Selected Aspects of the Secretary's Role in the Public Schools as Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

Patty H. Richards
East Tennessee State University

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Selected aspects of the secretary's role in the public schools as perceived by principals, teachers, and school secretaries

Richards, Patty H., Ed.D.
East Tennessee State University, 1991
APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Council of

PATTY H. RICHARDS

met on the

8th day of November, 1991.

The committee read and examined her dissertation, supervised her defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that her study be submitted to the Graduate Council and the Associate Vice-President for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.

Chairman, Graduate Committee

Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice-President for Research

Signed on behalf of the Graduate Council
ABSTRACT

SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE SECRETARY'S ROLE
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS PERCEIVED BY
PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOL SECRETARIES
by
Patty H. Richards

The purpose of this study was to compare principals', teachers' and secretaries' perceptions regarding selected aspects of the school secretary's role in administering the public schools.

A questionnaire, developed by the researcher, was sent to 465 principals, teachers, and school secretaries in the First Tennessee Development District, in Spring, 1991. Three hundred ninety-one questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 84%.

Six null hypotheses were tested for significance at the .05 level. The one-way analysis of variance and the Student-Newman-Keuls statistical procedures were used to test the responses of the three groups of participants for significant differences. All the null hypotheses were rejected.

The findings of the study were as follows:

1. The position of the typical school secretary in the First Tennessee Development District is a full-time position. Of the 137 secretaries surveyed, 97% reported they worked 35 or more hours per week.
2. Secretaries perceived that they assumed a greater administrative role in the school than the principals or teachers perceived.
3. Secretaries perceived that they assumed more of a public relations role in the school than principals or teachers perceived. Principals perceived that school secretaries assumed more of a public relations role than teachers assumed.
4. Principals and secretaries perceived that secretaries were more involved in the school operation than teachers perceived.
5. Secretaries perceived that they were more involved with clerical tasks than principals or teachers perceived.
6. Secretaries perceived that they were more involved with human relations tasks than principals or teachers perceived.
7. Principals perceived that secretaries participated more in professional development activities than teachers perceived.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following study has been filed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

Title of Grant or Project   Selected Aspects of the Secretary's Role in the Public Schools As Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

Principal Investigator  Patty H. Richards
Department  Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Date Submitted  December 4, 1990
Institutional Review Board Approval
Chairman  [Signature]
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, Doug, who has always encouraged me to set goals and has provided the encouragement to help me pursue them.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express appreciation to Dr. Charles W. Burkett, doctoral committee chairman, for his encouragement, accessibility, and assistance from the initial topic selection to the final writing. My sincere thanks is also extended to my other committee members, Dr. Cecil Blankenship, Dr. Floyd Edwards, and Dr. William Pafford for their encouragement, advice, and positive comments. Special appreciation is expressed to Dr. Russell West for his expertise in assisting with the statistical analysis procedures.

My deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Carolyn Brown who assisted with development of the research instrument and procedures for statistical analysis. Her additional role as a mentor and friend was invaluable.

Special thanks to my sister, Linda, for proofreading the literature review. Her support and encouragement were very meaningful.

My sincere gratitude is expressed to my dear friend, Mrs. Liz Hughes, for typing this study. Her continual, unfailing encouragement and hard work made this study a reality.
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The secretary to the principal in the public school system plays an essential role in the operation of an effective school. The school office is generally positioned at the center of school activities. As a result, the secretary is the first person that teachers, support personnel, students, and visitors usually encounter when they enter the school office. School secretaries are the "link between the school and home, office and classroom, principal and teacher" (Anderson, Hubbart, & Saylor, 1980, p. 9).

The school secretary has many roles, and the job cannot be classified as routine. In the course of a typical school day the secretary rarely performs work that is 100% clerical in nature; the secretary executes several roles: bookkeeper, receptionist, nurse, telephone operator, mail clerk and census taker (Anderson et al., 1980). Due to the multidimensional nature of the secretary's job, it is difficult for the secretary to properly balance the tasks that need to be accomplished and still serve the principal.

Principals view the secretary as an extension of themselves (Casanova, 1986). If principals are to provide leadership and assume professional responsibilities, they
need to employ secretaries who will operate the school office efficiently and effectively. A secretary who works within the framework of the school's philosophy and the system's policies is one of the principal's most valuable assets.

Secretaries are a vital link in the communication process. A primary duty of the school secretary is to dispense information; the secretary continually interprets policies and explains procedures. Secretaries set the tone in the school office by their manner of performance. The secretary often has many observers during the performance of required tasks. Secretaries are very influential in determining the attitudes the public has about schools (Sweeney, 1978).

Secretaries are being viewed as partners, working side by side with their bosses and undertaking more decision-making tasks (Angerosa, 1988). Clerical tasks are being made easier with the advent of electronic devices, eliminating many routine operations, and allowing the secretary more time for other tasks. Despite role changes, secretaries in public schools are and will continue to be essential to the school operation (Daas, 1980).

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

School secretaries are important to the operation of a
school, but no one knows how much influence they have or the extent of their duties.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions regarding selected aspects of the school secretary's role in the public schools.

**Significance of the Study**

The secretary maintains a key position in the school setting; therefore, an ongoing analysis of the position, and the individual employed in this position, is warranted. A comparison of co-workers' perceptions regarding the school secretary's role will assist administrators with hiring, training, and supervising of school secretaries. A well-trained, efficient secretary changes the office environment and allows the administrator to successfully manage other tasks (Cooper, 1979).

The secretary also supports teachers in several capacities. The secretary's duties and responsibilities need to be understood by the school staff. Drake and Roe (1986) acknowledged a common cause for a teacher's poor morale was negative treatment by office staff. Russell (1973) observed that "different role perceptions can cause
inefficiency and morale problems to develop" (p. 8). Clarifying the secretary’s role will help teachers comprehend the services the secretary can provide.

The secretary’s role in public schools is a relevant topic for training programs of administrators, teachers, and secretaries. Research on the school secretary’s role will help administrators write job descriptions, train secretaries, and plan staff development programs. Clarification of the school secretary’s role will enable administrators to maximize the abilities of the secretary and, therefore, contribute to the effectiveness of the school organization.

Research Questions

The study is directed toward providing data pertaining to the following questions:

1. Do school secretaries have an administrative role in the school hierarchy?

2. Are public relations an important aspect of the school secretary’s role?

3. To what extent are school secretaries involved in the operation of the school?

4. Are school secretaries involved more with clerical tasks or human relation tasks?

5. Do school secretaries participate in professional development activities?
Limitations

The study had the following limitations:

1. The study included the secretary who most directly served the school principal. Other secretaries in the school were excluded.

2. The study was limited to public schools in the First Tennessee Development District listed in the Directory of Tennessee Public Schools, 1989-90.

3. The study of secretaries' roles was limited to the information obtained from the literature search and questionnaire.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding this study:

1. A need existed for a study of school secretaries in Tennessee.

2. The responses marked by participants were accurate expressions of their perceptions of the role of the secretary.

3. Principals and teachers were aware of the job being performed by the school secretary.

4. The instrument used to gather data was valid for the purpose of this study.

5. Valid statistical procedures were used for analyzing the data.
Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following words or terms were used for understanding and clarity:

1. Administrative role - The act of managing or directing an organization.

2. Clerical tasks - Tasks performed that include such things as typing, record keeping, and filing.

3. Elementary - A public school having some combination of kindergarten through grade eight.

4. High school - A public school having some combination of grades seven, eight, or nine through twelve.

5. Human relations tasks - Tasks that primarily involve working with people.

6. Middle school - A public school with grades five, six, or seven through eight.

7. Operation of the school - The work or functions necessary for student instruction.

8. Principal - A principal is the administrative head of a school.

9. Professional development - Training, such as workshops or in-service, provided for employees to help them develop skills.

10. Public relations - Those functions of an organization concerned with attempting to create
favorable public opinion for itself (Neufeldt, 1988).

11. Role - A function or office assumed by someone.

12. School secretary - The secretary who most directly serves the principal.

13. Teachers - Full-time certificated professionals assigned to a public school whose primary task is instructing students.

**Hypotheses**

The research hypotheses, stated in the declarative format, pertain to a comparison of perceptions of principals, teachers, and secretaries regarding the school secretary's role. The following hypotheses were considered relevant to this study:

1. There will be a significant difference among principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's administrative role.

2. There will be a significant difference among principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's public relations role.

3. There will be a significant difference between principals', teachers', and secretaries'
perceptions of the school secretary's involvement in the operation of the school.

4. There will be a significant difference among principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions concerning the school secretary's involvement with clerical tasks.

5. There will be a significant difference among principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions concerning the school secretary's involvement with human relation tasks.

6. There will be a significant difference among principals', teachers', and secretary's perceptions of school secretaries' participation in professional development activities.

**Procedures of the Study**

The procedures of the study were as follows:

1. A review of related literature and research was conducted.

2. Approval of the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

3. A questionnaire was constructed based on a review of related literature.

4. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire were determined through a pilot study.
5. An explanatory letter, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped envelope, were mailed to the participants selected for the study.
6. Each participant was assured that individual names and school systems would not be used.
7. After a two-week period, a follow-up letter was sent to participants who had not responded.
8. The data were interpreted and analyzed at East Tennessee State University using the SPSS/PC+ Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters: Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, limitations, assumptions, definitions of terms, hypotheses, procedures, and organization of the study.

Related literature and research is reviewed in Chapter 2.

Methods and procedures used in developing the study are described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the data and a presentation of the results.

Summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter 2 consists of a review of literature and related research concerning the school secretary. The chapter is divided into five sections: (a) The Role of the School Secretary, (b) Selected Studies Pertaining to the School Secretary, (c) The Secretary and School Climate, (d) The Administrator and Secretary as a Team, and (e) Future Considerations for School Secretaries.

The first section, The Role of the School Secretary, describes the position of secretaries in the public schools. A summary of the secretary’s various tasks and responsibilities is presented.

The second section, Selected Studies Pertaining to the School Secretary, recounts previous studies conducted concerning the school secretary. Summaries of pertinent theses and dissertations written about the school secretary are presented.

The third section, The Secretary and School Climate, describes the relationship between the school secretary and school climate. The effect the school secretary has on school climate is emphasized.
The fourth section, The Administrator and Secretary as a Team, focuses on the working relationship of the administrator and the secretary. Selected articles are reviewed which outline how the administrator and the secretary can effectively work together.

The final section, Future Considerations for the School Secretary, addresses the impact of technology on the school secretary's role. Changes in the secretary's role, as a result of the increasing use of technology, are highlighted.

The Role of the School Secretary

Casanova (1986) conducted a descriptive study of six elementary school secretaries. The study was undertaken to gain an understanding of the work of school secretaries and to ascertain how their work contributed to school effectiveness. Research methods used in the study included on-site observations, interviews, a survey instrument, and content analyses of job descriptions and textbooks.

According to Casanova, the six elementary school secretaries were multitalented individuals who served many different clients and played a central role in the operation of the school. Very seldom were the human interaction aspects of the secretary's job reflected in job descriptions or textbooks. The data from this study
offered strong evidence that human interaction factors dominated the school setting. In the context of human interaction, the secretary played a central role in the communications network of the school. In addition, the lack of recognition and low salaries that school secretaries received were not in line with the work they performed or the responsibilities they assumed. Casanova submitted that the interdependence of the principal and secretary in the school office had an important impact on school administration and should not be disregarded in future studies of elementary school principals.

Cavanagh (1987) contended that secretaries affect morale and set the tone in the office setting because of their daily contact with people. The author suggested that secretaries are in a very critical position; and, as a result, their primary focus should be on building relationships with people.

Cavanagh maintained that the secretary's role vacillated between the secretary's loyalty and confidentiality to the supervisor and the secretary's independent judgment as a professional. Cavanagh cautioned that both positions carried great responsibility, and secretaries should neglect neither.

Anderson, Hubbart, and Saylor (1980) reported that school secretaries served an intermediary role for students
and parents, principal and teacher. The secretary played a critical role in establishing a successful school and community program. A typical school secretary:

1. Anticipated the unexpected and conveyed a genuine concern for people.
2. Understood the operation of the school in order to provide information to the principal, teachers, parents, and students.
3. Acted as a nurse and dealt with the first aid needs of children if schools did not have the services of a nurse.
4. Worked with teachers and was flexible when dealing with different personalities.
5. Assisted substitute teachers in becoming oriented to the school.
6. Prepared and distributed correspondence for students to take home.
7. Communicated with parents about problems which may ultimately affect the child.
8. Reported cases of truancy to parents.
9. Acted as a sounding board for the principal, teachers, parents, and students. (p. 9)

Anderson et al. concluded that school secretaries did not have routine office jobs. In the course of a typical
week, a school secretary performed as a bookkeeper, receptionist, nurse, telephone operator, mail clerk, and census taker.

In a study conducted at George Peabody College for Teachers, Hargis (1980) examined three traits which administrators and secretaries considered most important in an educational secretary. The following conclusions were developed:

1. Secretaries expected more of themselves than the administrators required.
2. Elementary and high school secretaries could function effectively at either level.
3. Elementary and high school secretaries reported similar responses to questions that described parallel job tasks. (p. 7)

The study gave credit to the importance of the school secretary. In addition, Hargis stressed that secretaries contributed more to their school than was required.

