFORTS, FRIGHTENED, FEARFUL, FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY, EXPRESSING ANXIETY OR APPREHENSION, QUESTIONS OWN ABILITY, INSECURITY.

4. FEELINGS OF PESSIMISM AND FRUSTRATION

   - PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE, LOST SENSE OF HUMOR, CRITICAL OR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS, CAN'T GET A HUMOROUS OBJECTIVE LOOK AT THEMSELVES, NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD FEDERAL PROGRAMS, FEELING FRUSTRATED THAT COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED.

   - FRUSTRATION WITH SINGLE ISSUE GROUPS, NEGATIVISM, A LOW TOLERANCE FOR FRUSTRATION, NEGATIVE CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AND DISPOSITION, UNABLE TO FIND MANY GOOD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT WORK, SENSE OF FUTILITY.

5. DECREASE IN ENERGY LEVEL

   - TIREDNESS, FEELING WORN OUT, DWINDLING COMPETITIVENESS, DECREASE IN DRIVE AND ENERGY, DECLINE IN TIME AND ENERGY FOR CREATIVE PLANNING, LACK OF ENERGY.

   - SLEEPING MORE THAN USUAL, TIRED, DECREASE IN ENERGY, NONCOMPETITIVE.

6. FEELING ALIENATED

   - WITHDRAWAL, FEELING ISOLATED, PARANOIA, SUSPICION OF OTHERS.

   - LOSING CONTACT WITH CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY, GREAT FEELINGS OF LONELINESS, NOT HUMANISTIC TO OTHERS, PARANOIA.

7. OVERLY CONSCIENTIOUS

   - TRIES TO BE TOO MANY THINGS TO TOO MANY PEOPLE, OVERLY HUMANISTIC, OVERLY SENSITIVE, TENDS TO PERSONALIZE PROBLEMS, BECOMES TOO CLOSE TO THE JOB, GREAT CONCERN FOR COUNTY, STATE, FEDERAL ISSUES AND ORGANIZATIONS, OBSESSED WITH SEEKING SUPPORT OF OTHERS.

   - FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE TO SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS, TAKE THINGS PERSONAL, PERFECTIONISTS, WORKAHOLICS.

TABLE 8.   (Continued)

8. FEELINGS OF ANGER AND RESENTMENT

    - DISGUST, DISCOURAGED, QUICK TEMPER, "SHORT FUSE", PETTISH AT TIMES.

    - BITTERNESS, IRRITABLE, UNCARING, BELLIGERENT, ANGRY.

9. UNDUE PRESSURE FROM COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL BOARD

    - PRESSURE FROM COMMUNITY CRITICISM, CAN'T COPE WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS, DREADS MEETINGS WITH BOARD, HAVING DIVIDED BOARDS, NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS BY SCHOOL BOARD, FAILURE TO GET OR HAVE SUPPORT OF STAFF.

    - FEELING STRESS FROM BOARD AND COMMUNITY, LACK OF SUPPORT FROM BOARD, ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY, EXPERIENCING DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS, HAVING FRACTIONATED BOARDS, DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOARDS OF EDUCATION OR CERTAIN MEMBERS.

10. PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

    - PHYSICAL ILLNESS, MEDICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS ULCERS, HEART ATTACKS, OVER EATING, DRINKING, SMOKING.

    - CHEST PAINS, POOR EYES, ILLNESS, PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS FROM TOO MUCH STRESS, ALCOHOLISM, EXCESSIVE WEIGHT.

11. EXHIBITS LOW LEVEL OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB

    - LACK OF EAGERNESS TO SERVE, LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB, APATHY TOWARDS THE JOB, DECREASE IN COMMITMENT TO POSITION, DISINTERESTED, BOREDOM.

    - LOSS OF INTEREST, ENTHUSIASM, DOESN'T LOOK FORWARD TO GOING TO WORK EACH DAY, LOSS OF ENTHUSIASM, UNENTHUSIASTIC.

12. RIGIDITY TO CHANGE

    - LACK OF OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS, AUTHORITARIAN TYPES NOT OPEN TO CRITICISM AND DIVERSITY OF VIEWS, PREOCCUPATION WITH THE STATUS QUO, UNRECEPTIVE TO INNOVATION AND CHANGE, IGNORES THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

    - MAINTAIN RATHER THAN CHANGE PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES, CAN'T CHANGE WITH THE TIMES, MORE AUTOCRATIC, IMMOBILITY IN THINKING, ATTITUDES AND PHILOSOPHIES NOT COMPATIBLE WITH TODAY'S REALITY.

13. WISHING FOR OR SEEKING ESCAPE VIA ANOTHER JOB OR EARLY RETIREMENT

    - WANTING TO GO TO ANOTHER JOB WITH LESS RESPONSIBILITY - INCLUDING ONE IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY, UNDUE CONCERN WITH EARLY RETIREMENT AS A WAY OUT, FEELING THAT MORE ARE LEAVING AT AN EARLIER AGE AND DESIRE TO ALSO DO SO, FEELING OF BEING IN THE SAME POSITION TOO LONG.

    - DESIRE FOR EARLY RETIREMENT TO DO SOMETHING ELSE, TALK AND THINK MORE ABOUT RETIRING EARLY, DESIRE TO "RIDE OUT" PRESENT CONTRACT, SEEK A POSITION WITH LESS RESPONSIBILITY, GIVING MUCH CONSIDERATION TO ANOTHER TYPE OF WORK, EXPERIENCING DISSATISFACTION WITH JOB, FIND WAYS TO BE OUT OF THE DISTRICT, CAN'T WAIT TO GET AWAY TO A MEETING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT, EXPERIENCING MUCH PROFESSIONAL UNHAPPINESS.

14. CLOSE TO RETIREMENT AGE

    - LESS THAN FIVE YEARS BEFORE RETIREMENT, TRY TO "HANG ON" UNTIL RETIREMENT, TENDENCY TO LIVE IN THE PAST AND DISCUSS PAST ACHIEVEMENTS.

    - GRAY HAIR, APPROACHING THE LAST 10-15 YEARS OF THEIR CAREER IN EDUCATION.

15. DECREASE IN OR LACK OF SPECIFIC JOB SKILLS

    - DIMINISHED PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS, INABILITY TO RELATE TO OTHERS.

    - LACK OF DIMINISHED HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS, BUSINESS SKILLS, TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS, DELEGATING SKILLS, PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS, COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

the literature, the responses of the AASA state affiliate directors and
presidents, and the superintendents interviewed as they relate to the
phenomenon of the burn-out syndrome. As noted before, if the term
"AASA affiliate directors" is used, it refers to the AASA affiliate
executive directors and presidents, and the term "superintendents"
refers to the 11 superintendents or former superintendents of schools
interviewed.

1.   Inability to Establish Priorities and Make Decisions

Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 1-3, 16, 19) list "inability to make
decisions" as one characteristic of burn-out. In addition, they
indicate that "problem-solving is no longer possible"; and list "lack
of focus" as another characteristic of burn-out. Cherniss (1978, p. 6)
uses the term "blaming others," which is similar to "shifts responsi-
bilities of own action to others," which is found in Table 8.
Freudenberger (1977, p. 27) and Mattingly (1977, p. 134) use the
statement "more effort but accomplishing less" that is similar to
"feels overwhelmed so avoids responsibility," as reported by the AASA
state affiliate directors.

Ricken (1980, p. 21) indicates "hesitant or reluctant to make
decisions" as one of the traits; this corresponds to what presidents of
the AASA affiliates reported. Skinner (1979, p. 9) uses the term
"work-avoider"; this corresponds to "task becomes harder so it's put
off," as reported by the state affiliate presidents.

This characteristic, identified by the AASA state affiliate
executive directors and presidents, is documented in the literature

usually as it relates to the person's job role and ranks in the lower half of characteristics of burn-out identified by the various authors. Twenty-seven percent of the superintendents interviewed indicated a lack of focus in setting goals and spoke of the increasingly difficult problem they were having in making decisions. This relative low percentage (27%) would place that characteristic at the bottom of the list with superintendents interviewed, rather than at the top as indicated by the AASA state affiliate directors.

2. Shows Loss of Emotional Control and Increased Worry

Skinner (1979, p. 8) uses the characteristic, "shows loss of emotional control," as one of the major characteristics of burn-out. McCann (1980, pp. 1-3) speaks of mental depression and emotional symptoms--two components found in the AASA state affiliate responses. Spaniol and Caputo (1979, p. 15) use the term "psychologically harmful"; they also indicate worriedness and guilt (p. 16) as major character- istics of burn-out. Cherniss (1980, p. 71) and Maslach (1978, pp. 113-114) speak of "emotional exhaustion" which corresponds closely to "emotional symptoms" found in the AASA characteristics. Maslach (1977, p. 4) writes of mental illness as a burn-out characteristic. Mattingly (1977, p. 134) also uses the term "worried" as one of the characteristics she sees in burned-out personnel.

Again, the literature substantiates this characteristic as deter- mined by the AASA state affiliates and places it in the top third of the authors responses of burn-out. The AASA state affiliate directors in their responses from the questionnaire indicate a high ranking for this

characteristic; however, of the 11 superintendents interviewed, only four gave responses that would warrant their inclusion in this category.

3. Lowered Self Concept

"Loss of or low morale" is the term used by Maslach (1977, p. 4), Freudenberger (1977, pp. 26-27), Seiderman (1978, p. 7) and Veninga (1979, p. 7). Cherniss (1978, p. 6) uses the term "decline in self esteem." Both terms correspond closely to "lowered self concept" as derived from the AASA state affiliate directors.

McCann (1980, p. 16) uses the same term "lacking in self confidence" and Mattingly (1977, p. 134) writes about "self doubt" as major characteristics of burn-out. Skinner (1979, p. 8) and Lagana (1979, p. 2) use the term "see self as failure," which corresponds closely with "feelings of inferiority" that the AASA state affiliate directors report as a characteristic of superintendent burn-out.

Fifty-five percent of the superintendents interviewed in the study indicated they felt insecure, had lost much of their self confidence, questioned their own ability and generally did not feel appreciated for their efforts. This response rate corresponds closely to that reported by the AASA state affiliate directors and the literature on burn-out.

4. Feelings of Pessimism and Frustration

Skinner (1978, p. 8), McCann (1980, p. 15), Freudenberger (1977, p. 26), Edelwich (1980, p. 42) and Veninga (1979, p. 7) use the term "frustration" as one of the characteristics observed in burn-out.

Maslach (1976, p. 20), Perlman and Hartman (1980, pp. 4-5), Lagana (1979, p. 12) and Skinner (1979, p. 8) use the term "negative attitude," which corresponds with several responses given by the AASA state affiliate directors.

Freudenberger (1977, p. 26) and Cherniss (1978, p. 6) speak of "negativism," which is very similar to a "negative attitude." Mattingly (1977, p. 131) uses the term "unable to find many good things about work," which is also reported by the AASA state affiliate directors. Storlie (1979, p. 2108) uses the term "resigned" instead of "sense of futility" as a characteristic.

Seventy-three percent of the superintendents interviewed indicated they were very frustrated, felt very negative, felt a sense of futility and could find very few good things to say about the superintendency. This is a slightly higher response rate than reported by the AASA state affiliate directors and writers on burn-out.

5. Decrease in Energy Level

The most frequent term used in the literature is "exhaustion" (Perlman and Hartman, 1980, pp. 4-5) (Maslach, 1977, pp. 3-4 and 1978, pp. 113-114) (Freudenberger, 1974, p. 159 and 1977, p. 90) (Cherniss, 1980, p. 71). Cherniss (1980, p. 6), along with Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 1-3) and McCann (1980, p. 15), use the statement "decline in time and energy for creative planning."

