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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE FORCED RESIGNATION OF TEACHERS

BY

WARREN PHILLIPS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT

The study describes, from the perspectives of selected teachers and administrators, the phenomenon of forced resignations of teachers for reasons of unsatisfactory performance. Interviews with those most involved with the supervisory process provided rich descriptions of both the supervisory process and its emotional impact on the participants. Additional information was gathered by means of a sur[illegible]perintendents, from a review of selected files provided by the Alberta T[illegible] and from a review of the judicial summaries of Alberta Board of Re[illegible]ch the major reasons for dismissal were related to unsatisfact[illegible]

The major findings were that: (a) a very sma[illegible] Alberta teachers are forced to resign, (b) sound and effective supervisory pra[illegible]s can result in the forced resignation or dismissal of teachers whose performance is [illegible] (c) there were profound emotional and psychological effects on both the teache[illegible] and the supervisors, (d) issues of caring and justice emerged as major themes and [illegible]pervision of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory was deemed to have considerable impact on the organizational culture.

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Finally, I would like to thank the teachers and supervisors who agreed to be interviewed. Each and everyone was extremely open and candid in their remarks to me. Without their cooperation, this study would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory have a detrimental effect on students, parents, other teachers, and administrators. Yet, despite widespread efforts to improve teacher evaluation and supervision programs, the concern persists. Often, there is little improvement in the quality of the teacher's performance following attempts at remediation, leaving the termination of the teacher's contract, either through board motion or through a forced resignation as the only recourse.

This study investigates the nature of the experiences of selected teachers whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory and of administrators who were involved in attempting to resolve the issues which arose from the teachers' unsatisfactory professional performance.

Introduction

A recent emphasis in public education has been on improvement of instruction for students. These efforts have resulted in attempts to improve the quality of teacher performance through teacher evaluation. In Alberta, this practice was mandated in January, 1985 with the introduction of provincial policy. This policy, found in the Alberta Education Program Policy Manual (1984), states:

> The performance of individual teachers and the quality of teaching practices across the province will be evaluated to assist in the provision of effective instruction to students and in the professional growth and development of teachers. (p.72)

Since the introduction of this policy, there has been considerable interest, both through research projects and in practice, about the effectiveness of teacher evaluation. The supervision of teachers has increased, and a number of teachers whose performance may be unsatisfactory have been identified, and either inducements have been provided to encourage these teachers to resign or their contracts of employment have been terminated.

However, most of the research related to teacher incompetence appears to focus on the development of policy, the teacher evaluation process or the procedures to be followed in

contract terminations and/or subsequent appeals. For example, Miklos (1990), in his review of the doctoral dissertations completed at the University of Alberta, identified four on topics related to teacher supervision and termination. Only one, completed by Harrison (1980), was directly related to termination of teacher contracts.

The nature of the problem. At present, there is little indication of the magnitude of the problem of unsatisfactory performance, or of the number of forced resignations of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. Also, there is little information on the means used to induce resignations from such teachers. Most important, there appears to be little insight into the effects of the supervisory and dismissal process on the teachers and the supervisors involved.

Research into teacher evaluation has avoided the question of what happens to educators whose performance has been judged to be unsatisfactory. Kelsey, (1992) after analyzing reports written about eight school principals who were judged by their superintendents to be providing unsatisfactory performance, stated:

> In the normal course of affairs in school districts, information about less-than-satisfactory principals resides primarily inside the heads of senior officials, trustees, the principals themselves, and in the anecdotes and apocrypha that are part of the fabric of the profession. It exists rarely, if at all, in the research literature, because whether and how a principal is failing are matters that lie well beyond the limits of what a researcher's respondents are willing to discuss. (p. 1)

The same concerns appears to be true with regards to less-than-satisfactory teachers. Very little research appears to have been done on the factors which contributed to a decline in performance or the effects of such a decline on teachers, supervisors and the organization.

At this time, there appears to be limited knowledge of the effects on teachers or supervisors when a problem employee is confronted about his or her unsatisfactory performance. Kelsey (1992) suggested that such confrontations are about failure, and "failure, especially public failure, brings its own pain, and pain is something of which people speak only in certain ways and to a restricted circle of people" (p. 2). As a result, researchers have been hesitant to intrude into this private sphere.