Daas (1980) concluded that school secretaries had more responsibility but made less money than other school employees. Secretaries often acted as assistants to principals and assumed administrative responsibilities during the absence of the administrator. Other duties of the secretary which Daas identified were taking dictation, typing letters, maintaining the budget, providing an
inventory of office supplies, greeting visitors, and serving teachers, students, and parents. According to Daas, secretaries were loyal, punctual, performed assigned tasks, and usually used fewer sick leave days than other classifications of employees. Daas predicted that electronic devices would effect distinct changes for secretaries, but emphasized that "secretaries in education are and will continue to be essential to the operation of our school system" (p. 6).

A study conducted by Bradshaw and Rogers (1985) of 417 school principals' secretaries in Utah revealed that all secretaries in the study were women. The majority were Caucasian, married and over age 29, and almost half had four or more children. The study also revealed secretaries were paid low salaries; the procedures used for hiring were often questionable; and opportunities for professional growth were virtually non-existent. Bradshaw and Rogers claimed little research had been conducted on the position of the school secretary. It was their position that researchers develop studies to address the following statements:

1. Determine qualifications for school secretaries.
2. Ascertain the best way to attract qualified secretaries.
3. Specify an adequate salary for secretaries.
4. Enrich the position of school secretaries so it would be stimulating and challenging.
5. Create professional development for secretaries.
6. Specify how school secretaries could appropriately impact situations and activities related to their jobs.
7. Ascertain appropriate procedures for interview, selection, orientation, and supervision of school secretaries.
8. Define flexible job descriptions for school secretaries. (pp. 17, 27)

Hales and Hyder (1971) explored the problems of role conflict and ambiguity as they involved the school secretary. They concluded that the school secretary: (a) completed clerical work, (b) distributed materials, (c) provided information and directives from the administration, (d) acted as a sounding board which determined how the principal reacted, and (e) served as a buffer between teachers and angry parents.

Despite the fact that secretaries' administrative duties have rarely been defined, Hales and Hyder pointed out that secretaries occupy a role of considerable power and authority. The authors maintained that most of the "accretion of power is hidden, incidental, and informal" (p. 83). The primary agency in this accretion of
secretarial power was the strategic location of the secretary's office which thrusts the secretary into being the center of the school's communication channels. Because the secretary was the dominant communication figure, the individual gradually accumulated power. Hales and Hyder asserted that secretaries' power accentuated in direct relation to the length of tenure.

Hales and Hyder maintained that attention should be focused on the role of the school secretary because of the secretary's importance in the school setting. Two recommendations were presented: (a) development of intensive in-service training programs and (b) creation of new programs through colleges and universities to prepare and update secretaries' skills.

According to the National Secretaries Association International (Hanna, Popham, & Tilton, 1978), a secretary has an ability for mastering office skills and assumes responsibility without direct supervision. Responsibilities emphasized were a display of initiative and the sound judgment required to make decisions within the scope of the executive's authority. Hanna et al. concluded that this concept implied that a secretary was not only highly qualified, but also had a mastery of office skills and a composite of personality attributes that were of the highest order.
Interviews conducted by Hart (1985) revealed that the job of the school secretary "as performed" contained far more than the job "as prescribed" (p. 132). Few secretaries had written job descriptions, although it was expected essential duties would be completed. Duties that the secretary performed were: (a) organized the school office, (b) prepared statistical returns, (c) maintained accounts and collected monies, (d) acted as staffing officer for support staff, (e) assisted administrator with duties such as school finance and planning, staff appointments and transfer arrangements, and (f) dealt with inquiries from teachers, pupils, and visitors. Hart found that many school secretaries often delegated these duties. The delegation of duties released the secretary's time and energy and enabled the secretary to perform other tasks. The secretary’s contribution was the creation of a well-organized office which enabled work to be done efficiently.

Proper delegation of routine tasks allowed the secretary more time to perform new tasks. Hart asserted that the administrator should be responsible for determining new tasks for the secretary. Hart contended that most secretaries "would probably welcome new functions which would enrich their work" (p. 134).

Hart’s research confirmed the prominence of the
secretary within the school. Hart described six roles that the school secretary actually performed: (a) friend or substitute parent, (b) extension of the principal, (c) sounding board, (d) leader of the non-teaching staff, (e) gatekeeper, and (f) financial consultant. These constituted roles that were outside the job description but were, nevertheless, extremely important in the development of the school program. Hart noted it was the responsibility of both the principal and the secretary to decide which of these roles was to be performed.

According to Porat and Will (1983), the secretary performed many roles which were classified into operational and managerial categories. In the operational mode, the secretary knew the manager's and secretary's position in the organizational structure and understood how they related to others in the organization. In the managerial role, the secretary served as executive assistant and part of the management team.

From a review of research conducted about school secretaries, Rahe (1960) concluded that the educational secretary was an indispensable member of the school system. The work that the secretary performed was so important to the effective operation of the educational organization that Rahe concluded the secretary was "truly one of the most influential forces in many schools" (p. 159).
The tasks of the secretary were found to be extremely varied. However, Rahe concluded that two tasks dominated the others: (a) answering the telephone and (b) responding to questions from pupils, teachers, school administrators, and the public. The job of the educational secretary varied from school to school ranging from secretaries who did mostly routine clerical work to secretaries who served as office managers or administrative assistants. Secretaries who functioned in the latter category made decisions, directed the work of others, and assumed partial responsibility for maintaining the smooth operation of the school.

Secretaries played a key role in public schools and were responsible for a diversity of duties that required numerous competencies. According to Rimer (1984), work patterns of elementary school secretaries fit into clusters of activities classified under six broad categories:

1. Public Relations - Examples of the secretary's service in this capacity included greeting visitors, registering and orienting new students, serving as an ally for students, and acting as a public relations agent.

2. Students Services - In this capacity, students' nonacademic needs were attended. Included in this
category was the performance of duties of "nurse, friend, soothsayer, disciplinarian, repair person, and possessor of all supplies and information" (p. 17).

3. Clerical Work - Completing paperwork, answering the telephone, keeping records, operating office equipment, maintaining office supplies, collecting and recording money were routine duties for the secretary.

4. Office Management - Maintenance of an attractive and businesslike environment was a major responsibility of the secretary.

5. Supplier of Staff Information - The secretary was a main source of information for teachers, students, parents, and members of the community.

6. Administrative Assistant to the Principal - The secretary made decisions in the absence of the principal, but usually not about curriculum or student discipline. (pp. 17-18)

Rimer reported that, historically, elementary school secretaries made a significant contribution to American schools. According to Rimer, requisites of the secretary's position included the performance of a multitude of duties and numerous skills, as well as the execution of organization, time management, self-motivation, and
discretion. The duties of a secretary entailed a knowledge of office practices, poise under stress, and the ability to communicate effectively. Rimer concluded the secretary was indispensable in the school setting and asserted the secretary’s contributions should be recognized.

Dolberg (cited in Maynard, 1965) reported that panelists from a convention of the National Association of Educational Secretaries agreed that the position of the school secretary was a public relations position, and the most desirable asset of the school secretary was personality. Dolberg asserted that the objectives for educational secretaries should include continued interest in their position and a desire to raise the secretary’s standards to a professional level. Dolberg also recommended that the school secretary should emphasize professional training and join professional organizations.

Bolinger (cited in Maynard, 1965) reported that if school secretaries were satisfied with their jobs and adept at human relations, they perceived their jobs as worthwhile and rewarding. Secretaries then performed their jobs to the best of their abilities which, in turn, allowed administrators to perform their jobs of educating students.

According to Bowers (cited in Maynard, 1965), the duties executed by the school secretary were: (a) interaction with the public, (b) maintenance of accurate
records and compilation of reports, (c) management of the budget and finances of the school, and (d) performance in an executive capacity in the administrator's absence. The school secretary's position demanded "a capacity to learn, to adjust, to improve the job and to improve with the job" (p. 23).

Traubert (cited in Maynard, 1965) pointed out that the school secretary should practice basic human relations. The secretary served as a "liaison between principal and teacher, principal and pupil, parent and the school" (p. 36). Furthermore, the secretary directed routine school duties, thus permitting the principal to conduct supervisory work. In the secretary's dealings with teachers, the secretary performed extra services, notified parents, provided supplies, and quickly located data. When working with students, the secretary listened to students' expressions of joy and disappointment, provided first aid, and issued school passes. The secretary met and greeted parents, defined issues, and scheduled meetings with school personnel. Traubert concluded that the school secretary made an important contribution in a successful school.

Trump (cited in Maynard, 1965) claimed the educational secretary had considerable training and performed not only clerical tasks, but made many administrative decisions. Provided the secretary was knowledgeable concerning the
policies of the school system, functions of an executive nature were performed in line with the system's policies. The administrator was freed from doing routine duties and thus able to handle leadership tasks.

Historically, the position of the educational secretary progressed in the area of "importance, scope of responsibility and authority, and prestige" (Anderson, Lee, Russon, & Crane, 1976, p. 9). The secretary had important responsibilities involving public relations. Other duties included: (a) performing clerical tasks, (b) preparing schedules and reports, (c) typing transcripts of grades, (d) ordering supplies, (e) keeping personnel and payroll records, and (f) handling maintenance calls. Depending on the size of the school system, other duties evolved. The secretary needed a thorough knowledge of school policies in order to serve students, teachers, and administrators. Anderson et al. also pointed out that educational secretaries needed a broad educational background to enter the field.

The role of the school secretary as receptionist and public relations agent was described by Stellar (1978). Stellar maintained that every school secretary was a receptionist to a degree; fulfilling the role of receptionist was extremely important. As a receptionist, the secretary provided information, answered the telephone, talked with parents, screened salespersons, and greeted
visitors. As a result of balancing the roles, the school secretary had more supervisors than other school employees. A secretary's supervisors included the principal, other administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Stellar cautioned secretaries to remember that they represented the school and recommended they extend the same respect to school guests as they did to guests in their homes.

Selected Studies Pertaining to the School Secretary

Marian Dark Study (1948)

Dark investigated the educational background, experience, terms of employment, salaries, tenure, and the secretary's duties in Oklahoma public schools. Data were compiled from questionnaires returned by secretaries and superintendents.

Dark noted that 70% of the superintendents surveyed preferred women for the job of secretary. The survey revealed that only one of the 82 secretaries was not a high school graduate. Dark concluded the training of school secretaries should be the same as training of secretaries in general. Dark also recommended school secretaries in Oklahoma should: (a) strive to reach a more professional level, (b) attain higher educational levels, and (c) concentrate on becoming better secretaries (p. 157).
Reba Farrow Anglin Study (1954)

Anglin (cited in Rahe, 1960) conducted a study in the Texas public schools and examined the duties, qualifications, and salaries of public school secretaries. The study revealed:

1. In school systems that were of medium size or larger, the secretary constituted an essential part of the school system.
2. The school secretary needed a broad education.
3. The educational secretary gained professional security and stature by acquiring benefits and a fairly stable income.
4. The school secretary served as coordinator, public servant, teacher, administrator, and public relations expert. (p. 157)

Mary Welling Study (1956)

Welling, at the State Teachers College of Salem, Massachusetts, surveyed the secretaries of high school principals in an attempt to determine the frequency they performed selected duties and activities. The work of school secretaries was classified into different categories, such as typewriting, bookkeeping, stenographic and secretarial activities. The data were also classified
according to the time devoted to the performance of the activities.

Welling's studies showed the activities most frequently performed were typing, maintaining attendance reports, compiling honor roll lists, and other clerical tasks. Welling also determined other frequent activities were as follows: bookkeeping, telephone communications, correspondence, taking dictation, composing letters, preparing transcripts of grades, receiving visitors, and making appointments. The findings of the study indicated high school secretaries' work varied in many respects. Welling asserted high school secretaries were kept quite busy, but were not usually overburdened.

Chauncey F. Benton Study (1956)

Benton, at New York University, investigated the school secretary's duties and contributions in New York elementary schools and attempted to delineate the duties of the school secretary and the principal. Benton classified the duties of the secretary under nine general headings: (a) typing, mimeographing, and dictation, (b) routine duties related to school administration and organization, (c) filing, indexing, and office routines, (d) annual budget and supply, (e) finance, (f) mail, (g) audio-visual aids, (h) meeting and working with people, and (i) miscellaneous. Benton reported 76 specific duties in an elementary school
which should be delegated to a person with secretarial training and should not be executed by the principal or classroom teacher. He determined 28 specific duties that should be retained for performance by the principal. The division of respective duties between the principal and secretary was more sharply defined in larger schools.

Dorothy C. Grovom Study (1958)

Grovom investigated the extent of responsibility the principal's secretary had concerning the professional-educational functions of the school principal's office. Grovom devised a check list divided into seven areas of professional-educational activities. These areas included: (a) records and written communications, (b) personnel administration, (c) instructional program, (d) public relations, (e) enrollment of students, their progress, and their behavior, (f) buildings and grounds, books, supplies and equipment, and (g) special school services and events. The emphasis in the study was on the secretary's level of participation in the seven areas: clerical or routine, semiprofessional, and professional.

Grovom concluded that participation by secretaries was predominantly on the clerical or routine level, very low on the semiprofessional level, and low on the professional level. The greatest participation at the professional level was in recordkeeping and written communication.
skills. It was Grovom's recommendation that careful consideration be given to certifying secretaries who performed activities at the professional level.

**James Alonzo Jones Study (1967)**

Jones conducted a study at Indiana University to determine the number of Indiana elementary schools that employed one or more secretaries. The study included a description of the position, including the characteristics, relationships, functions, and responsibilities of elementary school secretaries. Almost 90% of Indiana public elementary schools employed school secretaries. Although written policies affecting the secretarial position were established in half the school districts, only 20% of the districts used handbooks or manuals. All the secretaries in the study completed high school, but only one-third of the secretaries pursued educational programs related to secretarial work after high school. The study indicated that a wide variety of duties was delegated to secretaries. Clerical duties were more frequently assigned than were duties related to the professional-educational activities in the school.