The term "physical exhaustion" is used by Kahn (1978, p. 61) and Lagana (1979, p. 12). "Fatigue" is used by Mattingly (1977, p. 131)

and Spaniol and Caputo (1979, p. 15). "Tiredness" is indicated by Skinner (1979, p. 8) and Pines and Kafrey (1978, p. 504).

The above literature appears to substantiate this characteristic (decrease in energy level) as reported by the AASA state affiliate directors as a major cause of superintendent burn-out. Interestingly, 73% of the superintendents interviewed expressed this characteristic as one of the major reasons they were ready to, or had stepped down from their position. This is the second highest ranking characteristic identified by the burn-out authors.

6. Feeling Alienated

"Alienation" is a characteristic Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 16-17) have found in people who have burned out. "Withdrawal" (Mattingly, 1977, p. 131) (Lagana, 1979, p. 12) (Freudenberger, 1977, pp. 26-27) is a common term used in burn-out literature that corresponds very closely to that reported by the AASA state affiliate directors. "Paranoia" is similar to "feels everyone is out to screw him" as reported by Freudenberger (1977, pp. 26-27).

McCann (1980, p. 15) writes about "suspicion of others" which is "paranoia". "Losing contact with close friends and family" is reported by Maslach (1977, pp. 3-4), Cherniss (1980, p. 71) and McCann (1980, p. 16) as a burn-out characteristic.

Gillespie and Cohen (1980, p. 4) use the term "great feelings of loneliness" as a descriptor of burn-out. Rather than "not humanistic to others" (as reported by the AASA state affiliate directors), Maslach (1977, pp. 3-4) uses the term "dehumanized".

The characteristics "feeling alienated" and "withdrawal" were separated in the literature (Table 1). The characteristic "feeling alienated" was considered affective-cognitive, while the characteristic "withdrawal" was placed in the behavioral category (Table 1). If not separated, the characteristics rank high in the literature (Table 2) and in the response rate from the AASA state affiliate directors (Table 3). Of the superintendents interviewed for the study, 64% reported they were paranoid, felt isolated, and felt they had or were losing contact with close friends or family. AASA state affiliate directors and superintendents interviewed response rates for this item were about the same, which indicates it ranks in the top third of characteristics of superintendent burn-out.

7. Overly Conscientious

Mattingly (1977, p. 133) uses the term "becoming too close to the job." She also reports that "potential burn-out can be signaled by the person who begins to merge himself and his life with the institution," (1977, p. 133). She speaks of overestimation as the loss of trust in other members of the working team in the assumption of a self suffi-cient attitude that really "I can do it better than anyone else," or "if I want it done right, I'll have to do it myself."

The term "workaholics" used by a president of an AASA state affil-iate is similar to "I'm going to succeed even if it kills me," reported by Veninga (1979, p. 7). "Feel like they have to solve all the pro-blems" is illustrated also by Veninga (1979, p. 7) when he writes a common attitude is "trust only yourself."

AASA state affiliate directors responded to this with about the same frequency as the superintendents who were interviewed (55%). They responded that they were personalizing problems, workaholics, and trying to be everything to everybody, and it wasn't working out for them at all. This is the group, Freudenberger (1977, p. 27) describes as the dedicated, need for control, authoritarian or committed (work is everything) person who takes on too much, too often, too intensely, who often burns out.

8. Feelings of Anger and Resentment

Spaniol and Caputo (1979, p. 18) report a characteristic they labeled "anger and resentment." Freudenberger (1975, pp. 78-79) uses the term "discouraged" as a characteristic of burn-out. "Quick temper" is also reported by Freudenberger (1977, p. 26) and Lagana (1978, p. 12).

"Pettish at times" is a term reported by the AASA state affiliate directors and is similar to Seiderman's (1978, p. 7), "irritable and petty arguments," which he reports is a characteristic of burn-out. Storlie (1979, p. 2108), Maslach (1977, pp. 3-4), and McCann (1980, p. 15) use the term "irritable" as a characteristic of the burn-out phenomenon.

"Uncaring" is the term Lagana (1978, p. 12) and Maslach (1977, pp. 3-4) use. Skinner (1979, p. 8) uses the term "we just don't care anymore," as a characteristic of burn-out. McCann (1980, p. 15) and Cherniss (1978, p. 6) report that a burned-out person is "angry" about many of the things that are happening to him.

Fifty-five percent of the superintendents interviewed said they felt discouraged, had a quick temper, were irritable and just didn't

care anymore. This response rate is about the same as that given by
the AASA state affiliate directors when they responded to the charac-
teristics exhibited by superintendents who burn out. Burn-out writers
emphasize this item as a burn-out characteristic.

9. Undue Pressure from Community and School Board

Seiderman (1978, p. 7) reports "staff members will usually unite
in their criticism of administration." Other than this statement, which
does not correspond very closely, nothing in the literature would indi-
cate this as a characteristic of burn-out. So it appears to be unique
to superintendents, but very important. Sixty-four percent of those
interviewed reported the pressure from the community and that exerted
by the school board was or had made their life miserable. Most
reported they had "good" boards when they first started the position,
but with new board members being elected, they dreaded meetings, had
fractionated boards, and found an increasing deterioration of rela-
tionships with certain members on the board.

The importance of this characteristic on the superintendent's
decision to leave the superintendency needs to be stated. In some
cases, the pressure from the community and school board appears to
accelerate characteristics of superintendent burn-out. It's also
possible that the other characteristics have been the original cause of
the pressure exerted from the community and school board.

In the 1979-80 school year, 61.3% of the superintendents in the
United States reported the relationship with the school board was
excellent--almost no problems, and 32.4% reported the relationship was
good, but with a few problems (AASA, 1980, p. 9). This would indicate

that the majority of superintendents had little problems getting along with their boards of education, while many of the superintendents interviewed for the study viewed it as a major problem.

10. Physical Symptoms

Most writers on burn-out agree that this characteristic is of major importance in characterizing the phenomenon. Spaniol and Caputo (1979, p. 17) and Kahn (1978, p. 61) write of the specific symptoms of "insomnia," "migraine headaches," and "ulcers." Maslach (1977, pp. 3-4), McCann (1980, p. 15), and Cherniss (1980, p. 71) use the term "physical illness" or "physical symptoms from too much stress."

A surprisingly high percentage (64%) indicate this characteristic was a reason they want out of the position of the superintendency. Chest pains, heart problems, headaches, etc. are common. For relatively young men (average age of 47.9), many of them express the desire to "get out while I still have my health." Many attributed the stresses and pressures of the job as having an adverse affect on their health. The AASA state affiliate directors also report this same characteristic but not in as high a frequency as the superintendents interviewed for the study. As previously stated, writers of burn-out rank this item close to the top in its importance as a characteristic of burn-out.

11. Exhibits Low Level of Enthusiasm for the Job

Several terms or phrases are used to label this characteristic. Spaniol and Caputo (1979, p. 19) use "low level of enthusiasm" instead of "exhibits low level of enthusiasm for the job," as identified by the

AASA state affiliate directors. Edelwich.(1980, p. 14) and McCann
(1980, p. 15) use "loss of enthusiasm" for the same characteristic
previously mentioned. Rather than the term "apathy," Cherniss
(1978, p. 6) uses "decline in motivation." "Boredom" is the term used
by McCann (1980, p. 15), Bies and Molle (1980, pp. 32-33), Ricken (1980,
p. 21) and Seiderman (1978, p. 7).

Of the 11 superintendents interviewed for the study, 64% of them
gave responses that would put them in this category. They expressed
lack of interest for the position, boredom, and a loss of enthusiasm
and interest as a factor in their negative feelings about the superin-
tendency, resulting in their desire to leave the position. The high
response for this characteristic by the superintendents interviewed
would place it in the top one-third of the characteristics, rather than
in the bottom one-third, as determined by the response rate of the AASA
affiliate directors (Table 3). In the summary of the burn-out liter-
ature, this item appears in the bottom half in rankings of this charac-
teristic (Table 2). In the literature summary, "boredom" and "apathy"
are listed separately, which, if added together, would raise the
ranking in the literature significantly.

12. Rigidity to Change

This term is used by Cherniss (1978, p. 6) and Mattingly (1977,
pp. 131-132). "Rigid and inflexible attitudes" is the term indicated
by Freudenberger (1975, p. 90) and Seiderman (1978, p. 6) as a major
characteristic in determining if someone is burned out. Spaniol and
Caputo (1979, p. 21) indicate a "lack of openness to new ideas," which

corresponds closely with the characteristic as defined by the AASA state affiliate directors' responses.

A smaller percentage (45%) of the superintendents interviewed exhibited this characteristic. Fewer AASA state affiliate directors responded that "rigidity to change" was a characteristic of burn-out. However, the literature on burn-out would indicate that "rigidity to change and loss of flexibility" is a high-ranking characteristic of burn-out (Table 2).

13. <u>Wishing for or Seeking Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement</u>

The literature substantiates this characteristic as a response to burn-out as follows:

Maslach (1977, p. 7) reports, "A common response to burn-out is to quit and get out, either by changing jobs, moving into administrative work, or even leaving the profession entirely." Seiderman (1978, p. 6) speaks of "high staff turnover" as a result of burn-out. "Desire to leave job" is the term used by Pines and Kafry (1978, p. 504) in describing the response to burn-out.

Skinner (1979, p. 9) explains this characteristic as "giving much consideration to another type of work." "Experiencing dissatisfaction with job" is the way Cherniss (1980, p. 71) illustrates it. Seiderman (1978, p. 7) writes that "repeated lateness" and "increase in absenteesism" is the beginning stage of this characteristic.

With the superintendents interviewed, 82% of them exhibited this characteristic. However, this could be expected, as leaving or having left the superintendency was one of the criteria used in selecting the

sample for the study. Those superintendents showing this characteristic talked about "riding out" the present contract, experiencing severe dissatisfaction with the job, finding ways to be out of the district, wishing they were currently in another position, or talking about the one they are in now as a much better position (if they had already left). According to the authors of burn-out, this item would rank in the lower half of importance of characteristics of burn-out.

14. Close to Retirement Age

This characteristic is not substantiated in the literature on burn-out. In fact, Cherniss (1980, p. 72) reports that burn-out is found not only in older people, but also in younger people, specifically, those who have finished their training and are in their first jobs.

Fifty-five percent of the superintendents interviewed were 50 or older when they left the superintendency, and if so, they were included in this characteristic. AASA state affiliate directors reported persons meeting this characteristic had 10-15 years left in their career in education. Many superintendents are eligible to retire after 30 years of service in education and retire in their early 50's. However, some presidents and executive directors responded that age was not necessarily a factor in persons experiencing burn-out characteristics. AASA (1980, p. 3) indicates for the 1979-80 school year, 69% of the superintendents were 45 years old or older. Forty-seven percent of them were 50 years of age or older. Approximately, one-half of the practicing superin- tendents in the United States would fall into this group, so that might

explain the higher number of age-related responses from the AASA state affiliate directors who work with the public school superintendents.

15. Decrease in or Lack of Specific Job Skills

Little is reported in the literature about this characteristic of burn-out. However, the "inability to relate to others" is reported by Maslach (1978, pp. 113-114) as a contributor to burn-out. "Poor communication skills" is cited by Gillespie and Cohen (1980, p. 7), and "lack of skill-based training" is reported by Spaniol and Caputo (1979, p. 11).

Only 27% of the 11 superintendents interviewed showed signs of this characteristic. They spoke of losing effectiveness in their human relations and public relations skills. The few superintendents expressing this characteristic corresponds to the low response rate as reported by the AASA state affiliate directors.

A comparison of the responses from the superintendents interviewed with the AASA affiliate directors indicates that the superintendents exhibit the characteristics identified by the AASA state affiliate directors. The two groups, differ, however, in the ranking of the 15 characteristics of superintendent burn-out, as shown in Table 9. The ranking in Table 9 is derived from the percentage of superintendents expressing burn-out characteristics, as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 9. COMPARISON OF RANKINGS FOR THE BURN-OUT CHARACTERISTICS

(Numbers Within each Bracket Received Equal Number of Responses)

Characteristic	Superintendents Interviewed Ranking	AASA Affiliate Directors Ranking
Wishing for or Seeking Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement	1	13
Feelings of Pessimism and Frustration	2 ⎤	4
Decrease in Energy Level	3 ⎦	5
Feeling Alienated	4 ⎤	6
Undue Pressure from Community and School Board	5	9
Physical Symptoms	6	10
Exhibits Low Level of Enthusiasm for the Job	7 ⎦	11
Lowered Self Concept	8 ⎤	3
Overly Conscientious	9	7
Feelings of Anger and Resentment	10	8
Close to Retirement Age	11 ⎦	14
Rigidity to Change	12	12
Shows Loss of Emotional Control and Increased Worry	13	2
Inability to Establish Priorities and Make Decisions	14 ⎤	1
Decrease in or Lack of Specific Job Skills	15 ⎦	15

In Table 9, the highest ranking characteristic was, as expected, Number 13--"Wishing for or Seeking Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement." All superintendents interviewed were selected because they recently vacated or are currently in the process of stepping down from the position of the superintendency. Characteristic Number 4, "Feelings of Pessimism and Frustration," and Characteristic Number 5, "Decrease in Energy Level," ranked higher with the superintendents interviewed than with the AASA state affiliate directors. The literature would indicate a higher ranking of these two characteristics--comparable with the superintendents interviewed. Characteristic Number 1, "Inability to Establish Priorities and Make Decisions," ranked high on the AASA state affiliate responses, but very low in the responses of the superintendent interviews. This could be the result of an ease for the superintendents interviewed to speak about general goals for the district but difficult for an interviewer to ascertain whether specific personal and organizational goals, as well as ability to make decisions and establish priorities, were minimal or lacking.

The last characteristic, Number 15--"Decrease in or Lack of Specific Job Skills," was ranked low in the responses of both the superintendents interviewed and the AASA state affiliate directors. Characteristic Number 1--"Inability to Establish Priorities and Make Decisions" and Characteristic Number 2--"Shows Loss of Emotional Control and Increased Worry," ranked lower with the superintendents interviewed. Both the responses of the AASA state affiliate directors and the authors in the field would appear to rank these characteristics much higher.

The number of superintendents showing different characteristics of burn-out varied. Ten of the 11 superintendents interviewed exhibited

from 33% to 93% of the 15 characteristics of burn-out, as identified in the study. One superintendent exhibited 14 out of the 15 character- istics (Table 7), or 93% of all characteristics identified in superin- tendent burn-out. One superintendent exhibited only one characteristic, or 7%, and this was the result of a divorce which was reflected in Characteristic Number 6, as "losing contact with close friends and family." The average number of characteristics exhibited by the 11 superintendents interviewed in the study was eight, or 53%, of the 15 characteristics. Any one or a combination of several characteristics appeared to impact on the superintendent's decision to leave the superintendency for some other position.

In looking at the 15 characteristics of superintendent burn-out, the composite definition of superintendent burn-out takes on more mean- ing. It is important to remember that no superintendent interviewed was asked to define the term "burn-out"; rather they were asked questions relating to the characteristics of superintendent burn-out as derived from the AASA state affiliate directors. The directors were, in addition, asked to define the term, and it should be reported that no author of burn-out defined the term in exactly this way. However, in analyzing the term as derived from the AASA state affiliate directors, some simi- larities exist. For example, Daley (1979, p. 375) defines burn-out as "a relation to job-related stress that leads the person to become emotionally detached from the job and might ultimately lead the indi- vidual to leave the job altogether." This corresponds closely to that part of the definition derived from the AASA state affiliates' responses

stating "superintendent burn-out occurs when a superintendent has lost enthusiasm, interest and satisfaction in the job," is "no longer able or cares to cope with the stresses/pressures of the position," and "begins to question the desire to remain in the position." Cherniss (1980, p. 71) also defines burn-out as "a reaction to a stressful job."

Gillespie (1980, p. 7) says burn-out might be triggered by an incident, or can be precipitated over a period of time. This might be the stress/pressure of the position that was previously mentioned. Maslach (1976, p. 20) indicates "the loss of optimistic feelings or negativism," which corresponds to the part of the definition of super-intendent burn-out relating to "no longer able to respond in a positive manner to advance the cause of education," and "when a superintendent has lost interest and satisfaction in the job."

In defining burn-out, Kahn (1978, p. 61) and Spaniol and Caputo (1979, pp. 1-3) indicate "uncomfortable physical and emotional symptoms --ranging from exhaustion and insomnia to migraine headaches and ulcers." This corresponds closely to "symptoms are both physical and psychological" found in the definition of superintendent burn-out as derived from the AASA state affiliate directors' responses. This same definition of superintendent burn-out also includes an element of the four stages of burn-out described by Edelwich (1980, p. 42) as: "enthusiasm, stagnation, frustration and apathy." The definition of superintendent burn-out also includes an element of "exhaustion" as used in definitions by Freudenberger (1974, p. 159 and 1977, p. 90) and Mendel (1979, p. 75). Exhaustion corresponds to the definition of superintendent burn-out, which states, "the superintendent is no longer

able to cope" or "respond." "Negative attitudes" and "lowered job per-
formance" (Perlman and Hartman, 1980, pp. 4-5) are also implied com-
ponents found in the definition of superintendent burn-out.

Burn-out is a very individual phenomenon; it is easier to observe
and to describe than it is to define (Edelwich, 1980, pp. 13-14). What
burns out one superintendent will be a stimulating challenge for the
next and can be reflected in the reason the individual chose the pro-
fession, whether it be for financial, status-related, or emotional
reasons (Daley, 1979, p. 446). How much frustration the superin-
tendents feel in completing their jobs and how much tolerance they show
for uncertainty and ambiguity, as well as how they deal with role
conflict in the position determines, in part, their burn-out rate. In
addition, superintendents practice in the proverbial "pressure-cooker"
located in a "fish bowl" world of the chief administrators of public
schools which also affects the burn-out rate. For each of the 11
superintendents interviewed in the study, no one would probably fit the
entire definition of superintendent burn-out, but the definition, as
derived by the AASA state affiliate directors, would appear to fit the
majority of those superintendents interviewed. None of the definitions
of burn-out found in the literature encompasses completely the condi-
tions found in superintendents experiencing burn-out. No other burn-out
population that has been studied work with boards as superintendents do,
nor do they have to sustain community support for their institutions as
do public school superintendents. This distinction would indicate a
substantial difference in the conditions and/or circumstances within

which burn-out is likely to be experienced by school superintendents in contrast to other professionals.

Superintendent Number 2 exhibited 14 of the 15 characteristics of burn-out, followed closely by Superintendent Number 6 who exhibited 13 characteristics. Superintendents Number 5 and 9 exhibited ten of the 15 characteristics of burn-out, while Superintendent Number 8 exhibited nine characteristics. Numbers 4, 7, and 10 exhibited eight character-istics of burn-out, as identified by the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents. Superintendent Number 11 had six character-istics and Superintendent Number 1 exhibited five. The least number of characteristics of burn-out exhibited was one, found in Superintendent Number 3.

The response patterns of burn-out characteristics in Table 7 indicate few differences between Superintendents Number 1, 3, 5, and 11, who left the superintendency for a career outside of education, and Numbers 3, 6, 7 and 10, who left the superintendency but took another position in education. Superintendents Number 4, 8, and 9 had left or were leaving the superintendency but were not sure what they would be doing in the future.

Superintendents Number 1, 2, 5, and 11 exhibited as a group 35 characteristics of burn-out, while Numbers 3, 6, 7 and 10 exhibited 30 characteristics. The last group included Superintendent Number 3, who exhibited one characteristic of burn-out. If, with only one characteristic, Superintendent Number 3 was not considered in the grouping, no appreciable difference is found between those superin-tendents who left for a career outside of education and those who remained in education but took a position other than the superintendency.

The group of superintendents who left the field of education had three characteristics in common. These common characteristics were Number 5--"Decrease in Energy Level," Number 7--"Overly Conscientious," and Number 10--"Physical Symptoms." Excluding Superintendent Number 3, those three superintendents who remained in education but took a position other than the superintendency had two burn-out characteristics in common, Number 11--"Exhibits Low Level of Enthusiasm for the Job" and Number 13--"Wishing for or Seeking Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement." No other patterns in types or numbers of characteristics appear to distinguish these two groups of superintendents from each other.

The average number of students in each district represented by the superintendents interviewed was 7,086. Superintendents Number 1, 8, 10 and 11 come from districts of 7,000 or more students. The average number of characteristics of burn-out shown by this group was seven characteristics. Superintendents Number 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 came from districts of 7,000 or less students and exhibited an average of 9.1 characteristics. If Superintendent Number 3, with only one characteristic, is not included, the average is a high 10.5 characteristics of burn-out exhibited by the superintendents from smaller districts. This group of superintendents (Numbers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9) had one characteristic in common, Characteristic Number 13--"Wishing for or Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement." Characteristics Number 3--"Lowered Self Concept," 4--"Feelings of Pessimism and Frustration," 5--"Decrease in Energy Level," 6--"Feeling Alienated," 8--"Feelings of Anger and Resentment," and 11--"Exhibits Low Level of Enthusiasm for

the Job," were found in five of the six superintendents from districts with 7,000 or less students. This same group of superintendents, Numbers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 came from three city districts, two county districts and one exempted village district. Superintendents from 7,000 or over students (Numbers 1, 8, 10 and 11) came from three city districts and one county. The four superintendents from the larger districts, 7,000 or more students, exhibited fewer characteristics of burn-out (seven rather than 10.5) and had no characteristics of burn-out in common with each other. However, Characteristics Number 5--"Decrease in Energy Level," Number 7--"Overly Conscientious," Number 9--"Undue Pressure from Community and School Board," Number 10--"Physical Symptoms," Number 13--"Wishing for or Seeking Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement," and Number 14--"Close to Retirement Age," were found in three of the four superintendents from districts of 7,000 or more students.

The two groups of superintendents, ranked by number of students in the district, had only one characteristic of burn-out in common, Number 5--"Decrease in Energy Level." Those superintendents from districts of less than 7,000 students had characteristics in common, such as "lowered self concept," "feelings of pessimism and frustration," "feeling alienated," "feelings of anger and resentment," and "exhibited low level of enthusiasm for the job." The superintendents from districts of over 7,000 students exhibited characteristics in common, such as "overly conscientious," "undue pressure from community and school board," "physical symptoms," "wishing for or seeking escape via another job," or "early retirement and close to retirement age." The

superintendents from the districts of 7,000 students or less had more characteristics in common in the realm of affective-cognitive, focusing on attitudes and feelings; while the superintendents from the districts of over 7,000 students appeared to have more in common regarding characteristics dealing with the physiological and behavioral symptoms of burn-out (Table 1).