**William Clark Ford Study (1970)**

Ford's study analyzed selected aspects of the school secretary's position in Michigan public schools. Principals and their secretaries were surveyed for the
study from elementary, junior high, and senior high schools. Ford sought to determine: (a) if differences in the secretary's position existed according to the size of the school and the level of student population, (b) whether differences existed between the secretary's actual and ideal roles as viewed by secretaries and principals, and (c) whether secretaries and principals were in agreement on selected aspects of the secretary's position.

Ford found the typical secretary was married, female, and between the ages of 40 and 49. The secretary was a high school graduate with training in secretarial skills and bookkeeping. Secretaries reported their major reason for working was personal or for means of family support. Other findings revealed by the study included:

1. Principals and secretaries reported different responses concerning the tasks actually performed by the secretary. Secretaries reported accepting greater responsibility for tasks than was indicated by their principals.

2. Principals' expectations concerning the tasks the secretary should perform differed according to size and level of student population. The principal in small schools assigned more responsibility for administrative-assistant and teacher-counselor assistant than principals in large schools.
3. Principals wanted secretaries to have more responsibility as office managers and administrative secretaries.

4. Secretaries indicated they should have more responsibility in the areas of administration and office management and less responsibility as administrative assistant and teacher-counselor assistants.

5. Principals and secretaries had different expectations concerning ideal mechanical skills for secretaries. Principals indicated more mechanical skills should be required. (pp. 124-126)

Robert Vorley Russell Study (1973)

Russell, at Northern Arizona University, analyzed selected aspects of the secretary's role in Arizona public schools. A questionnaire containing 459 items in a checklist format was sent to principals, teachers, and secretaries in randomly-selected Arizona schools. Russell determined the role expectations that principals, teachers, and school secretaries held for the school secretary and ascertained if these expectations were in agreement.

Russell's research indicated several discrepancies in the responses among principals, teachers, and secretaries regarding the expectations of the school secretary. The school secretary was in a position of potentially high
conflict when making decisions dealing with interpersonal relations. In addition, differences were reported by the three groups concerning job responsibilities and job descriptions.

Russell recommended that principals consider clarifying the role of the school secretary at faculty meetings. The researcher also suggested the preparation of a comprehensive job description clearly delineating channels of communication and the delegation of authority.

**Robert T. Stowell Study (1974)**

At Temple University, Stowell (1974) investigated the decision patterns of the elementary school secretary during the absence of the principal. Stowell also analyzed the circumstances surrounding the decision patterns in terms of the perceptions of the elementary school principals and secretaries relative to the procedures and policies in their schools. Furthermore, Stowell described the perceptions of the authoritative relationships between the secretary and selected members of the school community.

Stowell’s study revealed principals and secretaries were in agreement concerning the type of administrative actions that should be taken in the principal’s absence. The study indicated principals and secretaries generally agreed that procedures and policies existed more often in the administrative task areas which contained the content
areas of educational program and personnel rather than in the areas of community relations, funds and facilities. Both groups generally perceived the secretary as having authority over the students, but not as having any authority over, or being under the authority of, persons or groups within the school community.

**Jane Grimes Barnett Study (1978)**

Barnett (1978) designed a study to develop and field test procedures for conducting an assessment of in-service education needs of school secretaries. The purpose of the needs assessment procedure was to determine the first step in designing an in-service program for secretaries. In the school system in which the assessment was conducted, such a program had not been employed previously.

According to the data Barnett collected, the highest ranking in-service needs were related to public relations, written communications, time management, office management, knowledge and understanding of board policy and procedures, and communication relays between parents and students. One limitation of this study was the participant's perception of the school secretaries' effectiveness rather than an objective measurement of effectiveness.

**John Tavasci, Jr. Study (1980)**

At Northern Arizona University, Tavasci proposed that the elementary school secretary was at the core of the
school's communication network. As a result, a relationship exists between the secretary's attitudes and the climate of the school. Tavasci's study outlined the extent of the relationship.

The population for the study was 20 elementary public schools in Arizona. Two standardized testing instruments were used: the Short Form Dogmatism Scale and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire.

Findings of Tavasci's study revealed a significant relationship between the secretary's perception of the school climate and the principals' and teachers' perceptions, as measured by the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire. There was no relationship between the secretary's dogmatism and school climate scores. Tavasci recommended using a different scale to measure attitudes in future research which would emphasize human relations. Tavasci asserted the secretary's perception of school climate be considered as a valuable indicator of actual school climate.

**John R. Chirco Study (1981)**

A study of job satisfaction of the elementary school secretary was conducted by Chirco at Western Michigan University. The researcher found the importance of the role of the elementary school secretary was related to job performance.
Chirco's review of literature isolated nine independent variables: amount of supervision, in-service, education, age, seniority, marital status, income, children, and ages of the secretary's children. Four dependent variables: supervision, work, pay, and promotion were identified as major component parts of job satisfaction.

The study found the secretaries' overall satisfaction with work and supervision was moderately high, while satisfaction with pay and promotion was low. Meaningful statistical support was applicable only to the relationship between work and in-service.

**Delores A. Bradshaw Study (1984)**

The purpose of Bradshaw's study was to describe selected characteristics of school secretaries in Utah public schools. The study analyzed personal profiles, employment procedures, job descriptions and duties, and professional development of Utah secretaries in the public schools during 1983-84. Data were gathered by a researcher-developed questionnaire.

The findings of the study revealed:

1. The two major reasons given by school secretaries for working were personal satisfaction and personal or family support.

2. Secretaries accepted their positions because of job location and work schedule.
3. Secretaries viewed the job as challenging and recommended the job to others.

4. The majority of school secretaries learned of the job opening from friends or relatives.

5. Eighty-two percent of the secretaries did not have written job descriptions. (pp. 134-137)

Bradshaw concluded that school secretaries were paid inadequate salaries and usually were not provided with job descriptions or given job orientations. The researcher affirmed that Utah State agencies had not provided the school secretary with professional development and contended that secretaries should be involved in planning their own programs for professional growth.

R. Carol Sweeney Study (1986)

Sweeney analyzed the principals' and school secretaries' expectations of authority regarding the performance of their respective duties. The researcher sought to determine if these expectations were being met and tried to determine if different expectations affected the evaluation of each other's general performances.

Sweeney selected 19 elementary schools in Los Angeles for the study. The schools were chosen because the principal and secretary had worked together at least two years, and the secretary supervised at least one other office staff member. Sweeney used focused interviews to collect data.
The study revealed the principals' and school secretaries' ratings of each other concerning authority were different. Sweeney recommended similar research be conducted on the junior and senior high levels to determine if results were similar for different grade levels. Sweeney suggested that the resulting information be used for the development of professional growth activities for school secretaries.

The Secretary and School Climate

Effective communication was identified by Golen and Titkemeyer (1983) as being essential for ensuring a productive working climate. Golen and Titkemeyer outlined 10 communication problems that appeared between the supervisor and the secretary.

1. Resistance to Change - Increased technology made changing jobs inevitable, and both secretaries and supervisors resisted these changes.

2. Differences in Preception - Supervisors, as well as secretaries, had stress producing jobs. Supervisors and secretaries were unaware of the stressors each encounter.

3. Prejudice or Bias - Supervisors reacted to secretaries based on prejudice or bias acquired through personal background.

4. Tendency Not to Listen - Supervisors and secretaries needed to listen to each other in an attentive,
careful, objective, and sympathetic manner in order to create an effective working relationship.

5. Misunderstanding of Nonverbal Cues - Supervisors and secretaries sent nonverbal messages which contradicted what was said. This contradiction led to problems in the office environment.

6. Lack of Understanding of Technical Language - Advancing technology created new terms that the supervisor and secretary must learn.

7. Poor Timing of the Message - The supervisor and the secretary, by employing better organizational techniques, could prevent situations resulting from improper planning or ineffective time management.

8. Defensiveness - Usually, the secretary developed defensive behavior when being evaluated or criticized, and the supervisor should encourage a supportive and nonthreatening climate.

9. Lack of Knowledge of Office Operations - A knowledge of standard office procedures was required.

10. Lack of Feedback - The supervisor gave directions, suggestions, positive and negative feedback, and rewards when appropriate. (p. 6-7)
Golen and Titkemeyer asserted that effective communication skills were essential to the successful operation of an office. Supervisors and secretaries needed to continually determine problems in communications and work to reduce an ineffective communications climate.

Sweeney (1978) suggested that people's responses to the school office were directly related to whether the office had a negative or positive climate. An informal survey conducted by Sweeney revealed school office climate and morale were significant factors reflecting the attitudes of the office personnel to the work situation and their level of productivity.

Sweeney outlined factors that impact on the school office climate and proposed techniques to make necessary improvements. The major factor Sweeney identified as impinging on school climate was effective communication. Effective communication was noted to be multidimensional and consisted of listening, clarity of expression, self-concept, self-disclosure, and coping with angry feelings. Barriers that prevented effective communication included preoccupation, hostility, inarticulateness, defensiveness, emotional blocks, and status.

Sweeney and Stoops (1981) recognized the school office as a "significant factor in determining the total school climate" (p.29). The findings of this study suggested that
school office employees take initiative in discovering the dynamics of the office climate. Employees should advise administration of needed changes and elicit their support. Stoops proposed the following goals for school office employees:

1. Students should be treated with friendliness and dignity and given the help they need.
2. Support staff should be made to feel welcome and comfortable in the office.
3. Teachers should be supported in their role as educators and should view the office as a place of service.
4. Parents should be assisted so they view the office as a place to find acceptance and receive answers.
5. Community members should be encouraged to view the school as an institute of integrity and service.
6. Administrators should be convinced the school office is being run efficiently and assured that it contributes to the well-being of students and staff.

(P. 31)

Priest (1975) contended that one person (i.e. the secretary) could influence the climate of an office from negative to positive. For secretaries to foster a productive office climate, Priest suggested certain guidelines be followed:
1. Recognize work as a necessary function for sound mental health.
2. Clarify the secretary's authority.
3. Understand the philosophy and style of the administrator.
4. Know the school district's policies and operate within their framework.
5. Provide continual, unwavering job performance.
6. Accept different situations and eliminate frustrations.
7. Initiate a self-improvement, self-realization program. (pp. 4-5)

Priest further proposed several suggestions that administrators should follow in working cooperatively with school secretaries. They were: (a) establish guidelines of authority, (b) allow the secretary to know the administrator's philosophy, (c) inform the secretary of expectations, (d) assign the secretary meaningful work, (e) encourage the secretary to be professional, (f) discourage office politics, and (g) be loyal and supportive of the secretary.

Priest acknowledged the role of the school administrator was strengthened by the assistance of an effective educational secretary. The author noted the secretary had a responsibility to the administrator, and
the administrator also had a responsibility to the secretary.

The function of the school secretary, according to Kuna (cited in Maynard, 1965), was to give service. Kuna observed school visitors often judged an entire school by the type of reception they received from the school secretary. Furthermore, secretaries were not aware of the impact their service had on the school environment and did not realize the importance of their role in coordinating faculty, parents, and students.

Kuna acknowledged that the first responsibility of the educational secretary was to provide assistance to the administrator. The duties of the job, as a result, were many and varied greatly in nature. The secretary increased the administrator's efficiency, thus, adding to the secretary's personal development.

Kuna concluded that the importance of a secretary being courteous to everyone entering the school office could not be overemphasized. As a general rule, Kuna stressed the "most efficient secretary is the one who uses freely the key of courtesy" (p. 50).

Stellar (1978) pointed out most secretaries maintained a friendly atmosphere in the school office when there was not a deadline or crisis. Public relations suffered when outside pressures overwhelmed the secretary. Stellar
recommended that secretaries should try to give visitors (even ones that were persistent and annoying) the same consideration day after day.

The Administrator and Secretary as a Team

In order for the administrator to assume a leadership role and for the secretary to assume many tasks of an administrative nature, two things must occur. First, the secretary must be well trained for the duties to be performed. Second, the secretary must have a clear understanding of the specifications of the job and should be given an opportunity to perform the assigned tasks.

Vinnicombe (1982) remarked that managers do not automatically know how to work most effectively with secretaries. While most administrators were aware of the valuable contributions of secretaries, very few understood the potential contributions secretaries could make.

Sweeney (1987) pointed out several steps that could prove useful to principals and school secretaries in beginning, improving, or enhancing their working relationships. Sweeney proposed principals and secretaries should have:

1. Identified the goals of the district and the school.
2. Clarified the responsibilities of the school secretary through the use of job descriptions.
3. Specified behaviors that transformed a job description into exemplary, productive on-the-job performance.

4. Indicated how the behaviors supported and supplemented the principal's role.

5. Developed a written description of what the secretary thought the job entailed.

6. Encouraged questions and built in time to meet regularly.

7. Planned daily meetings.

8. Supported the role of the school secretary.

9. Encouraged the secretary's efforts to do the job.

10. Responded to changing roles and responsibilities.

11. Nurtured the bond of loyalty that developed.

(pp. 50-51)

Sweeney's study supported the conclusion that the majority of successful principal and school secretary teams interviewed were using some variation of each step. In addition, school secretaries listed the five most important steps principals did to help them perform their job: (a) recognized the secretary's status and role as supervisor, (b) understood and followed the rules and procedures of the district, (c) recognized the hierarchy, (d) communicated openly, (e) controlled resources, environment, and people. Sweeney stressed the list should be used by principals and
secretaries as a means of opening communication. The purpose of the list was to provide a way to build and enhance the team of the administrator and school secretary.