The most common characteristic exhibited by all 11 superintendents was Number 13--"Wishing for or Seeking Escape Via another Job or Early Retirement," followed by Number 4--"Feelings of Pessimism and Frustration," Number 5--"Decrease in Energy Level," Number 6--"Feeling Alienated," Number 9--"Undue Pressure from Community and School Board," Number 10--"Physical Symptoms" and Number 11--"Exhibits Low Level of Enthusiasm for the Job." The least common characteristics exhibited by the superintendents were Numbers 1--"Inability to Establish Priorities and Make Decisions" and 15--"Decrease in or Lack of Specific Job Skills" (Table 9).

The average age of the superintendents interviewed was 47.9 years when they left the superintendency. Superintendent Number 2, who exhibited the most characteristics of burn-out, was 41 years of age, followed by Superintendent Number 6, who was 44. Superintendents Number 5 and 9 exhibited the same number of characteristics and were 39 and 53 years of age. The next highest number of characteristics was found in Superintendent Number 8 who was 47. The five superintendents who exhibited the highest percentage of burn-out characteristics averaged 44.8 years of age. With the exception of Superintendent Number 3, the five superintendents exhibiting the least characteristics

of burn-out averaged 52.6 years of age. Superintendent Number 3 was 40 years old.

These results would indicate a higher tendency for burn-out if the superintendent was in a district with less than 7,000 students and whose age was in the mid 40's.

Conclusions

Four questions were addressed in the study. In regard to Question Number One, "Does the burn-out syndrome exist among public school superintendents today?," the following conclusions are drawn:

1) Yes, the burn-out syndrome appears to exist among some public school superintendents today as reported by the AASA affiliate executive directors and presidents. Ninety-two percent of those responding felt the burn-out syndrome exists in some degree among public school super-intendents today.

2) Ten of the 11 superintendents interviewed for the study exhibited some of the characteristics of the burn-out syndrome as identified by the AASA state affiliate directors.

The following conclusion is drawn in regard to Question Two, "If the burn-out syndrome exists, how does it evidence itself in the superintendency today?":

The burn-out syndrome appears to evidence itself in the super-intendency today as the condition or state when a superintendent has lost enthusiasm, interest and satisfaction in the job. The superin-tendent is no longer able or cares to cope with the stresses/pressures

of the position, the time demands or the challenges. The superintendent is no longer able to respond in a positive manner to advance the cause of education and begins to question his/her desire to remain in the position. The symptoms are both physical and psychological.

Regarding Question Number Three, "What common characteristics exist among those persons in the superintendency who are experiencing burn-out?," the following conclusion is drawn:

There appear to be 15 common characteristics found in superintendents experiencing burn-out (Table 3, Chapter III), as identified by the AASA state affiliate executive directors and presidents.

The following conclusion is drawn from the fourth question, "How does the phenomenon of burn-out impact on a superintendent's decision to leave the superintendency?":

With four of the superintendents interviewed, burn-out was stated as a major reason they decided to leave the superintendency. With the exception of those four, who said they left because they were burned out, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty why the others left the superintendency--only that they did express some of the characteristics of burn-out, as identified by the AASA affiliate executive directors and presidents.

No conclusions can be reached as a result of this study on the issue of which group, career-bound superintendents or place-bound superintendents, are more prone to burn-out. Carlson (1972, pp. 40-41) states that superintendents promoted from within are called place-bound, and those advanced to the superintendency from outside the containing

organization are called career-bound. Carlson (1972, pp. 140-141) also states that the average time in office for place-bound superintendents is 8.3 years and 4.6 years for career-bound superintendents.

Using Carlson's definition, Superintendent Number Two is the only one interviewed for the study who held only one superintendency, and that was only for a total of four years. If the superintendents interviewed are analyzed in terms of the length of service in the last district, the picture is somewhat different. Six superintendents had spent five or more years in their last superintendency, with one spending 17 years. Five had spent less than five years in the last position, with the shortest tenure being two years.

The evidence from this study is inconclusive on this topic and no conclusion can be reached as to whether place-bound versus career-bound superintendents are more prone to burn-out, or if one has a renewal function that is not found in the other.

Recommendations for Practice

In regard to the conclusions relative to Question One, "Does the burn-out syndrome exist among public school superintendents today?," the following recommendations are offered:

1) School boards may wish to take a serious look at the phenomenon of the burn-out syndrome within their district. If it appears that burn-out is occurring, then the Board may wish to take steps to remedy the conditions that produce burn-out. School board associations, too, may choose to work at building an awareness of the

syndrome with their membership and develop programs to help deal with the superintendent burn-out phenomenon.

2) School boards and consultants who work with districts regarding the employment of superintendents may wish to take note of the burn-out phenomenon and consider the job setting for conditions that might contribute to the burn-out syndrome.

Regarding the conclusions relative to Questions Two and Three, "If the burn-out syndrome exists, how does it evidence itself in the superintendency today?" and "What common characteristics exist among those persons in the superintendency who are experiencing burn-out?", the following recommendation is offered:

If the superintendent exhibits several characteristics of super-intendent burn-out or the person's level of enthusiasm for the job appears to be low, attempts to rejuvenate the person might be employed. It is possible that sending the individual to conferences, workshops, granting a vacation or possibly a short leave of absence might be the answer to the problem. If the school board or the superintendent senses burn-out as a problem in the district, a committee to study the phenomenon might be advised.

The following recommendation is offered in regard to the conclusion relative to Question Four, "How does the phenomenon of burn-out impact on a superintendent's decision to leave the superintendency?":

An understanding and awareness of the phenomenon of burn-out, its characteristics, signs and symptoms appear important to individuals selecting and hiring superintendents. The potential superintendent

might also give careful consideration to the job and assess if what he/she can bring to the superintendency is equal to the demands of that superintendency. Superintendents might attempt to determine what activities provide a renewal function for him/her and others, and, if necessary, modify the organization to provide for this.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. The sample for this study was limited to those superintendents who have decided to leave the superintendency. A similar study utilizing a specific group of superintendents, who have some of the same working conditions but have decided to remain in their position, might be undertaken.

2. A study of middle managers (principals of schools or deans of colleges) might be completed. Such research could be similar to this study but based on responses of burn-out as derived from state or national associations of principals or deans of colleges.

3. Undertake a similar study comparing burn-out of professional groups, executives in business, hospital administrators, professionals in private practice, etc., to determine the similarities and differences of burn-out of executives who work with boards and those who do not.

4. It would be useful to extend this study to other states and their superintendents and make comparisons with this study's results.

5. Utilize state school board association directors to identify the
    characteristics of superintendent burn-out and perform a similar
    study.

6. A set of criteria was used to select superintendents for this study.
    A study of superintendents involving no such limitations and
    employing a control group might provide additional information
    regarding the phenomenon of superintendent burn-out.

7. A study interviewing the superintendent, the superintendent's
    family, school board members, community members, and other admin-
    istrators and teachers as to their perceptions of the character-
    istics the superintendent exhibits might be conducted with
    comparisons made between the groups.

8. A study could be undertaken to develop a selection procedure to be
    used by colleges of education which recognizes potential character-
    istics of superintendent burn-out. This procedure may be used in
    screening and selecting individuals to be trained in administration.

9. Much more research is needed to determine if a burn-out component
    should be included in the training program for administrators.

10. Design an instrument to audit an organization to determine if
    characteristics causing burn-out exist within the organization.

11. A study might be useful to develop an assessment instrument for use
    by persons hiring superintendents. The instrument might determine

potential burn-out problems within a district and determine a match between the potential superintendent and the position.

12. A study to determine the impact of internships, sabbaticals, leaves of absence, personal days, and conferences, workshops, etc., as to whether they might offer a renewal component to the burn-out syndrome, could be an important undertaking.

13. Some superintendents apparently never burn out. A study to determine how they renew themselves or what characteristics they appear to have in common, would complement this study.

14. Design a study to consider using "career phases" as now found in some businesses. Investigate the possibility of allowing super-intendents to move to the top and then move horizontally after they have been there for a period of time. Do superintendents renew and recharge as a result of this change? Investigate the possi-bility of having the superintendent undergo a "tapered retirement" to relieve persons of feeling they must "hang on" until retirement. Rotating superintendents in and out of the superintendency or considering terms for superintendents much like those in the U.S. presidency, might be investigated.

This study was limited by its type. Since it was descriptive, the results were not able to state cause and effect of relationships. In addition, it is possible that all participants did not respond to the questions asked openly and honestly. Because of the size of the sample and the method of choosing those to be interviewed, these findings

cannot be generalized to all superintendents. The phenomenon of burn-out is broad and nebulous. As the search of the literature suggests, what comprises the major characteristics of burn-out remains a matter of some conjecture. It is possible that other dimensions of superin-tendent burn-out escaped undetected in this study.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Materials Sent to the AASA
State Affiliate Executive Directors and Presidents

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SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL OF OHIO

In this day and age, you can hardly pick up a paper or journal without encountering an article on burn-out. At this time, however, very little is known about the phenomenon of executive burn-out in education.

On behalf of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the faculty of Educational Administration at The Ohio State University, and the School Study Council of Ohio, you (being the Executive Director of an AASA state affiliate), are being asked to respond to three questions that relate to a study currently being conducted on superintendent burn-out. Your president is also being asked to respond to the same questions.

You are being asked to help in the development of a definition of the phenomenon of executive burn-out, as well as describing some characteristics of this phenomenon that a burned-out superintendent might exhibit.

All responses will be used to assist us in defining superintendent burn-out and to understand better its characteristics. The definition and the characteristics will then be used in further research on this matter. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Please take a few minutes and define the term as you feel it relates to superintendents. It is very important that you return the attached questionnaire by March 8.

Thank you very much for your assistance with what we believe to be a very important aspect of today's executive life.

Best regards,

Don Unger
Assistant Director,
School Study Council of Ohio

Enclosure

Questionnaire - Superintendent Burn-Out

Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out?   Yes   No   Maybe

If you believe there is such a phenomenon, how do you define superintendent burn-out?

What common characteristics do you think exists among superintendents who burn-out?

OPTIONAL:

Can you suggest some criteria that would be helpful in using to determine if a superintendent is experiencing burn-out?

Any comments you would like to make relating to the phenomenon of burn-out.

Please complete and return in the enclosed envelope by March 8.
Thank you for your consideration.

SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL OF OHIO

In this day and age, you can hardly pick up a paper or journal without encountering an article on burn-out. At this time, however, very little is known about the phenomenon of executive burn-out in education.

On behalf of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the faculty of Educational Administration at The Ohio State University, and the School Study Council of Ohio, you (being the President of an AASA state affiliate), are being asked to respond to three questions that relate to a study currently being conducted on superintendent burn-out. Your Executive Director is also being asked to respond to the same questions.

You are being asked to help in the development of a definition of the phenomenon of executive burn-out, as well as describing some characteristics of this phenomenon that a burned-out superintendent might exhibit.

All responses will be used to assist us in defining superintendent burn-out and to understand better its characteristics. The definition and the characteristics will then be used in further research on this matter. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Please take a few minutes and define the term as you feel it relates to superintendents. It is very important that you return the attached questionnaire by March 12.

Thank you very much for your assistance with what we believe to be a very important aspect of today's executive life.

Best regards,

Don Unger
Assistant Director,
School Study Council of Ohio

Enclosure

Questionnaire - Superintendent Burn-Out

Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out?   Yes   No   Maybe

If you believe there is such a phenomenon, how do you define superintendent burn-out?

What common characteristics do you think exists among superintendents who burn-out?

OPTIONAL:

Can you suggest some criteria that would be helpful in using to determine if a superintendent is experiencing burn-out?

Any comments you would like to make relating to the phenomenon of burn-out.

Please complete and return in the enclosed envelope by March 12. Thank you for your consideration.

APPENDIX B

Responses Received from the AASA
State Affiliate Executive Directors and Presidents

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

⇒ IF YOU BELIEVE THERE IS SUCH A PHENOMENA, HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?

It is the situation where a superintendent is no longer able to give adequate responses to the many demands on him or her.

They become so busy with day-to-day administration, confrontations with exclusive bargaining units, that they begin to give up the battle. Frustrated by the tendency of some school boards to "use" the superintendent between the Board and the staff.

A superintendent who is tired of fighting the battles and is looking for a position outside the superintendency.

Reaching the point where the job is no longer challenging to the extent that the superintendent no longer commits himself to any long-range goals.

I would define superintendent burn-out as that condition or state when a superintendent has lost interest in the job, hates dealing with problems, ceases to meet the job with enthusiasm, and cannot wait until he/she is old enough to retire. In other words, he hates to go to work.

Failure to have the knowledge, intelligence, ability to perform his executive duties.

A feeling of inability to cope, of "being in over your head", of being swamped with problems and details.

When the executive officers loses control of the helm with staff and board and, too often, his own family.

One who has lost the excitement, dynamics and challenges of the position. An individual who is NOT looking forward to tomorrow, or next week, or next year. Rather an individual anxiously waiting for the day to end, or the year to end or to reach retirement. One that no longer cares to cope with the stresses of the position, the time demands of the position and/or the pressures of the position.

When the job is no longer satisfying.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, YES, DEFINITION (CONTINUED)

Loss of enthusiasm, excitement and satisfaction.

On the verge of "throwing in the sponge" due to:
1. Increased militancy of teacher unions, in particular, for increased
    salaries, fringe benefits and demands to have increasing say in
    administrative and managerial functions.
2. Trying to overcome school boards desire to administer rather than
    policy making.
3. Uphold integrity of schools over taxpayer revolt.
4. Deal with pressure groups.

To be a good and successful superintendent, you must have confidence in
yourself and your ability to do the job. Self doubt and inability to get
along with school boards is usually the first sign of burn-out. Without
enthusiasm and self pride in accomplishment, it is very hard to sustain
the drive needed to do the job.

Superintendent burn-out can perhaps best be defined by using the statement
attributed to "The Rose", in the Bette Midler movie of the same name,
(i.e., "She gave...and gave...and gave. Until she had nothing left to
give.").

Superintendent burn-out occurs when the superintendent places himself in an
environment (job situations) whereby he perceives his support system (in-
cluding the Board of Education), his self-concept, his personal ability in
dealing with tasks, and his personal health as not being in a state of
equilibrium with his duties and responsibilities.

The inability of the superintendent to cope with the increasing and varied
number of activities and burdens placed on them by community, board, students
and staff. Community expectations for the superintendent place considerable
stress on the superintendent.

The tiredness, the lack of ability to think incisively, to make the necessary
decisions, to respond without equivocating and the general inability to
function as one has in the past.

A desire to quit because of giving everything and still catching flak from
all sides.

Superintendent burn-out is a process that brings about a mental change in
attitude because of too much outside pressure.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, YES, DEFINITION (CONTINUED)

1. Loss of enthusiasm.
2. No drive.
3. Lack of devotion to education.
4. Total fatigue.
5. Negative attitude.

Superintendent burn-out is the inability to cope with all the burdens placed on them by staff, board and community.

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PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

➡ IF YOU BELIEVE THERE IS SUCH A PHENOMENA, HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUPERINTENDENT
BURN-OUT?

When a superintendent personalizes events to such an extent that his
effectiveness is below what is necessary to progress, he is in deep
trouble. I believe he has lost his thrust - burn-out occurs.

Someone who is tired of working 60+ hours a week to solve society ills
as well as educational problems, only to be blamed for the failure to
solve all the problems.

Superintendent burn-out is best characterized by a "do nothing" chief
school administrator. He can do all routine, non-thinking, non-contro-
versial tasks, but cannot organize the plan, the staff, whatever to do
the task at hand.

The point that is reached when efforts to improve the function and
excellence of the school district is no longer satisfying or exciting
to the superintendent.

Self destruct - YES.

A desire to quit, a feeling of discouragement, symptoms of irritability,
etc., caused by work pressure and inability to make desired changes,
insufficient funding, public disenchantment with schools.

I believe burn-out in any field would be that "state of mind" in which a
sense of futility, lack of control, lack of concentration and lack of
attention to detail are evident in carrying out the duties prescribed.

Not sure of definition. May be different for each individual.

When you don't look forward to going to work each day; when you wake up
several times each night with problems of the job on your mind; when you
talk (and think) more about retiring than you should; when you have chest
pains that require frequent medical check-ups...

A superintendent who fights constantly against federal regulation, a
divided school board - militant teachers, and an unconcerned but demanding
public finally reaches the point of no longer caring about students or the
quality of education. Fighting battles that are lost before the fight
begins finally takes its toll.

PRESIDENTS, YES, DEFINITION (CONTINUED)

...an identifiable behavioral and/or attitudinal change resulting in a
cessation of measurable progress in achieving personal and professionally
oriented goals; coupled with consciousness of the difficulty in making an
effort to perform what were previously routine and normal responsibilities
to a point when such responsibilities may be looked upon as onerous and
unpleasant.

I would define it as mental fatigue resulting from excessive pressure for
extended periods of time.

I believe the definition of the term "superintendent burn-out" would be
evident through physical symptoms and/or observable behavior.

The point of superintendent burn-out has been reached when the superintendent
reaches the conclusion that the battles required to advance the cause of
quality education are not any longer his personal mission.

Don't enjoy job anymore.
Short temper.
Lack of patience.
Bad attitude.
Feeling of why do I do this.

It is a condition that is depressive - the Board is down on the superintendent,
so is the teachers' union and the parents. It is a time when no matter how
much effort is put into a task and how well it turns out, the critics are
there to complain. (When the superintendent goes home, his dog growls and
threatens to bite him).

Superintendent burn-out is a process that brings about a mental change in the
superintendent's attitude which can lead to a change in professions.

Physical and psychological reaction over a period of time to excessive job
demands that do not relate directly the realization of personal or pro-
fessional goals.

The "grinding" process which results in the superintendent becoming physically
and mentally tired; results in discouragement and disillusionment; and a
desire to "resign" from the profession. If that resignation does not occur,
then it is likely to result in that person becoming ineffective.

Loss of enthusiasm, loss of drive, loss of devotion, fatigue, defeated
feeling, total attitudinal breakdown.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   MAYBE

⟹ IF YOU BELIEVE THERE IS SUCH A PHENOMENA, HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUPERINTENDENT
BURN-OUT?

My answer above may be an indicator....I don't know how to define burn-out.

1. Loses drive.
2. No positive thoughts, or few.
3. Enthusiasm lacking.
4. Zest gone.
5. Challenge not there.

Very difficult to pin down to a definition. The job is loaded with con-
frontation - conflicts - decision-making. Some individuals thrive on this.
Others find the pressures of it so exhaustive that it becomes more than they
can take. This is particularly the case if there is a great deal of
adverse criticism and under cutting of their leadership role.

Too many pressures - mostly financial. Costs are mounting - special groups
demanding more services - fewer parents in community.

Don, I suggest you survey those who have left the superintendency within the
past two years - the topic is very complex - in my own case, I left the
superintendency four years ago - "burn-out" is not the right term. I wanted
a university-based position - yet, as I reflect on that job, I was also
ready for an assignment other than another position as superintendent.

I really don't know - probably a general decline in job satisfaction.

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   <u>MAYBE</u>

⇨ IF YOU BELIEVE THERE IS SUCH A PHENOMENA, HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

A state of mind.

Riding the fence, loss of leadership, less active in community functions.

Unhappy with the job - lack of support from staff, public, board.
Thinking about leaving education - just plain tired.

I'm not sure that burn-out is a good description. Some superintendents tend to lose effectiveness after several years in the same district.

A wearing down by the constant pressure and number of no-win situations he/she must deal with.

Loss of interest, drive enthusiasm, etc. are all indicative. However, one must be careful not to attribute the entire problem to the job. A healthy personal life, full of personal satisfaction can do much to maintain one's sanity.

When the frustration level totally exceeds the ability to respond in a positive manner.

When a person just feels that the dead-end road is everywhere. When new things don't work and the status-quo is not acceptable.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

⟹ IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

At least there does not appear to be any in this state. (Postmarked Florida).

I could have responded "yes"; I did respond "no" and I could have responded "maybe" and felt equally as sure of my response for any of the three depending upon what I wanted to understand "burn-out" to mean.
Right now, I believe "burn-out" is being visualized as one of those popular things that a busy executive is supposed to experience because it indicates that the job is tough, that it has certain pressures connected with it and that there are certain frustrations encountered in attempting to meet the expectations of the position.
We could just as easily talk about housewife burn-out, bartender burn-out, farmer burn-out, vacationer burn-out, or even fisherman's burn-out. It's a very popular thing to be a harried, over-worked, underpaid, misunderstood something or other.
I really can't think of many jobs in this day and age that are pressure-less. I think we do ourselves and those with whom we work a disservice by glamorizing the difficulties encountered as "burn-out" when we probably should be directing our efforts toward the positive, rewarding aspects of the positions for which we have professionally prepared ourselves.
Don, the only "burned out" superintendent that I knew was killed in the fire.

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

⟹ IF YOU BELIEVE THERE IS SUCH A PHENOMENA, HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

In my judgment, there is psychology overload, which is transitory with conditions.

(No written response).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

⇒ WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK EXISTS AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS WHO BURN-OUT?

They are older, set in their ways and have a strong tendency to procrastinate on all issues, large and small.

Overly humanistic, very conscientious, take problems personally - try and please all groups.

1. Agnostic.
2. Disgust.
3. Tired.
4. Disinterested in what's going on.
5. Unenthusiastic.

Being subjected to local pressures, community criticisms, etc. over a period of time.
Lowered self concept - loss of confidence in one's ability to set and achieve goals.

1. Depressed.
2. Bitter - cross.
3. Little or no patience.
4. Over eat - drink - smoke - (overweight).
5. Resentful.
6. Loss of a sense of humor.
7. Tense - unable to relax.
8. Withdrawal.

The most important failure to get and have complete support of his entire staff, his administrators, teachers, janitors and cooks. He needs this to get and keep school board and community support.

Fatigue.
Discouragement
Paranoia.

Suspicion of others: staff, peers, board, family. Insecurity, indecisive actions, impetuous actions, quick temper, shift of responsibility for own actions to others, emotional instability, physical illness, great concern for county, state or federal issues and organizations, usually critical or negative attitude toward all of the above. Appearance of boredom.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, YES, CHARACTERISTICS (CONTINUED)

They commence to lack that eagerness to serve--to do that little extra
something required to do a job well. Become more interested in getting
a job or a task completed rather than taking the necessary time to do the
job well. Begins to dread to go to school board meetings (they become
drudgery and work rather than a challenge), begins to divide himself/herself
from his staff--both administrative and teaching--and takes on a negative
disposition rather than a positive one.

They have divided boards.
They are highly motivated and sensitive people.
They have been there for some time.   (All best guesses).

1. Less than five years to retirement.
2. Constant turmoil.
3. Always reacting rather than stimulating.
4. In one position too long.
5. Negative attitude.