Provided the secretary had basic skills necessary to perform the job, the secretary's value depended to a large extent on the willingness of the administrator to treat the secretary as part of the team (Reynolds & Tramel, 1971). Methods suggested to assist the secretary in becoming more effective included:

1. Demonstrating enthusiasm about new changes.
2. Assisting the secretary in accepting change.
3. Providing opportunities for the secretary to develop personal potential.
4. Confiding in the secretary and providing a clear picture of expected accomplishments.
5. Evaluating and listening to the secretary's ideas.
6. Letting the secretary know what is expected.
7. Communicating clearly.
8. Reminding the secretary of the important part the secretary plays in any change that occurs in the organization. (p.37)

Reynolds and Tramel concluded that the secretary should serve as an efficient instrument of change and not inhibit needed changes.

Porat and Will (1983) noted the traditional role of the secretary had changed, and the boss and secretary should
comprise a team of two. Porat and Will asserted the secretary is not considered as a servant to the master but should be regarded as a working member of a productive team. In order for the manager and secretary to function effectively as a team, several elements must be considered:

1. The boss and secretary must support each other.
2. The team needs to be interdependent and learn how to control, manage, initiate, and delegate.
3. Team members must be committed to working together.
4. The team must be accountable as a unit. (pp. 2-3)

Mann (1980) concluded that the secretaries with whom he had worked ranked the relationship between the boss and secretary as "the most vital ingredient to their effectiveness" (p.89). Communications, confidence, and consideration were listed as the most important factors in establishing the manager-secretary relationship. Mann suggested nine responsibilities and directions that should be included in the job description for a secretary: (a) telephone, (b) mail, (c) appointments, (d) visitors, (e) filing, (f) office organization, (g) human relations, (h) confidentiality, and (i) objectives. Mann stressed that communication between the secretary and principal was the most essential factor in contributing to the principal's effectiveness.

The findings of a non-educational study revealed that managers and secretaries identified communications as the
key to improving office productivity (Major, 1984). The majority of managers responded that automated equipment increased productivity, while secretaries pointed out the need for a team relationship between the manager and secretary. The study also revealed:

1. Managers overestimated the time that secretaries spent on traditional tasks and underestimated the time spent on non-traditional tasks.

2. Half the managers reported they wasted more than 10% of their time on minor tasks because of not delegating tasks to secretaries.

3. Fewer than one in four secretaries said they were too busy to take on extra duties. (p. 104)

Major concluded the discrepancy between managers' and secretaries' responses concerning the secretary's use of time offered the manager potential to increase the secretary's productivity.

Kaiser (1985) asserted the principal was the key decision maker when it came to deciding what tasks the secretary performed and what part of the day was devoted to these tasks. The school secretary should be considered an essential member of the school team. Kaiser stated that blending the academic and the nonacademic staff into an effective work force was an important task the principal must master. In order for the school secretary to function
efficiently, Kaiser (1985) pointed out the secretary needed to accomplish the following:

1. Define job responsibilities and functions carefully.
2. Inform school personnel of responsibilities and limitations of the secretarial position.
3. Accept suggestions from the principal on how best to carry out tasks.
4. Seek counsel and advice from the principal.
5. Receive advice from school personnel in regard to improving office services.
6. Enjoy a sense of freedom and trustworthiness.
7. Retain the confidence of the principal and staff.
9. Engage in staff development programs. (pp. 157-158)

Kaiser suggested using a task checklist to determine the responsibilities of the school secretary. The checklist should include four task categories: routine secretarial tasks, special secretarial tasks, human relationship tasks, and self-improvement tasks. Kaiser suggested the secretary and principal should decide jointly how the tasks were implemented.

Angerosa (1988) interviewed secretaries working in a cross-section of jobs with the purpose of discovering if the secretary's role changed during the eighties. The main
thrust of the interviews suggested the role of the secretary changed from the secretary doing menial tasks for a boss to the secretary being involved in making decisions. As a result of new technologies, secretaries had to master new skills and, consequently, assumed more administrative responsibilities.

In an article on becoming a secretary-administrator team, Koeppe (1981), a school superintendent in Colorado, asserted his secretary had become increasingly valuable to his office and to the operation of the school system. Some techniques for ensuring success in this cooperation process were suggested as follows:

1. Present an attitude to the public of accessibility, honesty, and respect.
2. Convey a friendly and helpful voice quality over the telephone.
3. Work together as a team to expedite tasks.
4. Initiate suggestions on improving the operation of the office. (p. 4)

Koeppe suggested using the techniques cited above to create a mind-set for the secretary and the administrator which would promote growth and on-the-job satisfaction. Koeppe concluded that educational secretaries and administrators should always strive to become more productive, both separately and as a team.
In a national survey in which selected outstanding principals were questioned as to their success, Drake and Roe (1986) reported an important factor contributing to the principals' success was a competent secretary. Certain guidelines were suggested for the principal to follow when working with the school secretary to avoid creating or reinforcing problems:

1. Establish a clear order of general priorities.
2. Convey responsibilities of the secretary to the teachers.
3. Periodically review office procedures with the entire staff.
4. Prevent office directives to the professional staff from going through the secretary.
5. Deter the secretary from making schoolwide decisions.
6. Provide membership for the secretary in an association for school secretaries.
7. Insist on an in-service plan for the office staff.

( pp. 398-399)

Drake and Roe emphasized that the school office was critical to the well-being of the organization. The office served as a workplace for communications, a source of information, and processor of contacts.

Cooper (1979) observed that the secretary often served as a buffering agent for the principal. In certain
instances, the secretary assumed the role of principal by arranging appointment times and screening visitors. Poor judgment displayed in such situations resulted in negative consequences. Cooper regarded the secretary as a vital resource for administrators and a valuable link in the chain of communications and intergroup relations.

Cross (1980) proposed some practical procedures for principals to use in order to gain more time. A key to successful time management for the principal was to work with the school secretary as a partner. Cross presented a questionnaire composed of 15 questions to be taken first by the principal and then by the secretary. After completion, the principal and secretary compare their responses and begin making improvements in teamwork. Cross emphasized that the principal could confide, delegate, and closely communicate with the secretary. This communication could lighten the load of the principal and enhance the job of the secretary.

Finch (1983) acknowledged that the school secretary helps make the principal a better executive. The principal needs to learn to work effectively with the school secretary. "An effective secretary knows when to take fast action (and how to take it), when to listen, when to ask questions, when to act, and when simply to take a message and see that it's acted on promptly" (p. 21, Finch, 1983).
Finch asserted that secretaries learned appropriate responses from experiences, but it was far better for the principal to anticipate problems that the secretary would experience and work out probable solutions together. Finch proposed six steps to help the principal and secretary work together: (a) consider the secretary as a member of the office team, (b) provide all the information the secretary needs to perform well, (c) delegate authority to act, (d) treat the secretary as a co-worker, (e) encourage professionalism, and (f) offer financial incentives and rewards. The above steps were intended to help the principal increase office productivity through the help of the secretary.

Future Considerations for School Secretaries

Manthay (1984) noted that the "information age is here" (p. 5). The information age broadened traditional roles and, more importantly, enhanced the secretary's relationship to management. Five roles of the secretary were identified by Manthay, and descriptions were given outlining how technology intensified the roles:

1. The secretary as secret-keeper - Increased access to more information multiplied the contributions and power of the secretary.
2. Consultant/sounding-board - The secretary, who examined and evaluated information, assisted in turning information into knowledge.

3. Assistant - The secretary, by doing additional research and analysis, became more interchangeable with other workers.

4. Facilitator/expediter - This role grew in new ways as information kept in computers generated new methods of communication.

5. Coordinator - Increased responsibility for juggling aspects of the organization resulted in growing recognition for the secretary. (pp. 5-6)

Manthay urged secretaries to welcome new technology. In Manthay’s opinion, the use of technology enhanced the accomplishments of the secretary’s tasks through better use of time and encouraged the secretary to exercise creativity.

Strassman (1987) predicted many secretarial activities would be displaced by computers in the near future. He forecasted the emergence of a new discipline called knowledge management which he viewed as an opportunity for secretaries. As offices inevitably incorporate electronic devices, secretaries need to use these devices to perform their duties. Strassman contended that the secretary’s role of controlling electronic devices would increase in importance.
Schonberg (1983) noted that executives found it difficult to staff the position of secretary. Secretaries are better trained than in the past. In addition to the usual secretarial skills, contemporary secretaries are trained in the latest use of office technology. Schonberg further asserted that employees may be unclear about what a secretary actually does, and this uncertainty may hamper the administrator's effort to recruit qualified secretaries. Schonberg suggested that business and industry work with high schools and colleges to encourage the inclusion of secretarial courses in the curriculum. Schonberg concluded job satisfaction, competitive salaries, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement are key factors in attracting individuals into secretarial positions.

The impact that electronic communication devices had on the business world and their influence on school offices was recognized by Prasch (1980). Prasch predicted that school secretaries reacted to these changes, either negatively or positively. Prasch encouraged secretaries to react in a positive manner. It was Prasch's contention that electronic devices enabled secretaries to perform routine tasks quickly and more efficiently. New goals became necessary for in-service programs; computer literacy was a top priority. Prasch predicted the "secretary's desk will be an important nerve center of an expanded flow of information" (Prasch, 1980, p. 5).
The secretary of the future, according to Hanna, Popham, and Tilton (1978), must be flexible by preparing for, accepting, and adjusting to change. A secretary who performs many different functions welcomes new technology. Word processing was noted as being foremost among the new technology because it provided freedom from routine typing and allowed the secretary time to accomplish more challenging work.

Porat and Will (1983) predicted that job opportunities are evolving from the need to process increasing information, thus, changing the direction for secretaries. Porat asserted the spread of electronic technology freed the secretary from doing routine, repetitious tasks and provided the opportunity to be an executive assistant who could work in a creative and professional manner.

With the advent of word processing systems, clarification of the secretary's role became urgent. Word processing was introduced in some instances to replace secretarial staff. In other cases, word processing systems were used to increase the productivity of the secretarial staff (Vinnicombe, 1982).

The conclusion of a non-educational study of secretaries conducted by Kelly Services (Lanser, 1984) revealed that automation relieved stress on the job and afforded greater productivity in many cases. Seventy-five
percent of the respondents questioned replied that automation allowed them to spend less time typing and more time doing work that involved decision-making. Forty-three percent claimed the use of electronic equipment improved the relationship with their supervisor. Secretaries under the age of 25 were the most excited about the benefits that computer technology had to offer.

According to Woodling (cited in Maynard, 1965), the secretary of the future must understand the office is the nerve center of the school. New demands will be created for the secretary; and, as a result, the secretary needs to develop reading and listening skills and learn how to use words in letters and reports. A learned secretary is not needed for the job; instead, a learning secretary is required. Woodling claimed that the school secretary should function as an administrative assistant, converting the school secretary's job into a profession.

Summary

Chapter 2 consisted of a review of literature regarding the school secretary. The chapter included five sections: (a) The Role of the School Secretary, (b) Selected Studies Pertaining to the School Secretary, (c) The Secretary and School Climate, (d) The Administrator and Secretary as a Team, and (e) Future Considerations for School Secretaries.
The first section, The Role of the School Secretary, presented strong evidence that secretaries played an important role in the operation of the school. The tasks secretaries performed varied greatly in nature, but usually required the secretary be competent in numerous areas. The literature reflected the secretary was responsible for clerical tasks as well as tasks that involved human relations.

The second section, Selected Studies Pertaining to the School Secretary, summarized selected theses and doctoral dissertations conducted about the school secretary. Several studies have been completed attempting to delineate the duties of the school secretaries: Anglin (1954), Benton (1956), Welling (1956), Jones (1967), and Sweeney (1986). Other studies attempted to analyze selected aspects of the position of the school secretary: Dark (1948), Jones (1967), Ford (1970), Russell (1973), and Bradshaw (1984). The responsibilities of a secretary were studied by Grovam (1958), Jones (1967), Russell (1973), and Stowell (1974). The relationship between the secretary and climate was described by Tavasci (1980). Chirco (1980) studied job satisfaction of school secretaries and Barnett (1978) sought to assess their in-service needs.

The third section, The Secretary and School Climate, focused on the importance of the school secretary as a
major factor in determining the climate of the school office. The office, in turn, had an effect on the total school program. The review of literature offered suggestions for ensuring a positive climate and described ways to avoid producing a negative climate.

The fourth section, The Administrator and Secretary as a Team, described how the administrator and secretary worked together. Steps were suggested to help the administrator and secretary function more effectively.

The fifth section, Future Considerations for School Secretaries, described the impact that electronic technology has had on the job of the school secretary. Ways in which the secretary needed to adapt or change in the future were included.

The review of literature reflected the viewpoint that the school secretary was a key factor in the operation of the school. The position of school secretary has often been overlooked and even neglected. A search of the literature revealed that the job of the school secretary was worthy of further study.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter contains the research design, questionnaire development, identification of the population, description of pilot studies, and refinement of the questionnaire. Reliability and validity measurements of the questionnaire and data analysis procedures are also included.

Research Design

This study, descriptive in nature, used the survey method as a means to collect data. Descriptive research is "fact finding with interpretation and analysis of trends in attitudes in terms of their commonality and potential for prediction" (Smith, 1987, p. 35). A review of literature indicated that educators agreed on the secretary's critical importance in the school setting, but research on the school secretary's role was limited. Research questions were selected based on a review of literature concerning the school secretary, and a survey instrument was developed by the researcher to obtain necessary data. Surveys enhance the literature within a given discipline by providing information about the state of current thought about a particular topic (Alreck & Settle, 1985).
Development of the Questionnaire

Several published instruments were examined in an attempt to find an appropriate measurement for this study. Educational instruments that were examined had been developed for the purpose of assessing administrators' and teachers' behavior; the school secretary was not specifically named as a subject of study. A number of instruments used in the business field were also considered, but these were deemed inappropriate for the school secretary. The search did not reveal a specific instrument that could be used or adapted to assess the school secretary's roles. Therefore, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher.