See above.   (On the verge of "throwing in the sponge" due to:
            1. Increased militancy of teacher unions, in particular, for
                increased salaries, fringe benefits and demands to have
                increasing say in administrative and managerial functions.
            2. Trying to overcome school boards' desire to administer
                rather than policy making.
            3. Uphold integrity of schools over taxpayer revolt.
            4. Deal with pressure groups.)

Overtired.
Pessimistic attitude.
Lack of enthusiasm and incentive for the job.
Non-renewal of contracts by school boards.
Superintendents transferring to other jobs, including private industry.
Medical problems, including ulcers, heart attacks, mental depression.

The most common characteristics of superintendent burn-out are as follows:
preoccupation with the status quo, undue concern with retirement, unreceptive
to innovation and change, and a sign of dwindling competitiveness coupled
with an aura of insecurity.

1. Deterioration of self-concept.
2. Trying to achieve too many tasks in an inappropriate amount of time.
3. A feeling of guilt in not being able to perform certain duties.
4. A negative attitude toward compliance with federal programs.
5. Pressure of community criticism.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, YES, CHARACTERISTICS (CONTINUED)

Apathy towards the job.
Postpone decisions.
Anger - short fuse.
Withdrawal to the inner circle of friends.

They try to "hang on" until they can retire.
They lack initiative.
They cannot make decisions.
They seek support from others.
They often live in the past and discuss past achievements.
They ignore the present.

Lack of skills, feelings of fatigue, not able to make adequate decisions, loss of interest, enthusiasm, and mad at the world.

Just wanting out and taking everything personal, poor relationships with certain school board members, frustration upon frustration, inflexible to any changes.

Belligerent, frightened, loss of concern for others, does not feel good about his/her work or life.

Impatient.
Intolerant.
Physical and emotional problems.
Inferior feelings.
Can't make decisions.
Always worrying, frustrated and angry.

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

⇨ WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK EXISTS AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS WHO BURN-OUT?

Lack of specific job skills:
   a. Human relations.
   b. Business skills.
   c. Lack of time arrangement.
   d. Lack of delegating skills.

Lack of appreciation for their efforts.

At first bitterness (to staff, board, colleagues, profession, etc.); then frustration with self and others; finally immobility.

Fatigue.

Hy-per.
Alcoholism.
Family problems.
Poor public relations.
Lack of self-control.
Paranoia.

A desire for early retirement, in just to do something else.
Heart attacks, etc. (physical symptoms).
Emotional symptoms.

1. Depression.
2. Negativism.
3. Lack of enthusiasm.
4. Declining ability to concentrate, switch gears and organize.
5. A sense of futility.
6. A sense of "aloneness".

Loss of interest and enthusiasm and energy - irritable.

I probably just listed them - (when you don't look forward to going to work each day; when you wake up several times each night with problems of the job on your mind; when you talk [and think] more about retiring than you should; when you have chest pains that require frequent medical check-ups...). Most often, in several instances that I think of, these people have changed in attitude - from positive to negative. They find all kinds of reasons for being out of their district, and they don't find many good things to say about their work.

PRESIDENTS, YES, CHARACTERISTICS (CONTINUED)

Tired - uncaring - belligerent - frightened - fearful - non-competitive.

Having socially oriented attitudes and philosophies that are not compatible
    with reality.
Unrealistic in establishment of goals.
Impatient.
Hesitant or reluctant to make decisions.
Having a feeling of inferiority.
Minimal effective communication skills.
Having physical or emotional limitations.
Often showing or expressing anxiety or apprehension.
At times intolerant.
At times pettish.

Nervous condition, gray hair, excessive weight and poor eyes.

1. They serve in districts with fractionated school boards.
2. They serve in districts that experience difficult employee negotiations.
3. They tend to be approaching the last ten to fifteen years of their
    career in education.

Ride out my present contract.
Seek a position of less responsibility.
Can't wait to get away to a meeting.

Take things personal.
Do not have the ability to know when it really is the superintendent's problem.
Feel like they have to solve all problems.
Not humanistic.

1. There is a loss of enthusiasm for the position.
2. Tasks become harder; they are put off.
3. There is a change in normal behavior.
4. Much consideration is given to some other type of work.
5. The superintendent questions his own abilities.
6. There is a great feeling of loneliness.

Job dissatisfaction, professional unhappiness, malaise, anger, insecurity.

Deterioration of relationships with certain Board of Education members.
Frustration with dealings involving single-issue groups.
Decline in time and energy devoted to creative planning.
Tendency to maintain instead of change programs and approaches.

PRESIDENTS, YES, CHARACTERISTICS (CONTINUED)

    (a) Type "A" personalities - unwilling to relax or unwilling to be
          without immediate and demanding pressures.
    (b) Inability to say "no" to persons who make requests or demands on
          time of superintendent.
    (c) Inability to shift responsibility to assistants.

Constant mention of retirement, seeming envy of those who have retired,
general persecution complex, pressure, feeling that can please no one.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   MAYBE

⟹ WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK EXISTS AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS WHO
BURN-OUT?

I do know this or at least I think I do....more superintendents seemingly
are leaving their positions at an earlier age.

1. Too close to the job.
2. Fear.
3. Try to be too many things to too many people (impossible).
4. Can't get a humorous objective look at themselves.

Sensitive people essentially lacking in self-confidence. Authoritative
types who are not often to criticism and diversity of views different
from their own. Individuals who lack the essential energy, drive and
commitment to the position. Many uncommon characteristics, such as the
right person in the wrong situation at a particular time.

Poor public relations.
Tired.
Can't cope with all the problems.

(No written response).

Pressure.
Tension.
More to do than one can handle.

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   MAYBE

⟹ WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK EXISTS AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS WHO
BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

Can't change with the times.

Illness, indecisiveness, less visible.
Fewer recommendations.

(No written response).

Cynicism - superintendents become frustrated with regulation, taxpayer
uprisings, unions, etc. and become cynical.
Loss of Enthusiasm - after several years, superintendents may lose
enthusiasm for their job.
Stress - after years of psychological stress, physical problems develop.

No longer look forward to going to work. Irritable about ordinary problems.
A tendency to become more autocratic.

Perfectionists, workaholics, no sense of humor.

Problem solving not possible due to lack of ability or existing conditions.
Low tolerance for frustration.
Lack of system for ventilation of concerns.
Lack of support from: board, administrators and community.

Just being alone at the top of a very busy career.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

⇨ WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK EXISTS AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS WHO
BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

(No written response).

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

⇨ WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU THINK EXISTS AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS WHO BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

(No written response).

(No written response).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

⇒ OPTIONAL: CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN USING TO
            DETERMINE IF A SUPERINTENDENT IS EXPERIENCING BURN-OUT?

Evaluate them on how receptive they are to new ideas, how promptly they
respond to their mail which should be answered and how promptly they make
decisions which should not be postponed.

Can't relax - turns to drinking more "to relax" - avoids tough decisions.

(No written response).

(No written response).

1. Interview - Include if he/she would follow the same professional path
              if they had to do it over.
2. Physical exam.
3. Psychological exam - written or oral.

1. Failure to express appreciation, praise or something to commend each
   individual staff member. Instead of looking for the good first,
   always starting with the critical.

Ask him/her: "How's it going?" If he/she tells you, there is some degree
of burn-out.

A checklist of all the above. (Suspicion of others: staff, peers, board,
family. Insecurity, indecisive actions, impetuous actions, quick temper,
shift of responsibility for own actions to others, emotional instability,
physical illness, great concern for county, state or federal issues and
organizations, usually critical or negative attitude toward all of the
above. Appearance of boredom.). Incidence of divorce or broken families
is very high. Alcoholism, drugs may be used to remove stress which
superintendents feel causes burn-out.

Mental attitude.	Interest in long-range planning.
Social attitude.	PR with general public.
Eagerness to volunteer.	Attendance at school events.
Relationship with staff.	Attitude toward school board.
Professional involvement.	Interest in improving position.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, YES, BURN-OUT CRITERIA (CONTINUED)

(No written response).

(No written response).

No.

(No written response).

Note the answer to question number three above. (The most common characteristics of superintendent burn-out are as follows: preoccupation with the status quo, undue concern with retirement, unreceptive to innovation and change, and a sign of dwindling competitiveness coupled with an aura of insecurity.)

1. Self-assessment appraisals - either through an interview or a written activity - dealing with feelings, attitudes and skills.
2. An appraisal of work behaviors.
3. A review of the effectiveness of the personal support system.

(No written response).

No.

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

⇨ OPTIONAL: CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN USING TO
              DETERMINE IF A SUPERINTENDENT IS EXPERIENCING BURN-OUT?

1. When he/she begins blaming everyone else for problems that they are
   having.
2. Loss of sleep.
3. Irritability.
4. Unable to make decisions.

(No written response).

Loss of humor is usually a symptom which indicates overtiredness, fatigue
and/or burn-out. Loss of purpose, drive, "zest for the job". Absence of
volunteering, absence of meaningful in-service experiences, increased errors,
procrastination, excuses.

Simply ask: What are your immediate and long-range goals and objectives for
              the school district and how do you propose to reach them?
A negative response would be a good indicator.

Behavior patterns. ⎤
Social problems.   ⎟
Family problems.   ⎬   Medical and Other Professional Help
Drinking problems. ⎦

1. Develop a psychological test. Give it to him periodically to detect
   change. Same with a physical exam.
2. Ask his peers and professional colleagues if he is changing.

Solutions: 1. Sharing experiences with other administrators to assist in
               alleviating the feeling of having "all the problems of the
               world".
            2. Stress and time workshops.
            3. A plan of attack to increase optimism.
            4. Means of coping: a) with problems placed at your doorstep.
                                 b) working with people and their problems.

(No written response).

(No written response).

PRESIDENTS, YES, BURN-OUT CRITERIA (CONTINUED)

None - other than observing and looking for some of the traits I list
above. (When you don't look forward to going to work each day; when you
wake up several times each night with problems of the job on your mind; when
you talk [and think] more about retiring than you should; when you have
chest pains that require frequent medical check-ups...   Most often, in
several instances that I think of, these people have changed in attitude -
from positive to negative. They find all kinds of reasons for being out of
their district, and they don't find many good things to say about their work.)

By using appropriate characteristics listed above: (Having socially oriented
attitudes and philosophies that are not compatible with reality, unrealistic
in establishment of goals, impatient, hesitant or reluctant to make decisions,
having a feeling of inferiority, minimal effective communication skills,
having physical or emotional limitations, often showing or expressing anxiety
or apprehension, at times intolerant, at times pettish) - establish an
evaluation instrument that could be used as a self-evaluation with a weighted
scale approach.

(No written response).

1. Results of annual physical examination (overeating, overdrinking, over-
    weight, high blood pressure, etc.).
2. A lessening of enthusiasm for the job, shows less excitement about being
    superintendent--can be observed through behavior at meetings and comments
    made.

Slow down in program development.
Slow down in evaluation of current programs.

(No written response).

The above characteristics. (There is a loss of enthusiasm for the position.
Tasks become harder, they are put off. There is a change in normal behavior.
Much consideration is given to some other type of work. The superintendent
questions his own abilities. There is a great feeling of loneliness.)

Shock therapy?

(No written response).

PRESIDENTS, YES, BURN-OUT CRITERIA (CONTINUED)

(a) Periodic "honest" visit with subordinates to ask for evaluation.
(b) When there is constant (or frequent) practice of taking work home.
(c) Report from wife or other close family member.