Five topics were selected from the literature review for study: (a) the school secretary's administrative role, (b) the school secretary's role in public relations, (c) the school secretary's role in the school operation, (d) tasks performed by the secretary, and (d) professional development activities for school secretaries. Items were selected from the literature review and categorized under each topic. Repetitious items were identified and deleted. Attempts were made to eliminate ambiguous wording and to write the items in terms of vocabulary understood by the participants. After refinement, 50 statements were chosen as relevant to the selected topics.
The questionnaire was structured for individual administration. Responses for the questionnaire were arranged on a five-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire was given informally to several educators to check for item clarity. Ambiguous and unsatisfactory items were restructured or eliminated.

Identification of the Population

The population for the study comprised 17 school systems from the First Tennessee Development District as listed in the Directory of Tennessee Public Schools, 1989-90. Excluded from the population were schools designated as follows: (1) elementary-secondary, K-12 and 1-12, (2) vocational schools, and (3) special education schools.

Three groups of individuals were targeted for the population: principals, school secretaries, and teachers. The chief administrator of each school and the secretary who most directly served the chief administrator comprised the first two groups. The third group consisted of one randomly-selected teacher from each school. Personnel lists of teachers were obtained from participating school systems. Each teacher on the individual system list was assigned a number beginning with 001 and running consecutively until all names were assigned numbers. Using
a table of random numbers, one teacher was selected from each school.

An initial pilot study was conducted in 14 Washington County schools; questionnaires were delivered to 42 participants. Responses to the questionnaire were analyzed, and the instrument was refined. An additional pilot study was conducted with 33 participants from 11 Johnson City schools. Washington County and Johnson City schools were eliminated from the final population because of their participation in the pilot studies.

The final population consisted of personnel from 15 school systems: Bristol, Carter, Cocke, Elizabethton, Greeneville, Greene County, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson County, Kingsport, Newport, Rogersville, Sullivan, and Unicoi. The final study had 465 participants.

Description of Pilot Studies

Two consecutive pilot studies were conducted to identify items in the questionnaire that needed additional improvement. Other considerations for pilot testing of the instrument were to: (a) determine the internal consistency or reliability, (b) establish validity, (c) ascertain the time required for individual administration, and (d) revise or delete items according to the results of SPSS/PC+ statistical procedures for reliability.

An assessment form was constructed to allow participants to offer their suggestions and comments
Four categories were listed on the assessment form for participants to rate aspects of the questionnaire. The categories were directions, format, clarity, and ease of use. Participants could rate each category as acceptable, needs improvement, or unacceptable. In addition, space was made available for participants to identify questions they wanted eliminated or added and to make additional comments.

Questionnaires, assessment forms, and a cover letter explaining the purpose of the pilot study and encouraging participation in the study (Appendix A) were delivered to each school. The instruments were collected after one week. Participants who had not responded were encouraged to submit the questionnaire at a later date.

**Validity of Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was given informally to several school secretaries, teachers, and principals whose current positions were similar to those in the selected population. In addition, the instrument was given to business secretaries for review. The participants responded to the questionnaire, made comments, and suggested changes. The questionnaire was revised based on the participants' input.
The instrument was reviewed for content and face validity by Charles Beseda, Associate Professor at East Tennessee State University, and William Isbell, a business professional employed by Tennessee Eastman Company. Each item was carefully reviewed for validity, readability, and ease of administration. Appropriate changes were made as a result of their comments and suggestions.

An initial pilot study was conducted in the Washington County Schools in December, 1990. Questionnaires were delivered to each school in Washington County, specifically addressed to the principal, secretary, and one randomly-selected teacher. Assessment forms were attached to the pilot questionnaire for use by the respondents. The participants' comments and suggestions were carefully reviewed. As a result, changes were made in the directions and the word structure of several items. Several respondents indicated the response scale was not appropriate for the questions.

Directions for administering the questionnaire were given orally to the person to whom the packets were delivered. This person was usually the secretary. Comments on the assessment forms revealed that some participants did not understand whether to respond to the questionnaire based on their perceptions of their current secretary or to respond based on their perceptions of school secretaries in general. Therefore, more specific directions were added to the second instrument.
A frequency procedure was conducted using the SPSS/PC+ statistical package to obtain frequency counts for individual items. Questions that had very little variance were eliminated, since the responses to these questions seemed obvious and did not serve any purpose in the questionnaire. Reliability procedures were conducted on the questionnaire. Items that displayed negative correlations with other items on the test were examined for possible elimination. After careful analysis, these items were retained; the negative correlations were judged to be a result of only one question allotted to a particular subject.

To increase the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, another pilot study was conducted. Permission was obtained from the Johnson City School System to conduct the second pilot study (Appendix B). Packets containing a cover letter, questionnaire, and an assessment form were delivered to each school (Appendix B). The same response scale was retained for the second study, but a question was added to the assessment form asking the respondents if another scale, such as always, often, occasionally, seldom, or never would be more appropriate. A question was added to determine the length of time required for the participants to complete the questionnaire.
Frequency and reliability procedures were conducted on the second pilot study. Questions were again examined and judged for possible elimination. Questions were eliminated if the frequency procedure indicated they were obvious questions. Negative correlations were examined, but the negative results were once again judged to be caused by the singularity of the questions.

The assessment forms were compiled and carefully analyzed. The majority of respondents stated a preference for another scale. Thus, a different rating scale ranging from always, often, occasionally, seldom, or never was selected for the final questionnaire. The average length of time required to complete the questionnaire, as reported by the respondents, was 15 minutes.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability procedures were conducted on the individual items in the questionnaire after each pilot study. However, because of the limited size of the pilot sample, reliability coefficients could not be estimated.

The reliability procedures were again conducted after the final collection of data. Procedures used were Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the 41-item instrument, excluding demographics, were .8643 with a standardized item alpha of .8712. Split-half reliability coefficients
revealed an alpha for Part 1 of .7991 and an alpha for Part 2 of .7407. Split-half reliability coefficients revealed correlation between forms of .6908, equal length Spearman-Brown .8171, Guttman Split-half .8139, and an unequal-length Spearman-Brown of .8172.

Data Collection Procedures

A packet which contained a cover letter requesting participation in the study and assuring anonymity, a questionnaire, a Scantron answer form, and a stamped, addressed envelope was mailed to each participant (Appendix C). Two weeks later, a follow-up letter was sent to participants who had not responded (Appendix D).

A total of 394 questionnaires were returned. However, three questionnaires were returned with a notation attached reporting their school did not have a secretary. The total of usable questionnaires was 391 or an 84% return.

Data Analysis Procedures

The hypotheses were stated in the research format in Chapter 1. For purposes of statistical analysis, the null format for each hypothesis was tested. The minimum acceptable level for determining statistical significance for differences was the .05 level. The one-way analysis of variance procedure, ANOVA, was used to test the null hypotheses that the means of the three groups in the
population were equal. The groups were analyzed in terms of their perceptions of six variables: the secretary's administrative role, the secretary's public relations role, the secretary's extent of operation in the school, the secretary's performance of clerical tasks, the secretary's performance of human relations tasks, and the participation of the school secretary in professional development activities.

The primary assumptions for using the analysis of variance procedure were randomness and equal variances among all the groups in the population. Randomness was acquired by surveying all the principals and secretaries in the population and by using a table of random numbers to randomly select the teachers in the population.

Norusis (1990) stated that many procedures for testing for homogeneity of variance "are not very useful since they are influenced by characteristics of the data other than the variance" (p. B-29). Even if the variances are different, there is "no cause for alarm" if the sample sizes in the groups are similar because the ANOVA test is not particularly sensitive to violations of equality of variance. Since the sample sizes for all the groups were similar, the assumptions for using the analysis of variance procedure were met.

A multiple comparisons procedure was used to identify the pairs of means that were different from each other and to name the differences among the three groups of
participants that were statistically significant. The multiple comparison procedure used was the Student-Newman-Keuls test.

The SPSS/PC+ Statistical Package was used in analyzing and interpreting the data. The responses from the questionnaires were scanned from the Scantron Answer Forms (3200) using a Scantron 5200s machine. The resulting data were downloaded onto micro-disks into an ASCII file for use with the SPSS/PC+ package.

**Summary**

The research methodology and procedures were presented in this chapter. Five topics were selected for study from the review of literature concerning the school secretary. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data. Two pilot studies were conducted to refine the questionnaire and establish validity and reliability.

The population for the actual study consisted of 465 principals, teachers, and school secretaries from the public schools in the First Tennessee Development District. Approximately 84% of the questionnaires were returned. The data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance and Student-Newman-Keuls statistical procedures.
CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions regarding selected aspects of the school secretary's role in public schools. Topics selected for study included: the secretary's administrative role, the secretary's public relations role, the extent of the secretary's involvement in the school operation, the secretary's performance of clerical and human relations tasks, and the secretary's participation in professional development activities. Statistical procedures were used to compare the responses of the three groups in the population regarding the selected variables.

Pre-Analysis Preparation of Data

Data were obtained from a researcher-developed questionnaire that was completed by principals, teachers, and school secretaries. Four hundred sixty-five questionnaires were mailed to the target population; 391 were received for an 84% return rate. Data describing the number of respondents are presented in Table 1.
Table 1
Number of Respondents Surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants marked their responses on Scantron Form 3200. Answer forms were examined to verify that respondents had completely darkened the boxes intended for their responses. Stray pencil marks outside the response boxes that would be detected by the scanning machine were erased.

Response forms were checked for correct coding of the demographic data. The answer form did not allow a sufficient number of boxes for the wide range of responses given in the category of grade levels of the respondents' school. Unanticipated and missing responses on question 43 concerning grade levels in the respondent's school were coded on the answer sheets by the researcher based on the Directory of Tennessee Public Schools, 1989-90. The
responses were divided into three categories: elementary, which included grades K-2, K-4, K-5, K-6, K-7, K-8, and 3-5; middle, which included 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8; and high school, which included 7-12, 8-12, 9-12, and 10-12. In addition, an identification number was assigned to each participant and coded on the answer forms.

The data were recoded to be compatible with the SPSS statistical program. The alpha responses were recoded to numeric responses: responses initially coded as A were recoded as 5 for always; B responses were recoded as 4 for often; C responses were recoded as 3 for occasionally; D responses were recoded as 2 for seldom; and E responses were recoded as 1 for never.

Demographic Data for Respondents

Demographic data were obtained from three items on the questionnaire. The first demographic item required the participants to categorize their school in terms of grade levels. The categories were divided into three divisions: elementary, middle, and high school. Of the 391 respondents, 278 or 71% worked in elementary schools; 62 or 16% worked in middle schools; 51 or 13% worked in high schools. Data depicting the frequency and percentage distributions are presented in Table 2.
Participants were asked to indicate the range of student population in their school. The two leading categories were 200-399, with 146 or 38% of the respondents, and 400-599, with 126 or 32% of the respondents. Sixty-seven or 17% of the respondents worked in schools with fewer than 200 students; 146 or 38% had 200-399 students; 126 or 32% had 400-599 students; 20 or 5% had 600-799 students; and 32 or 8% had 800 or more students. Data are presented in Table 3.
Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Student Population in Participants' School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 200</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-399</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-599</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-799</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 and over</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>391</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last demographic item was specifically addressed to secretaries. Secretaries were asked to report how many hours they worked per week. Of the 137 secretaries surveyed, 133 or 97% reported they worked 35 or more hours per week. One secretary or 1% reported working less than 14 hours per week; one secretary or 1% reported working 15-24 hours per week; and two secretaries or 2% reported working 25-34 hours per week. Data are presented in Table 4.
Table 4

Hours School Secretaries Work Per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than 14 Hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 Hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 Hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 or More Hours</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Research Questions

Research questions were presented in Chapter 1. Six variables were distinguished based on the research questions: the school secretary’s administrative role, public relations role, involvement in the school operation, involvement with clerical tasks, involvement with human relations tasks, and participation in professional development activities.