Less visibility to public, less accessible to public and to staff, general
beginning of defeated attitude (can't win, can't please, etc. voiced),
outward droop, loss of sharpness, rambling, continued general referral
to past.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT? MAYBE

⇒ OPTIONAL: CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN USING TO
             DETERMINE IF A SUPERINTENDENT IS EXPERIENCING BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

1. Does he initiate new programs and follow them through?
2. Are problems attacked head on and anticipated to a large extent?
3. Can he still delegate?
4. Does he run a tight ship on routine matters or only when something
    comes along?

(No written response).

(No written response).

(No written response).

Everyone is in the process of burning out. Probably it is not curable.

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   MAYBE

OPTIONAL: CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN USING TO
           DETERMINE IF A SUPERINTENDENT IS EXPERIENCING BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

Wants to hang onto job.

I am not sure it is something that can be measured.

(No written response).

Survey of Board of Education regarding superintendent's performance.

(No written response).

Does he look forward to work every day?
Is he/she trying new techniques?

Development of honest peer evaluation system.

(No written response).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   <u>NO</u>

⇨ OPTIONAL: CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN USING TO
             DETERMINE IF A SUPERINTENDENT IS EXPERIENCING BURN-OUT?

(No written response).

(No written response).

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

⟹ OPTIONAL: CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN USING TO
             DETERMINE IF A SUPERINTENDENT IS EXPERIENCING BURN-OUT?

     (No written response).

     (No written response).

     (No written response).

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   YES

⇨   OPTIONAL: ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENA OF
              BURN-OUT.

Superintendents having burn-out should either resign or shape up.

(No written response).

(No written response).

(No written response).

Burn-out may be related to the aging process, however, I have found it
in younger individuals. I believe this area needs to be addressed or many
administrators are and will continue to commit professional suicide.

Failure to realize his success and performance depends on support in the
following order:
   1. Staff.
   2. Community.
   3. School board - school board wants him to succeed - they hired him.

"Burn-out" is relative, both in severity and duration. There are remedies.

Burn-out is not because of chronological age. It occurs when an individual
is in a situation which is beyond his control. The only solution is change
of situation, sometimes a career switch. Too often one burned out in one
situation moves to similar job and finds no relief in the change.

I am convinced that it is a very real and serious problem. Forcing school
administrators to continue in that capacity until age 65 in order to receive
reasonable retirement benefits is a major mistake. It is not good for the
school district or the individual. Thus, provisions should be made
available for early retirement, at age 62 or even age 60, for those who have
"burned-out" at that age.

(No written response).

I don't like the expression "burn-out". It may be a temporary reaction to
constant pressure and a change in environment may be necessary.
We called this being in a rut.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, YES, COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

Probably increasing to the increased external pressures.

(No written response).

None that I have not already made. (Superintendent burn-out can perhaps
best be defined by using the statement attributed to "The Rose", in the
Bette Midler movie of the same name, i.e., "She gave...and gave...and
gave. Until she had nothing left to give."). (The most common character-
istics of superintendent burn-out are as follows: preoccupation with the
status quo, undue concern with retirement, unreceptive to innovation and
change, and a sign of dwindling competitiveness coupled with an aura of
insecurity.)

Due to an increasing complexity in our societal make-up, burn-out is a topic
that deserves and demands an increasing priority in the development of
people.

(No written response).

Burn-out is partially caused by too damn much interference by everyone in
the educational process - federal government, courts, state legislatures,
parents, unions, pressure groups. The only profession that has to let
everyone else run its show!

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   <u>YES</u>

OPTIONAL: ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENA OF
BURN-OUT.

It is an increasingly serious problem as more and more variables spin out
of our control.

I'm only 42, but after 21 years in education (the last 18 as a superintendent),
I am having my doubts. I have more education, work longer hours, and make less
than most management people in private industry.

"Burn-out" is not a typical action. It is caused by overload, inability,
lack of training or experience, or any combination of "too much power in too
small a fuse".

Get me any help you can immediately!

(No written response).

We can't do anything about it in these times. (See - I feel burned out!)

I believe that this phenomena is operable in all fields but is most frequent
in those related to people positions in which the problems of others are
often thrust on another - in this case the superintendent - resulting in an
overload.

(No written response).

I don't think we should be guilty of over-emphasizing this. However, it is
real and should be dealt with by AASA in a logical manner. Boards of
Education don't realize how much pressure they put on superintendents, and
perhaps some helpful information from AASA that we could send to Directors
would be helpful.

It appears that there will be more burned out superintendents before the
phenomena subsides.

WE ALL BURN OUT SOONER OR LATER; SOME SOONER THAN LATER.

(No written response).

PRESIDENTS, YES, COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

I believe the phenomena of burn-out is definitely worth studying.

Deserves further study.

(No written response).

(No written response).

It's not a fun time, and it is not easy to recover from. It is sometimes
fatal - how many of the superintendents that die in office are suicides or
die from a (broken) heart attack? - and almost always occurs to our better
superintendents, not the ones that the profession could do without.

Probably attributed to pressures from above (Board) than from staff, students
or parents.

When an individual is able to "take some kind of action", he feels some
control over his destiny. Without that control, the "burn-out" is likely
to increase. (Additional comment at bottom of page: Sorry for the delay....
I'm waiting on a plane in Washington, D.C. and doing some of the very things
that contribute to burn-out.)

Yes, need to understand that each is human, each can burn-out, but burn-out
is mental. Courage of conviction and willingness to make change (after
recognition of need) helpful.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   MAYBE

⟹ OPTIONAL: ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENA OF
             BURN-OUT.

(No written response).

Yes, I've got it! Also, this is Monday.

The over conscientious individual can burn-out from over-work. The super-
intendent must have a source of renewal including other interests and
associations. The need is imperative to have some person or persons with
whom the superintendent can completely relax (take down his hair). A good
family relationship is important.

(No written response).

Don, I suggest you survey those who have left the superintendency within
the past two years - the topic is very complex - in my own case, I left
the superintendency four years ago. "Burn-out" is not the right term. I
wanted a university-based position, yet, as I reflect on that job, I was
also ready for an assignment other than another position as superintendent.
Why not contact ERS or AASA regarding a research project on this? Sorry,
I'm not much help to you! I'd like a copy of the results of this survey.

(No written response).

<u>PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS</u>

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT? <u>MAYBE</u>

⇒   OPTIONAL: ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENA OF
             BURN-OUT.

I feel that this topic has been blown out of proportion by the teacher's
union. It is basically a "cop out" for those teachers who are unhappy with
salary and working conditions.

(No written response).

I am not sure that there is such a phenomena as burn-out. How about cop-out?
Are we talking about uncontrolled pressure as a result of "stress"?

(No written response).

I don't like the term. I believe stress is a factor, but that longevity often
lessens the effectiveness of CSO's.

I think a more common phenomenon than burn-out is impatience with non-
educational issues which must be dealt with. Too much time with attorneys,
negotiations, and hearing officers. It is increasingly difficult to go home
feeling that you have done anything for kids. When you "win" battles,
winning doesn't seem to do anything for kids.

As I have related above, we need to look at the total person, his <u>family</u>,
hobbies, etc. to assess the effect of the job. There is no doubt that the
superintendency is for a very special kind of person. Perhaps you can
develop some "predictors" for "coping" that will be useful in guiding people
in (or out) of the profession.

The pressures have increased as we all know. However, there has been
little, if any, change in the training or re-training programs. Those
programs must be altered to deal with the reality of today.

It would appear that we aren't alone in this phenomena.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

⟹ OPTIONAL: ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENA OF
              BURN-OUT.

    (No written response).

    (No written response).

PRESIDENTS - STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT?   NO

⇨   OPTIONAL: ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENA OF
              BURN-OUT.

It is a gimmick of NEA for engendering sympathy from the public and
castigating superintendents for poor administrative practices.

(No written response).

(No written response).

APPENDIX C

Materials Sent to the Expert Panel

SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL OF OHIO

April 29, 1980

In this day and age, you can hardly pick up a paper or journal without encountering an article on burn-out. At this time, however, very little is known about the phenomenon of executive burn-out in education.

On behalf of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the faculty of Educational Administration at The Ohio State University, and the School Study Council of Ohio, you are being asked to serve on an expert panel, along with selected members of the faculty of Educational Administration of state institutions in Ohio, the Executive Director of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, and the Executive Director of the Ohio School Boards Association.

You are being asked to submit a list of names of superintendents or former superintendents of public schools in Ohio who meet the following criteria:

1. Has voluntarily or is voluntarily stepping down from the position of superintendency.

2. Is or has done so within the last five years.

3. Has or had at least seven years before retirement age of 60 before this step was taken.

4. Could have retained the current superintendency and could probably take another superintendency elsewhere.

5. Meets some of the characteristics illustrated in the definition of superintendent burn-out. (No one person has all the signs and symptoms of burn-out.)

In March 1980, the 50 executive directors and the 50 presidents of AASA state affiliates were asked to respond to a questionnaire asking for the following information:

(a) Is there such a thing as superintendent burn-out?

(b) If you believe there is such a phenomenon, how do you define superintendent burn-out?

(c) What common characteristics do you think exists among superintendents who burn-out?

Page Two

In addition, two optional questions were asked:

(a)   Can you suggest criteria that would be helpful to
      determine if a superintendent is experiencing burn-out?

(b)   Any comments you would like to make relating to the
      phenomenon of burn-out would be helpful.

The total number of returns was 57 out of 100. For the question, "Is
there such a thing as superintendent burn-out?

            - Those giving the YES response: Executive Directors 17
                                                    Presidents   20
                                                        Total 37

            - Those giving the MAYBE response: Executive Directors   5
                                                    Presidents   10
                                                        Total 15

            - Those giving the NO response: Executive Directors   2
                                                    Presidents   3
                                                        Total 5

The composite definition of superintendent burn-out derived from the
AASA state affiliates is as follows:

        Superintendent burn-out is the condition or state when
    a superintendent has lost enthusiasm, interest and satis-
    faction in the job. The superintendent is no longer able or
    cares to cope with the stresses/pressures of the position,
    the time demands or the challenges. The superintendent is
    no longer able to respond in a positive manner to advance
    the cause of education and begins to question the desire to
    remain in the position. The symptoms are both physical and
    psychological.

Because you are in and have been in a position to observe superintend-
ents, you have been selected to help identify superintendents who meet
the above criteria and exhibit at least several of the listed charac-
teristics. Your responses will be used to assist us in locating and
interviewing ten individuals to attempt to ascertain the degree, if
any, the phenomenon of burn-out played in their decision to leave the
previous superintendency. The top five will be selected in rank order
of those names which occur with the greatest frequency in the following
two areas:

Page Three

    (a) Those who left the superintendency for a career
         outside of education.

    (b) Those who left the superintendency for another
         position within an educational organization.

In summary, the candidates will be superintendents in Ohio who have in
the last five years, or are in the process this year, voluntarily and
prematurely (at least seven years before retirement) left or are
leaving their superintendency either to leave the profession for another
career, or take another position within the profession. These candi-
dates must exhibit several characteristics of a burned-out superin-
tendent.

All responses by you will be kept strictly confidential. Please take a
few minutes and think who might meet the criteria. We would like at
least five names, if possible. More than that number will be useful.
Please return the enclosed sheet or call the names into:

      Roy Larmee, Professor of Educational Administration, O.S.U. -
                 (614) 422-7700
      Luvern Cunningham, Professor of Educational Administration, O.S.U. -
                 (614) 422-7700
      Don Anderson, Associate Dean of Education, O.S.U. - (614) 422-2461
                            or
      Don Unger, Assistant Director, SSCO - (614) 422-1936

It will be most helpful if you can respond by May 10, 1980

Thank you very much for your assistance with what we believe to be a
very important aspect of today's executive life.