Research Question 1

Do school secretaries have an administrative role in the school hierarchy? Questions 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 27, 34, and 37 on the questionnaire (Appendix E) assessed the school secretary’s administrative
role in the school hierarchy. Of the three groups of respondents, 9% of principals, 11% of teachers, and 18% of secretaries reported that the school secretary always had an administrative role in the school hierarchy. Additional responses on the questions concerning the school secretary's administrative role were as follows: 18% of principals, 18% of teachers, and 21% of secretaries marked often; 20% of principals, 19% of teachers, and 18% of secretaries marked occasionally; 22% of principals, 19% of teachers, and 15% of secretaries marked seldom; and 31% of principals, 33% of teachers, and 28% of secretaries marked never. Participants' responses on the administrative role variable are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Administrative Role of the School Secretary
as Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2

Are public relations an important aspect of the school secretary's role? Questions 1, 3, 14, and 26 on the questionnaire (Appendix E) assessed the school secretary's public relations role. Of the three groups of respondents, 60% of principals, 46% of teachers, and 74% of secretaries reported that the school secretary always performed a public relations role in the school. Additional responses on the questions concerning the school secretary's public relations role were as follows: 28% of principals, 31% of teachers, and 21% of secretaries marked often; 10% of principals, 18% of teachers, and 4% of secretaries marked occasionally; 2% of principals, 4% of teachers, and 1% of secretaries marked seldom; and none of the principals, 1% of teachers, and none of the secretaries marked never. Participants' responses on the public relations role variable are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Public Relations Role of the School Secretary as Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3

To what extent are school secretaries involved in the operation of the school? Questions 6, 12, 21, and 35 on the questionnaire (Appendix E) assessed the secretary's involvement in the school operation. Of the three groups of respondents, 22% of principals, 24% of teachers, and 28% of secretaries reported that the school secretary was always involved in the operation of the school. Additional responses on the questions concerning the secretary's involvement in the school operation were as follows: 24% of principals, 21% of teachers, and 21% of secretaries marked often; 20% of principals, 15% of teachers, and 16% of secretaries marked occasionally; 17% of principals, 16% of teachers, and 16% of secretaries marked seldom; and 17% of principals, 24% of teachers, and 19% of secretaries marked never. Participants' responses on the school operations role variable are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
School Secretaries' Involvement in the School Operation as Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4

Are school secretaries involved more with clerical tasks or human relations tasks? Questions 13, 15, 23, 29, 38, 39, and 40 on the questionnaire focused on clerical tasks (Appendix E). Of the three groups of respondents, 45% of principals, 49% of teachers, and 64% of secretaries reported that the school secretary was always involved with clerical tasks. Additional responses on the questions concerning the extent of the school secretary's performance of clerical tasks were as follows: 31% of principals, 28% of teachers, and 23% of secretaries marked often; 13% of principals, 13% of teachers, and 6% of secretaries marked occasionally; 6% of principals, 5% of teachers, and 3% of secretaries marked seldom; and 5% of principals, 5% of teachers, and 4% of secretaries marked never. Participants' responses on the clerical tasks variable are presented in Table 8.

Table 8
School Secretaries' Involvement With Clerical Tasks as Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions 11, 18, 30, 31, 32, and 41 focused on human relations tasks (Appendix E). Of the three groups of respondents, 31% of principals, 30% of teachers, and 49% of secretaries reported that the school secretary was always involved with human relations tasks. Other responses on the questions concerning the extent of the school secretary's performance of human relations tasks were as follows: 31% of principals, 26% of teachers, and 27% of secretaries marked often; 19% of principals, 19% of teachers, and 12% of secretaries marked occasionally; 11% of principals, 15% of teachers, and 6% of secretaries marked seldom; and 8% of principals, 10% of teachers, and 6% of secretaries marked never. Participants' responses on the human relations tasks variable are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
School Secretaries' Involvement with Human Relations Tasks as Perceived by Principals, Teachers, and School Secretaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 5

Do school secretaries participate in professional development activities? Questions 24, 28, 33, and 36 on the questionnaire determined the school secretary's participation in professional development activities (Appendix E). Of the three groups of respondents, 25% of principals, 16% of teachers, and 26% of secretaries reported that the school secretary always participated in professional development activities. Additional responses on the questions assessing the school secretary's participation in professional development activities were as follows: 18% of principals, 19% of teachers, and 21% of secretaries marked often; 25% of principals, 22% of teachers, and 17% of secretaries marked occasionally; 17% of principals, 18% of teachers, and 13% of secretaries marked seldom; and 15% of principals, 25% of teachers, and 23% of secretaries marked never. Participants' responses on the professional development activities variable are presented in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypotheses Analyzed Using One-way Analysis of Variance and Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure

The declarative format for each hypothesis was stated in Chapter 1. For purposes of statistical analysis, the null format stated that no differences existed among the three groups of respondents for the six selected variables. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were significant differences among the three groups of participants. The .05 level of significance was established for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses. The ANOVA procedure showed significant differences for all hypotheses. The Student-Newman-Keuls procedure was applied to all hypotheses to determine where significant differences were found among the three groups.

Degrees of freedom are indicated by DF, sum of squares by SS, and mean squares by MS. Significant differences are indicated by an asterisk beside the value. Although a total of 391 responses were analyzed, the tables reflect varying numbers because of missing responses.

Null Hypothesis 1

Null hypothesis 1 stated there will be no significant differences among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's administrative role. The results of the analysis are listed in Table 11.
Table 11
One-way Analysis of Variance Procedure for Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Administrative Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>F-Prob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2283.4255</td>
<td>1141.7127</td>
<td>14.0504</td>
<td>&lt;.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>29578.1004</td>
<td>81.2585</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>31861.5259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05

Statistical treatment of the data revealed a significant difference. The F-ratio was 14.05 with the F-probability being <.01, which was less than the .05 level.

Further analysis was conducted to determine where the significant differences were found. Results of the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure are presented in Table 12. Responses were analyzed for principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's administrative role which resulted in a grand mean of 39.76. In the principals' group, responses were analyzed which revealed a mean of 37.98. Analysis of the teachers' group revealed a mean of 38.05, and the secretaries' group resulted in a mean of 43.26. Specific differences
among the three groups of participants are designated by an asterisk. The principals' perceptions of the school secretary's administrative role differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions. The teachers' perceptions of the school secretary's administrative role differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 12
Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure of Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Administrative Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37.9828</td>
<td>Principals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.0484</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.2598</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .05 level

Null Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis 2 stated there will be no significant difference among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's public relations role. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 13.
Table 13
One-way Analysis of Variance Procedure for Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Public Relations Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>F-Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>411.5080</td>
<td>205.7540</td>
<td>34.0561</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among Groups</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>2295.8183</td>
<td>6.0416</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>2707.3264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical treatment of the data revealed a significant difference among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the secretary's public relations role, as evidenced by the F-ratio of 34.06 with a F-probability of <.01.

An additional analysis was conducted to determine where the significant differences were found. Results of the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure are presented in Table 14. A grand mean for the three groups was 22.07. Analysis of the principals' responses resulted in a 22.30 mean, a mean of 20.71 for the teachers' responses, and a mean of 23.18 for the secretaries' responses. Specific differences among the three groups of respondents are designated by an
asterisk. The principals' perceptions differed significantly from the teachers' perceptions; the principals' perceptions differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions; and the teachers' perceptions differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions. Thus, the null hypotheses was rejected.

Table 14

Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure of Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Public Relations Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.7109</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.3025</td>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.1838</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis 3 stated there will be no significant differences among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the secretary's involvement in the school operation. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 15.
Statistical treatment of the data revealed a significant difference. The F-ratio was 3.68 with the F-probability being .03, which was less than the .05 significance level.

Further analysis was conducted to determine where the significant differences were found. Results of the Student-Newman-Keuls procedures are presented in Table 16. The grand mean for the three groups was 12.67. Analysis of the principals' responses resulted in a mean of 12.18, a mean of 12.90 for the teachers' responses, and a mean of 12.94 for the secretaries' responses. Specific differences among the groups of participants are designated by an
The principals' perceptions differed significantly from the teachers' perceptions, and the teachers' perceptions differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 16
Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure of Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Involvement in the School Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.1797</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9030</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9417</td>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis 4

Null hypothesis 4 stated there will be no significant difference among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's involvement with clerical tasks. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 17.
Table 17
One-way Analysis of Variance Procedure for Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Involvement with Clerical Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>F-Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>423.6328</td>
<td>211.8164</td>
<td>19.1224</td>
<td>&lt;.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>4175.9751</td>
<td>11.0769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>4599.6079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05

Statistical treatment of the data revealed a significant difference. The F-ratio was 19.12 with the F-probability being <.01, which was less than the .05 significance level.

Further analysis was conducted to determine where the significant differences were found. Results of the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure are presented in Table 18. The grand mean of the three groups was 29.38. The principals' group had a mean score of 28.47, the teachers had a mean score of 28.83, and the secretaries had a mean score of 30.83. Specific differences among the three groups are designated by an asterisk.
The principals' perceptions differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions to the extent that secretaries worked on clerical tasks, and the teachers perceptions differed significantly from the secretaries' perceptions. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 18

Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure of Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Involvement with Clerical Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28.4661</td>
<td>Principals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.8320</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.8321</td>
<td>Secretaries*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis 5

Null hypothesis 5 stated there will be no significant difference among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's involvement with human relations tasks. The results of the one-way analysis of variance procedure are presented in Table 19.
Table 19

One-way Analysis of Variance Procedure for Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Involvement with Human Relations Tasks

| Source        | D.F. | SS     | MS      | F-Ratio | F-Prob.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>349.1358</td>
<td>174.5679</td>
<td>24.5345</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>2725.1259</td>
<td>7.1152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>3074.2617</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05

Statistical treatment of the data revealed a significant difference among the three groups. The F-ratio was 24.53 with the F-probability being <.01, which was less than the .05 significance level.

Further analysis was conducted to determine where the significant differences were found. Results of the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure are presented in Table 20. The grand mean for the three groups was 19.10. In the principals' group, responses were analyzed which revealed a mean of 18.70. Analysis of the teachers' group revealed a mean of 18.21, and the secretaries' group resulted in a mean of 20.40. Specific differences were found between the
teachers' and secretaries' perceptions and between the principals' and secretaries' perceptions. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 20

Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure of Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Involvement with Human Relations Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.2093</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.7049</td>
<td>Principals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.4000</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis 6

Null Hypothesis 6 stated there will be no significant difference among the principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions of the school secretary's participation in professional development activities. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 21.
Table 21
One-way Analysis of Variance Procedure for Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Participation in Professional Development Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>F-Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81.6045</td>
<td>40.8022</td>
<td>3.2388</td>
<td>.0403*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>4573.0977</td>
<td>12.5981</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>4654.7022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05

Statistical treatment of the data revealed a significant difference. The F-ratio was 3.24 with the F-probability being .04, which was less than the .05 significance level.

Further analysis was conducted to determine where the significant differences were found. Results of the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure are presented in Table 22. The grand mean for the three groups was 12.41. The mean score for the principals' group was 13.01, the teachers' mean score was 11.82, and the secretaries' group was 12.41. Specific differences among the three groups of
participants are designated by an asterisk. The principals' perceptions differed significantly from the teachers' perceptions regarding the participation of school secretaries in professional development activities. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 22

Student-Newman-Keuls Procedure of Principals', Teachers', and Secretaries' Perceptions of the School Secretary's Participation in Professional Development Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.8174</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.4118</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.0087</td>
<td>Principals *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05

Summary

Six null hypotheses were formulated for testing. The one-way analysis of variance procedure was used to test the null hypotheses for significant differences. Significant differences were shown for all null hypotheses. The
Student-Newman-Keuls procedure was applied to the data to determine where the significant differences were among the three groups of respondents. As a result of the data analysis, all of the null hypotheses were rejected.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the study. Findings and conclusions based on the data analysis are presented. Recommendations based on the findings are also included.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare principals', teachers', and secretaries' perceptions regarding selected aspects of the school secretary's role in the public schools. This study was concerned with these questions:

1. Do school secretaries have an administrative role in the school hierarchy?
2. Are public relations an important aspect of the school secretary's role?
3. To what extent are school secretaries involved in the operation of the school?
4. Are school secretaries involved more with clerical tasks or human relations tasks?
5. Do school secretaries participate in professional development activities?

The population for this study included 17 school systems from the First Tennessee Development District, as identified by the Directory of Tennessee Public Schools.
The principal, secretary, and one randomly-selected teacher from each school in the First Tennessee Development District was chosen to participate in the study. Two school systems, Washington County and Johnson City, were used as the population for pilot studies. The remaining 15 school systems were used in the final study: Bristol, Carter, Cocke, Elizabethton, Greeneville, Greene County, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson County, Kingsport, Newport, Rogersville, Sullivan, and Unicoi.

A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to gather data. The content of the instrument was based on recurring themes from the literature review concerning school secretaries. Six variables concerning the school secretary were selected for study: administrative role, public relations role, involvement in the school operation, performance of clerical tasks, performance of human relations tasks, and participation in professional development activities. Educators and business professionals examined the instrument for content validity. Two consecutive pilot studies were conducted to establish reliability and validity of the instrument. Changes were made on the original instrument as a result of the pilot data and evaluation forms completed by the participants. The final, revised questionnaires were mailed in Spring, 1991, to 465 participants. Three hundred
ninety-one questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 84%.

Six null hypotheses were tested for significance. The one-way analysis of variance was used to test for significant differences among the three groups of participants. In addition, the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure was used to test where the significant differences were found. The .05 probability level was used to determine statistical significance. As a result of the statistical procedures, all the null hypotheses were rejected.

Findings

The problem of this study was that school secretaries are important to the operation of a school, but no one knows how much influence they have or the extent of their duties. Based on the significant differences among the participants' perceptions, the findings of the study were as follows:

1. The position of the typical school secretary in the First Tennessee Development District is a full-time position. Of the 137 secretaries surveyed, 97% reported they worked 35 or more hours per week.

2. Secretaries perceived that they assumed a greater administrative role in the school than the principals or teachers perceived. According to the secretaries surveyed, the majority responded that
they had authority over students, made assignments for support staff, covered for teachers who had to leave their classrooms for emergencies, and helped supervise students during bus pick-up, lunch, playground, or other activities. Further, the majority of those surveyed were of the opinion that the secretary supervised students who were waiting to see the principal for disciplinary action and believed the secretary played a visible role in defining the work load of the principal. They also indicated that the secretary contacted and arranged for substitutes in teacher absences, reprimanded students who violated school policies, made assignments for school volunteers, and determined the quantity of classroom supplies to be distributed. In addition, the secretaries who were surveyed responded that the secretary controlled the use of the copy machines, handled minor complaints from parents without requiring assistance from the principal or a teacher, acted as the principal’s substitute in the principal’s absence, screened the principal’s telephone calls, and made decisions of an administrative nature.

3. Secretaries perceived that they assumed more of a public relations role in the school than principals or teachers perceived. Principals perceived that school secretaries assumed more of a public
relations role than teachers assumed. Examples of the secretary's public relations role were that the secretary made people feel welcome when they entered the office, showed genuine concern for people, performed extra services for teachers, made it easier for others to do their job, and had a positive effect on the atmosphere of the school.

4. Principals and secretaries perceived that secretaries were more involved in the school operation than teachers perceived. Examples of the school operations role variable were that the secretary attended faculty meetings, served on committees that were instrumental in making decisions concerning the operation of the school, functioned as a primary source of information, and was included in social activities involving teachers.

5. Secretaries perceived that they were more involved with clerical tasks than principals or teachers perceived. Examples of clerical tasks were that the secretary spent the majority of the day doing paperwork, assumed the role of banker by supplying change, accepting checks, and checking the balance of school accounts, performed routine clerical duties, and functioned as a record keeper. Other examples included use of a computer to complete many tasks and distribution of mail.
6. Secretaries perceived that they were more involved with human relations tasks than principals or teachers perceived. Examples in the human relations category were that the secretary administered first aid to students, acted as a friend and a confidant to the students, oriented new teachers and substitute teachers to the school, and spent a majority of the day interacting with people. Other examples were that the secretary functioned as a counselor and advisor for teachers and was responsible for answering the office telephone.

7. Principals perceived that secretaries participated more in professional development activities than teachers perceived. Examples of the professional development activities variable were that the secretary attended inservice programs designed for secretaries, participated in regularly scheduled workshops for secretaries, belonged to professional organizations, and sought opportunities for professional development.

Conclusions

From the results of the data analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There is a disparity among the perceptions of principals, teachers, and school secretaries concerning the school secretary's role.
2. School secretaries perceive that they perform a greater number of tasks than principals or teachers perceive.

3. School secretaries perceive their role in the school setting as being more complex than principals or teachers perceive.

Recommendations
As a result of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Administrators should clarify the secretary’s role in their individual school in order for secretaries to achieve maximum effectiveness in the school setting.

2. Education courses for principals and teachers should emphasize the potential for discrepancies concerning the school secretary’s role.

3. Job descriptions for school secretaries should be developed or refined to clarify the school secretary’s role.

4. Further studies should be conducted on additional aspects of the school secretary’s role. Demographic data concerning the school secretary, such as pay, fringe benefits, length of employment, and job satisfaction need to be analyzed.

5. Interviews should be conducted with a sample of respondents to gain an in-depth analysis of their
perceptions concerning the school secretary's role. Efforts should be made to investigate the disparities among the participants' responses.

6. School secretaries should be provided with the option of participating in workshops and conferences for school secretaries. With the advent of increasing technology, secretaries need opportunities to learn about the latest office procedures. Further, participation in in-service activities is a requirement for secretaries in secondary schools when such schools are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a regional accreditation agency.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER, ASSESSMENT FORM, AND
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PILOT STUDY I
Dear Educator:

Would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and assessment form? By way of introduction, I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I am conducting a study on the role of the school secretary.

Before sending out the questionnaire that I plan to use in my study, I would like you to respond to the instrument and react to its clarity and relevance. After filling out the questionnaire, please complete the assessment form and give me your comments and offer suggestions for improvement.

Your assistance with this part of the study will be appreciated. The responses that you give will be helpful in developing my final questionnaire. Neither your name nor your school system’s name will be identified in this research.

Please return the completed questionnaire and assessment form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Patty Richards
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosures
# ASSESSMENT OF QUESTIONNAIRE

After filling out the questionnaire, please check the appropriate box beside each item.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>A - Acceptable</th>
<th>NI - Needs Improvement</th>
<th>UA - Unacceptable</th>
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<td>1. Directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Format</td>
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<td>3. Clarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ease of Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Questions that should be eliminated. Please list number(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Questions that should be added.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Additional comments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE.
MARK YOUR RESPONSE FROM AGREE STRONGLY (A)
TO DISAGREE STRONGLY (D)
OR NO OPINION (E)

Agree Strongly........A Disagree ...........C
Agree ..................B Disagree Strongly.....D
No Opinion........E

* * *

AS A D DS NO

1. The secretary has a written job description.... A B C D E

2. The secretary often makes assignments for
the support staff (e.g. custodians,
instructional assistants, school bus drivers,
and cafeteria workers).................. A B C D E

3. The secretary shows genuine concern for
people................................. A B C D E

4. The secretary has a positive effect on the
atmosphere of the school................ A B C D E

5. When teachers are absent from school, they
contact the secretary who personally arranges
for their substitute.................... A B C D E

6. The secretary serves on committees that are
instrumental in making decisions concerning the
operation of the school............... A B C D E

7. When the principal is out of the building, the
secretary acts as the principal's substitute... A B C D E

8. The secretary covers for teachers who have to
leave their classrooms for emergencies........ A B C D E

9. The secretary makes decisions of an administrative
nature..................................... A B C D E

10. The secretary helps to supervise students in
situations such as bus pick-up, lunch,
playground activities.................... A B C D E

11. The secretary spends a majority of time
interacting with people.................. A B C D E

12. The secretary is included in social activities
that involve faculty and/or students......... A B C D E
13. The secretary often assumes the role of banker by supplying change, accepting checks, and checking the balance of accounts.............. A B C D E

14. The secretary is willing to perform extra services for teachers................................. A B C D E

15. The secretary controls who will use the copy machines........................................ A B C D E

16. The secretary plays a visible role in defining the work load of the principal.............. A B C D E

17. The secretary often handles minor complaints from parents without requiring assistance from the principal or a teacher................................. A B C D E

18. The secretary attends faculty meetings................................................................. A B C D E

19. The secretary reprimands students who violate school policies................................. A B C D E

20. The secretary uses a computer to complete many tasks........................................ A B C D E

21. Leaders in the school district encourage secretaries to seek opportunities for professional development................................. A B C D E

22. The secretary screens telephone callers and decides who will talk to the principal...... A B C D E

23. The cooperativeness of the secretary makes it easier for others to do their job.......... A B C D E

24. The secretary decides who will receive duplicating paper, textbooks, and/or classroom supplies, and determines the quantity to be distributed................................. A B C D E
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree Strongly (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (C)</th>
<th>Agree (B)</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly (D)</th>
<th>No Opinion (E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. The secretary participates in regularly scheduled workshops for secretaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The majority of the secretary's time is consumed with paperwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. In the absence of the school nurse, the secretary administers first aid to students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. The students consider the secretary to be a friend and a confidant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. The secretary helps to orient new teachers and substitute teachers to the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The secretary helps to make support staff feel welcome in the office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. The secretary attends inservice programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. The secretary is a primary source of information for the principal, staff, and students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. The secretary is perceived as having authority over the students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. When answering the telephone, the secretary conveys a genuine tone of friendliness and helpfulness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. The secretary supervises students who have been sent to the office for discipline reasons and are waiting to see the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The secretary only makes decisions that have the approval of the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
37. The secretary is a member of an informal group of teachers who have considerable influence in the school................................. A B C D E

38. The secretary greets teachers warmly when they enter the office......................................................... A B C D E

39. When visitors enter the office, the secretary greets them politely and makes every attempt to provide them with the information they are seeking......................................................... A B C D E

40. The secretary is in charge of assigning tasks for parents and members of the community who volunteer to work in the school............................ A B C D E

41. The secretary does not become annoyed when interrupted................................................................. A B C D E

42. The secretary often does things to improve the efficiency of the operation of the school..... A B C D E

43. The secretary is polite and helpful to students......................................................................................... A B C D E

44. The secretary spends the majority of the time doing typing, data entry (computer), and record keeping................................................................. A B C D E

45. The secretary has many clerical responsibilities and these responsibilities are the most important part of the secretary's job................. A B C D E

46. The secretary keeps the principal informed about situations requiring attention......... A B C D E

47. The secretary personally notifies staff members if they have reports that need to be completed................................. A B C D E
MARK YOUR RESPONSE FROM AGREE STRONGLY (A)
TO DISAGREE STRONGLY (D)
OR NO OPINION (E)

Agree Strongly........A  Disagree ............C
Agree ..................B  Disagree Strongly.....D
No Opinion.............E

*   *   *

48. The secretary maintains poise in stressful situations............................... A  B  C  D  E
APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH, COVER LETTER, ASSESSMENT
FORM, AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PILOT
STUDY II
## Approval Form for Research Proposals

**Requestor's Name:** Patty Richards

**Title of Research Proposal:** The Role of the School Secretary (A pilot study)

### Step 1: Research Review Committee Evaluation

- We temporarily withhold approval of your proposal until you address the questions we have raised about it in the attached letter. Include this form with resubmission of your proposal.
- We conditionally approve your proposal and you may proceed with making contact with principal(s) of the appropriate school(s), but it is necessary for you to address the questions we have raised about your proposal in the attached letter.
- We approve your proposal. Proceed with obtaining approval of the principal(s) of the appropriate school(s).

### Step 2: Principal's Evaluation

- I temporarily withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our school for reasons stated in the attached correspondence. Include this form with the resubmission of your proposal.

Principal 1: __________________________ Date: __________
Principal 2: __________________________ Date: __________
Principal 3: __________________________ Date: __________

I approve your proposal. Please forward this form to the central office for approval of the superintendent.

Principal 1: ________________ Date: __________
Principal 2: ________________ Date: __________
Principal 3: ________________ Date: __________

Note: This was discussed during the principal's meeting on 29 Jan 91. No principals voiced objection to the step 3: Superintendent's Evaluation study; however, participation is on a voluntary basis.

I withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our school for the reasons stated in the attached correspondence. I am returning to the review committee a copy of your proposal, a copy of this form, and a copy of my correspondence to you. They will communicate with you further.

I approve your proposal. Proceed with your research according to the conditions agreed upon in the preceding sections of this form and your research proposal.

Signature of Superintendent: ________________ Date: __________

Note: The signed copy of this form should be returned to the research review committee for its records.

---

**Johnson City Board of Education**

Page 2 of 2
February 5, 1991

Dear Educator:

Would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and assessment form? By way of introduction, I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I am conducting a study on the role of the school secretary.

Before sending out the questionnaire that I plan to use in my study, I would like you to respond to the instrument and react to its clarity and relevance. After filling out the questionnaire, please complete the assessment form and give me your comments and offer suggestions for improvement.

Your assistance with this part of the study will be appreciated. The responses that you give will be helpful in developing my final questionnaire. Neither your name nor your school system’s name will be identified in this research.

Please return the completed questionnaire and assessment form in the self-addressed envelope which has been provided for your use. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Patty Richards
Patty Richards
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosures
ASSESSMENT OF QUESTIONNAIRE

After filling out the questionnaire, please check the appropriate box beside each item.

A = Acceptable  NI = Needs Improvement  UA = Unacceptable

1. Directions
2. Format
3. Clarity
4. Ease of Use
5. Questions that should be eliminated. Please list number(s).

6. Questions that should be added.

7. In your opinion, would a rating scale such as the following be more appropriate for this questionnaire?
   a. Often
   b. Sometimes
   c. Seldom
   d. Never
   e. Not Applicable

8. How much time did it take you to complete this questionnaire?

9. Additional comments.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE.
SECRETARIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to acquire a description of the role of the school secretary. For the purposes of this study, the school secretary is the one who most directly serves the principal and works a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours per week. Other secretaries in the school are not to be considered. Please respond to the questions as they apply to the secretary in your school this year. All responses are anonymous. It is vitally important to the success of the study that your responses be an honest assessment of how the secretary in your school functions.

Please read each statement carefully. Mark all responses on the answer form provided. Make dark marks (--) and use a #2 pencil. Mark your responses from "Always" (A) to "Never" (E).

Always .........................................A
Often .........................................B
Occasionally ..................................C
Seldom .........................................D
Never .........................................E

NOTE: This questionnaire is to be completed based on your perceptions of what the secretary is actually doing in your school this year. It is not to be answered in terms of how you think a school secretary should perform.

The questionnaire and subsequent study are not an evaluation of particular individuals. The purpose of the study is to describe the roles and responsibilities of school secretaries in public schools as perceived by principals, teachers, and secretaries.