                              Best regards,

                              Don Unger
                              Assistant Director,
                              School Study Council of Ohio

Attachments

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPERINTENDENTS EXPRESSING BURN-OUT

(Listed in Order of Frequency of Responses)

1st Line - Executive Directors' Responses
2nd Line - Presidents' Responses

1. Inability To Establish Priorities And Make Decisions (17 Responses)

   - Shifts responsibilities of own actions to others, more interested in getting task completed then to take the time to do it right, continually postpone decisions, lack initiative, trying to achieve too many tasks in an inappropriate amount of time, feel overwhelmed so avoids responsibilities, always reacting, impetuous actions, lack of focus in setting goals, constant turmoil at work.

   - Lack of ability to know when it's the Superintendent's problem, inability to concentrate, hesitant or reluctant to make decisions, indecisiveness, inability to switch gears and organize, task becomes harder so it's put off, problem solving no longer possible, gives fewer recommendations, unrealistic in establishment of goals.

2. Shows Loss Of Emotional Control And Increased Worry (15 Responses)

   - Mental depression, tense, unable to relax, worried, feeling of guilt for not being able to perform certain duties.

   - Depression, emotional symptoms, emotional limitations, marked change in normal behavior, lack of self control, loss of patience, intolerant, hyper, wake up at night with job on the mind, nervous condition.

3. Lowered Self Concept (13 Responses)

   - Feeling insecure, deterioration of self-concept, fear, lacking in self confidence.

   - Feeling lack of appreciation for efforts, frightened, fearful, feelings of inferiority, expressing anxiety or apprehension, questions own ability, insecurity.

4. Feelings Of Pessimism And Frustration (13 Responses)

   - Pessimistic attitude, lost sense of humor, critical or negative attitude toward others, can't get a humorous objective look at themselves, negative attitude toward federal programs, feeling frustrated that commitments and expectations have not been fulfilled.

   - Frustration with single issue groups, negativism, a low tolerance for frustration, negative change in attitude and disposition, unable to find many good things to say about work, sense of futility.

5. Decrease In Energy Level (13 Responses)

    - Tiredness, feeling worn out, dwindling competitiveness, decrease in drive and energy, decline in time and energy for creative planning, lack of energy.

    - Sleeping more than usual, tired, decrease in energy, noncompetitive.

6. Feeling Alienated (13 Responses)

    - Withdrawal, feeling isolated, paranoia, suspicion of others.

    - Losing contact with close friends and family, great feelings of loneliness, not humanistic to others, paranoia.

7. Overly Conscientious (12 Responses)

    - Tries to be too many things to too many people, overly humanistic, overly sensitive, tends to personalize problems, becomes too close to the job, great concern for county, state, federal issues and organizations, obsessed with seeking support of others.

    - Feel like they have to solve all the problems, take things personal, perfectionists, workaholics.

8. Feelings Of Anger And Resentment (12 Responses)

    - Disgust, discouraged, quick temper, "short fuse", pettish at times.

    - Bitterness, irritable, uncaring, belligerent, angry.

9. Undue Pressure From Community And School Board (12 Responses)

    - Pressure from community criticism, can't cope with all the problems, dreads meetings with board, having divided boards, non-renewal of contracts by school board, failure to get or have support of staff.

    - Feeling stress from board and community, lack of support from board, administration and community, experiencing difficult negotiations, having fractionated boards, deterioration of relationships with boards of education or certain members.

10. Physical Symptoms (11 Responses)

    - Physical illness, medical problems such as ulcers, heart attacks, over eating, drinking, smoking.

    - Chest pains, poor eyes, illness, physical symptoms from too much stress, alcoholism, excessive weight.

11. Exhibits Low Level Of Enthusiasm For The Job (11 Responses)

   - Lack of eagerness to serve, lack of enthusiasm for the job, apathy towards
     the job, decrease in commitment to position, disinterested, boredom.

   - Loss of interest, enthusiasm, doesn't look forward to going to work each
     day, loss of enthusiasm, unenthusiastic.

12. Rigidity To Change (11 Responses)

   - Lack of openness to new ideas, authoritarian types not open to criticism
     and diversity of views, preoccupation with the status quo, unreceptive to
     innovation and change, ignores the present and future.

   - Maintain rather than change programs and approaches, can't change with
     the times, more autocratic, immobility in thinking, attitudes and
     philosophies not compatible with today's reality.

13. Wishing For Or Seeking Escape Via Another Job   (11 Responses)
    Or Early Retirement

   - Wanting to go to another job with less responsibility - including one in
     private industry, undue concern with early retirement as a way out,
     feelings that more are leaving at an earlier age and desire to also do
     so, feeling of being in the same position too long.

   - Desire for early retirement to do something else, talk and think more
     about retiring early, desire to "ride out" present contract, seek a
     position with less responsibility, giving much consideration to another
     type of work, experiencing dissatisfaction with job, find ways to be out
     of the district, can't wait to get away to a meeting outside the district,
     experiencing much professional unhappiness.

14. Close To Retirement Age (7 Responses)

   - Less than five years before retirement, try to "hang on" until retirement,
     tendency to live in the past and discuss past achievements.

   - Gray hair, approaching the last 10-15 years of their career in education.

15. Decrease In Or Lack Of Specific Job Skills (5 Responses)

   - Diminished public relations skills, inability to relate to others.

   - Lack of diminished human relations skills, business skills, time manage-
     ment skills, delegating skills, public relations skills, communication
     skills.

SUPERINTENDENTS WHO LEFT THE SUPERINTENDENCY FOR A CAREER OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION

(If current address is not known, include the district they were previously associated with.)

Name	Current Address (if known)	Current Phone Number (if known)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

SUPERINTENDENTS WHO LEFT THE SUPERINTENDENCY
FOR ANOTHER POSITION WITHIN AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please return to: Don Unger, Assistant Director, School Study Council of Ohio, 143 Arps Hall, 1945 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43210

APPENDIX D

Material Sent to the Superintendents in the Study

SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL OF OHIO

May 30, 1980

Dear

As a graduate student of Educational Administration at The Ohio State University, I am conducting a study dealing with the stresses and pressures of the superintendency and how this relates to a super- intendent's decision to leave that position. The faculty of Educational Administration at The Ohio State University, John Hauck of BASA, and the School Study Council of Ohio have endorsed this study. An expert panel composed of 25 members from across the state were asked to submit a list of names of superintendents in Ohio who have left the super- intendency to either take a position outside of education or to take another position within education other than the superintendency.

You and nine of your colleagues have been selected from the list as persons I hope to interview. Would you meet with me for an hour or two to share your professional insights and experiences? Your feelings related to the stresses and pressures of the superintendency are essential to this study.

While it may not be of great concern to you, your anonymity will be pro- tected in any and all reporting of the study.

This study deals with a concern that we believe to be a very important aspect of today's executive life. I will be contacting you by phone in the next several days to seek an appointment and to answer any questions you may have concerning this work. Your help in this matter will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to meeting with you and hearing your views on the profession.

Sincerely,

Don Unger
Assistant Director, SSCO

DU:ku

APPENDIX E

Superintendents' Interview Guide

SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What district were you last superintendent? Can you tell me something about the district? Was it rural, suburban or urban? What was the approximate number of students?

How many years were you a superintendent? In the last position?

What was it about being superintendent that attracted you to it?
  (a) Can you recall what you expected life to be like as a
       superintendent?
  (b) How was it different?

What were the most rewarding things about working as a school superintendent?

What were the least rewarding things about the superintendency?

Concerning workload, what in your estimation is the number of hours you devoted to the superintendency during a typical week? How many evenings in a typical week did you obligate to work related to the superintendency? Saturdays? Sundays? What time in the morning did a typical work day start? What time did it end? (Probe: Were you working too hard on the job?)

When did you first seriously consider leaving the superintendency? Why did you leave?

How did you feel about the goals of the district? Did you set personal and organizational goals?

Did you feel constraints on time? How did you handle them?

Were there situations in which you had little or no control? Can you describe them? How did you alleviate them?

How did you feel about your ability to do a "good job" in your last year as a superintendent? How did that compare with your first years?

Did you feel you were positively influencing other people's lives through the superintendency? Did you feel you were appreciated by others for your efforts?

During your last superintendency, did you ever question your own ability? If so, how often?

Were there any aspects of the superintendency that frustrated you?
(Probe: What kinds of things frustrated you?)

Did you find that most of the people you worked with met your expectations
and fit into your personal philosophy of education? (Probe: Did you feel
you had a critical or negative attitude toward others?)

Was the superintendency a physically "draining" experience? Did you often
feel tired or exhausted from work? (Probes: Did you engage in physical
activity during the superintendency? If so, did this help?)

How did you generally feel when you left after a day's work? Were you
energetic? "Used up"?

How did you feel in the morning getting ready to face another work day?
Were you refreshed? Fatigued?

When you had a tough decision to make or faced a serious problem in the
district, to whom did you turn? What were you seeking from these people?
Did these people (that person) deliver the type of help you were expecting?
What kind of help did you receive? (Probe: Did school board, adminis-
trators, teachers, community, professional organizations help you cope
with the situation?)

Did the tensions of the job affect your personal or family life? How?
What did you do to relieve the tensions?

Did you become personally involved with the problems of the district?

Did you worry about the superintendency hardening you emotionally? Did
it? (Probe: Were you more calloused towards people in the last years of
the superintendency? Were you irritable?)

How did you feel working with the school board? The community?

How did your board meetings go? Did this change any over the last few
years?

In your last year of the superintendency, can you describe your health?
(Probes: Migraine headaches ___, ulcers ___, chest pains ___, chronic
back pain ___, fatigue ___, irritability (tension) ___, high blood
pressure ___, insomnia ___, overweight ___, alcoholism ___). Do you feel
these symptoms could be related to stress in the superintendency?

How did your eagerness and enthusiasm for the job compare between your first and last years of the superintendency?

Did you ever feel bored with the superintendency? Explain.

How do you perceive the image of the superintendent of schools over the time you first entered it until the present time, as seen by the public? Teachers? Board of Education? Other administrators?

If you could have changed any institutional practice or policy, what would it have been?

Of the changes that were made in the system while you were superintendent, when were most of these made? (Probe: beginning, middle or end?)

How do you feel the pressures of the superintendency compare to other occupations or professions?

How many years did you have before retirement?

Did you receive adequate and realistic education and training from the university to prepare you for the superintendency? Explain. (Probes: What were the major strengths and weaknesses of your graduate study program?)

What job skills do you feel are the most important for the superintendency? Which ones do you wish you had a better "handle" on?

In your opinion, did you experience any mental or emotional exhaustion that was related to stress in the superintendency?

Do you think you might ever go back to the superintendency?
    If answer is no: Why not?
    If answer is yes: Under what circumstances?

APPENDIX F

Tabulation of Interview Questions and Characteristics of Burn-Out

TABLE 10. TABULATION OF INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPERINTENDENT BURN-OUT

Interview Question Number

Characteristic Number	1	2	3	3A	3B	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17A	17B	18	19	20	21	22A	22B	23	24	25	26	27A	27B	28	29	30	31	32	33
0	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X																											X
1												X	X																									
2														X	X																						X	
3																X	X																					
4																		X	X	X																		
5																					X	X																
6								X															X															
7																								X														
8																									X	X												
9																											X											
10																												X	X									
11																														X	X	X						
12									X																													
13		X																															X					
14																																		X				
15																																			X	X		

0 – Indicates open, depending on the response to determine what characteristic, if any, it is applied.

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