Names of principals, teachers, and secretaries will not be identified or reported in any research. All responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

East Tennessee State University
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Box 19000A
Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-0002
Telephone: (615) 929-4415, 4430

Patty Richards
Doctoral Candidate
1. The secretary makes people feel welcome when they enter the office................ A B C D E
2. The secretary supervises students who are waiting to see the principal for disciplinary action.......................... A B C D E
3. The secretary shows genuine concern for people........................................ A B C D E
4. The secretary has a positive effect on the atmosphere of the school....................... A B C D E
5. The secretary contacts and arranges for substitutes in teacher absences................ A B C D E
6. The secretary serves on committees that are instrumental in making decisions concerning the operation of the school.......................... A B C D E
7. The secretary acts as the principal's substitute when the principal is out of the building...... A B C D E
8. The secretary covers for teachers who have to leave their classrooms for emergencies.... A B C D E
9. The secretary makes decisions of an administrative nature................................ A B C D E
10. The secretary helps to supervise students during bus pick-up, lunch, playground or other activities................................. A B C D E
11. The secretary only makes decisions as authorized........................................ A B C D E
HARK YOUR RESPONSE FROM ALWAYS (A)
TO NEVER (E)

Always..................A  Occasionally........D
Often..................B  Seldom............C
Never................E

*  *  *

12. The secretary is included in social activities
   involving teachers........................................ A  B  C  D  E

13. The secretary assumes the role of banker
   by supplying change, accepting checks, and
   checking the balance of school accounts........... A  B  C  D  E

14. The secretary performs extra services for
   teachers.................................................. A  B  C  D  E

15. The secretary's foremost responsibility is to
   complete clerical tasks............................... A  B  C  D  E

16. The secretary makes assignments for school
   volunteers............................................... A  B  C  D  E

17. The secretary controls the use of the copy
   machine.................................................. A  B  C  D  E

18. The secretary functions as a counselor and
   advisor for teachers................................. A  B  C  D  E

19. The secretary plays a visible role in defining
   the work load of the principal.................... A  B  C  D  E

20. The secretary handles minor complaints from
   parents without requiring assistance from the
   principal or a teacher............................... A  B  C  D  E

21. The secretary attends faculty meetings......... A  B  C  D  E

22. The secretary reprimands students who violate
   school policies........................................ A  B  C  D  E
MARK YOUR RESPONSE FROM ALWAYS (A) TO NEVER (E)

Always..................A Occasionally............C
Often..................B Seldom.................D
Never................E

* * *

23. The secretary uses a computer to complete
many tasks.............................................. A B C D E

24. Leaders in the school district encourage
secretaries to seek opportunities for
professional development....................... A B C D E

25. The secretary screens the principal's telephone
calls.................................................... A B C D E

26. The cooperative nature of the secretary makes
it easier for others to do their job.......... A B C D E

27. The secretary determines the quantity of
classrooms supplies to be distributed......... A B C D E

28. The secretary participates in regularly
scheduled workshops for secretaries......... A B C D E

29. The secretary spends the majority of the
day doing paperwork............................. A B C D E

30. The secretary administers first aid to
students............................................... A B C D E

31. The students consider the secretary to be a
friend and a confidant............................ A B C D E

32. The secretary helps orient new teachers
and substitute teachers to the school........ A B C D E

33. The secretary spends much of the day
interacting with people........................... A B C D E

34. The secretary belongs to professional
organizations........................................ A B C D E
HARK YOUR RESPONSE FROM ALWAYS (A) TO NEVER (E)

Always..................A  Occasionally.........C
Often..................B  Seldom..................D
Never..................E

35. The secretary makes assignments for support staff......................... A B C D E

36. The secretary functions as a primary source of information..................... A B C D E

37. The secretary attends inservice programs designed for secretaries........... A B C D E

38. The secretary has authority over the students....................................... A B C D E

39. The secretary functions as a record keeper............................................. A B C D E

40. The secretary's responsibilities include maintenance of office equipment used by school personnel......................... A B C D E

41. The secretary distributes mail.............................................................. A B C D E

42. Answering the telephone is a primary duty of the secretary..................... A B C D E

43. Your current position in the school:.............. A B C D E
   (a) Principal
   (b) Teacher
   (c) Secretary

44. Grade levels in your school.............................. A B C D E
   (a) Elementary (K-5)
   (b) Middle School (6-8)
   (c) High School (9-12)
   (d) Other (please specify) _____________________________

45. Student population in your school.............. A B C D E
   (a) Less than 200
   (b) 200-399
   (c) 400-599
   (d) 600-799
   (e) 800 and Over
APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER, SCANTRON ANSWER SHEET, AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACTUAL STUDY
April 10, 1991

Dear Participant:

Would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope? I am a doctoral student completing a dissertation study at East Tennessee State University in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. The study focuses on the roles and duties of school secretaries.

The principal, school secretary, and one randomly-selected teacher in each of the schools in the 17 school systems in the First Tennessee Development District are being asked to complete the questionnaire. Participants who responded to the questionnaire in a pilot study estimated that it took 15 minutes or less to complete.

Each survey form is coded to ensure anonymity. All responses will be strictly confidential. Neither your name nor your school’s name will be identified in the research study.

Your input is vitally important to the success of my study. Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Patty Richards
Doctoral Candidate

Approved by:

Charles W. Burkett
Dissertation Director
<table>
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**Example:**

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**Write ID Number Here**

**Mark ID Number Here**

**PART 1**

Code ID Number at left by filling in the appropriate boxes according to the example.

**Important**

- Use #2 Pencil
- **Make Dark Marks**
- **Erase Completely to Change**

**Name**

**Subject**

**Hour**

**Date**
SECRETARIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to acquire a description of the roles and responsibilities of school secretaries as perceived by principals, teachers, and secretaries. The school secretary is the one who most directly serves the principal. Other secretaries in the school are not to be considered.

Please respond to the questionnaire based on your perceptions of what the secretary is actually doing in your school this year. The questionnaire is not to be answered in terms of how you think a school secretary should perform.

All responses are anonymous. Do not indicate your name, your school name, or your position on the answer sheet. Names of principals, teachers, and secretaries will not be identified or reported in any research.

Please read each statement carefully. Mark all responses on the answer form provided. Make dark marks (--) and use a #2 pencil. Mark your responses from "Always" (A) to "Never" (E).

Always .............. .A
Often .................. .B
Occasionally .......... .C
Seldom ................. .D
Never .................. .E

East Tennessee State University
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Box 19000A
Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-0002
Telephone: (615) 929-4415, 4430

Patty Richards
Doctoral Candidate
Mark all responses on the answer form provided.
Use a #2 pencil and make dark marks (---). Do not write on the questionnaire. Mark your response from always (A) to never (E).

Always.................A  Occasionally...........C
Often....................B  Seldom.................D
Never.....................E

1. The secretary makes people feel welcome when they enter the office
   A B C D E

2. The secretary supervises students who are waiting to see the principal for disciplinary action
   A B C D E

3. The secretary shows genuine concern for people
   A B C D E

4. The secretary has a positive effect on the atmosphere of the school
   A B C D E

5. The secretary contacts and arranges for substitutes in teacher absences
   A B C D E

6. The secretary serves on committees that are instrumental in making decisions concerning the operation of the school
   A B C D E

7. The secretary acts as the principal's substitute in the principal's absence
   A B C D E

8. The secretary covers for teachers who have to leave their classrooms for emergencies
   A B C D E

9. The secretary makes decisions of an administrative nature
   A B C D E

10. The secretary helps supervise students during bus pick-up, lunch, playground or other activities
    A B C D E

11. The secretary spends the majority of the day interacting with people
    A B C D E
12. The secretary is included in social activities involving teachers................. A B C D E

13. The secretary assumes the role of banker by supplying change, accepting checks, and checking the balance of school accounts................. A B C D E

14. The secretary performs extra services for teachers........................................ A B C D E

15. The secretary performs routine clerical duties........................................ A B C D E

16. The secretary makes assignments for school volunteers............................... A B C D E

17. The secretary controls the use of the copy machine.................................. A B C D E

18. The secretary functions as a counselor and advisor for teachers.................. A B C D E

19. The secretary plays a visible role in defining the work load of the principal..... A B C D E

20. The secretary handles minor complaints from parents without requiring assistance from the principal or a teacher................. A B C D E

21. The secretary attends faculty meetings........................................ A B C D E

22. The secretary reprimands students who violate school policies.................... A B C D E

23. The secretary uses a computer to complete tasks.................................. A B C D E
MARK ALL RESPONSES ON THE ANSWER FORM PROVIDED.

USE A #2 PENCIL AND MAKE DARK MARKS (--). DO NOT WRITE ON
THE QUESTIONNAIRE. MARK YOUR RESPONSE FROM ALWAYS (A) TO NEVER (E).

Always......................A Occasionaly.................C
Often.........................B Seldom.....................D
Never......................E

* * *

24. The secretary seeks opportunities for professional development................. A B C D E
25. The secretary screens the principal's telephone calls........................................ A B C D E
26. The secretary makes it easier for others to do their job...................................... A B C D E
27. The secretary determines the quantity of classrooms supplies to be distributed........ A B C D E
28. The secretary participates in regularly scheduled workshops for secretaries........... A B C D E
29. The secretary spends the majority of the day doing paperwork.............................. A B C D E
30. The secretary administers first aid to students.................................................... A B C D E
31. The students consider the secretary to be a friend and a confidant......................... A B C D E
32. The secretary orients new teachers and substitute teachers to the school............... A B C D E
33. The secretary belongs to professional organizations............................................. A B C D E
34. The secretary makes assignments for support staff............................................... A B C D E
35. The secretary functions as a primary source of information..................................... A B C D E
36. The secretary attends inservice programs designed for secretaries....................... A B C D E
Hark all responses on the answer form provided.
Use a #2 pencil and make dark marks (--). Do not write on the questionnaire. Mark your response from Always (A) to Never (E).

Always...............A Occasionally.........C
Often..................B Seldom...............D
Never.............E

37. The secretary has authority over the students.........................A B C D E
38. The secretary functions as a record keeper.......A B C D E
39. The secretary is responsible for maintenance of office equipment used by school personnel........................A B C D E
40. The secretary distributes mail......................A B C D E
41. The secretary is responsible for answering the office telephone..................A B C D E

Please continue to mark your responses on the answer form.

42. Your current position in the school:............A B C D E
   (a) Principal
   (b) Teacher
   (c) Secretary

43. Grade levels in your school:.......................A B C D E
   (a) Elementary (K-5)
   (b) Middle School (6-8)
   (c) High School (9-12)
   (d) Other (please specify) ____________________________

44. Student population in your school:.............A B C D E
   (a) Less than 200
   (b) 200-399
   (c) 400-599
   (d) 600-799
   (e) 800 and Over

Only the school secretary needs to respond to the following question:

45. As a school secretary, I work:
   (a) Less than 14 hours per week
   (b) 15-24 hours per week
   (c) 25-34 hours per week
   (d) 35 hours or more per week
APPENDIX D

FOLLOW-UP LETTER
April 29, 1991

Dear Participant:

I mailed a questionnaire to you concerning the roles and duties of school secretaries. The questionnaire is the means of collecting data for my doctoral dissertation.

As of this date, I have not received your questionnaire. Your input is essential to the success of my study. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and assistance. A prompt reply will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Patty Richards

Patty Richards
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE ARRANGED BY

VARIABLES
## Administrative Role of the Secretary

1. **The secretary has authority over the students.**
2. **The secretary makes assignments for support staff.**
3. **The secretary covers for teachers who have to leave their classrooms for emergencies.**
4. **The secretary helps to supervise students during bus pick-up, lunch, playground, or other activities.**
5. **The secretary supervises students who are waiting to see the principal for disciplinary action.**
6. **The secretary plays a visible role in defining the work load of the principal.**
7. **The secretary contacts and arranges for substitutes in teacher absences.**
8. **The secretary reprimands students who violate school policies.**
9. **The secretary makes assignments for school volunteers.**
10. **The secretary determines the quantity of classroom supplies to be distributed.**
11. **The secretary controls the use of the copy machines.**
12. **The secretary handles minor complaints from parents without requiring assistance from the principal or a teacher.**
13. **The secretary acts as the principal's substitute in the principal's absence.**
Administrative Role of the Secretary (continued)

14. ________ The secretary screens the principal's telephone calls.

15. ________ The secretary makes decisions of an administrative nature.
PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SECRETARY

* * *

1. _______ The secretary makes people feel welcome when they enter the office.

2. _______ The secretary shows genuine concern for people.

3. _______ The secretary performs extra services for teachers.

4. _______ The secretary makes it easier for others to do their job.

5. _______ The secretary has a positive effect on the atmosphere of the school.
EXTENT THAT THE SCHOOL SECRETARY SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL

* * *

1. _______ The secretary attends faculty meetings.

2. _______ The secretary serves on committees that are instrumental in making decisions concerning the operation of the school.

3. _______ The secretary functions as a primary source of information.

4. _______ The secretary is included in social activities involving teachers.
CLERICAL TASKS/HUMAN RELATIONS TASKS

* * *

1. The secretary spends the majority of the day doing paperwork.

2. The secretary administers first aid to students.

3. The secretary assumes the role of banker by supplying change, accepting checks, and checking the balance of school accounts.

4. The students consider the secretary to be a friend and a confidant.

5. The secretary orients new teachers and substitute teachers to the school.

6. The secretary spends the majority of the day interacting with people.

7. The secretary completes clerical tasks or performs routine clerical duties.

8. The secretary primarily functions as a record keeper.

9. The secretary uses a computer to complete many tasks.

10. The secretary is responsible for maintenance of office equipment used by school personnel.

11. The secretary distributes mail.

12. The secretary functions as a counselor and advisor for teachers.

13. The secretary is responsible for answering the office telephone.
PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*   *   *

1. _______ The secretary attends inservice programs designed for secretaries.

2. _______ The secretary participates in regularly scheduled workshops for secretaries.

3. _______ The secretary belongs to professional organizations.

4. _______ The secretary seeks opportunities for professional development.
VITA
PATRICIA HELEN RICHARDS

Personal Data:
Date of Birth: April 30, 1951
Place of Birth: Kingsport, Tennessee
Marital Status: Married, one child

Education:
Public Schools, Sullivan County, Tennessee
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Psychology/English, B.S., 1972
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Elementary Education, M.A.T., 1976
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Educational Leadership, Ed.D., 1991

Professional Experience:
Vocational Evaluator, Goodwill Industries, Danville, Virginia, 1974-1975
Teacher, Jonesborough Elementary, Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1976-1980
Doctoral Fellow, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1987
Librarian, Boones Creek Middle School, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1981-present

Professional Membership:
Phi Delta Kappa, 1987-present
Kappa Delta Pi, 1987-present
Tennessee Association of School Librarians, 1990-present