As well, information about the range of consequences of the summative evaluation process appears quite restricted. Bridges (1992) noted that supervisors respond to unsatisfactory teaching reports in two stages. During the first stage, the supervisor attempts to work with the teacher to remediate the difficulties. During the second stage, there is an effort to remove the teacher from the teaching function. This can be done by a forced resignation, a transfer to a non-teaching position, or the formal termination of the teacher's contract. Furthermore, Bridges (1992) found that only a limited number of options were used as inducements for teachers to resign their teaching position. However, while experience suggests that incompetent teachers more often resign due to a combination of pressure, negotiation and inducements than due to formal termination of their contract, the forced resignation of teachers appears to be an area which has not been studied.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study could provide a better understanding of the experiences of tenured teachers who have changed from feeling and being competent to feeling and being perceived as incompetent. As well, the study could identify alternative approaches to resolving issues created by unsatisfactory professional performance. I believe that present approaches often devalue the self-esteem of the teacher, and lead to hostility between the teacher and the supervisor. By gaining a better understanding of the emotions and experiences of those involved, it may be possible to suggest alternatives which achieve the same end in a more constructive manner. A better understanding of the thoughts, feelings and emotions experienced by the teacher and administrator during this process may allow others to approach similar situations in a different manner.

Bridges (1992) suggested that administrators often avoid working with incompetent teachers as there appeared to be considerable potential for the administrators to face conflicting values and ethical dilemmas. The evaluation of teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory is often governed by procedures which attempt to ensure that the school board is able to demonstrate both that the teacher is incompetent and the

requirements of natural justice have been met. The procedures appear to be driven more by the legalities of the process than by considerations for excellence in instruction or the welfare of the employee. This has the potential to lead to ethical dilemmas for the administrator who may be faced with the problem of developing sufficient and adequate documentation while attempting to respect the self-esteem of the teacher. An investigation of this aspect of the forced resignation of teachers was seen to be useful.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The foci of the study are on the interventions of administrators directed towards tenured teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory and on the lived experience of the teacher and the administrator just before, during, and after the time of the intervention.

The major research question is: What were the experiences of selected teachers and supervisors before, during, and after the induced exit of a teacher whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory? Related questions include:

1. (a) How frequently are teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory confronted about their performance?

   (b) How frequently are these teachers induced to leave the teaching profession?
2. What factors were perceived by the teacher and the supervisor to have contributed to the deterioration of the teacher's performance?
3. What was the nature of the administrator's supervision of, assistance to, and/or counselling of the teacher?
4. (a) What support was provided to a teacher whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory?

   (b) What support should be provided to such a teacher?
5. What ethical dilemmas did supervisors face during their involvement with teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory?

6. (a) What support was provided to the supervisor during the time the supervisor was working with a teacher whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory?

   (b) What support should be provided to the supervisor during the time the supervisor is working with such a teacher?

7. In what ways could the resources presently committed to the process of induced exit of teachers be reallocated to have a greater potential benefit for the teacher?

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

The study consisted of three main parts. The first part provided insight into the magnitude of the problem of unsatisfactory teaching performance from the provincial perspective. This was done by surveying school superintendents with a questionnaire about the unsatisfactory performance of teachers, and by reviewing the Alberta Teachers' Association files of those teachers who requested assistance from the Member Services Department because supervisors perceived their performance to be unsatisfactory. The second part was a review of the judicial summaries of Board of Reference cases related to unsatisfactory performance. The final segment sought to increase our understanding of the experiences associated with the forced resignation of teachers through a series of interviews with those most directly involved.

The interviews with teachers and administrators created a greater understanding of how these two parties felt about the possibility of termination. Each teacher was asked to provide an account of the events which occurred and the emotions or feelings experienced prior to the direct intervention by the supervisor, during the formal evaluation and following the resolution of the issue by the teacher's decision to resign. Some specific areas included: How did the teachers view their level of competence before the formal evaluation and subsequent move to terminate the teaching contract had begun? Had this view changed over time? What events actually triggered the commencement of the proceedings to terminate? At what point was the decision to resign made? What emotions did the teacher experience? What has occurred with the teacher since that time?

Administrators who have worked with teachers with a similar history of decreasing competency were also interviewed. An effort was made to determine what feelings and emotions the administrator experienced prior to the beginning of direct intervention, during the formal evaluation and following the teacher's decision to resign. How did the administrator view the teacher's level of competency before the move to terminate had begun? Had this view changed over time? What events actually triggered the commencement of proceedings to terminate? What conflicting values did the administrator experience as a result of the responsibilities being carried out? Did the administrator feel he or she was facing a moral dilemma created by concern for the teacher versus concerns for the needs of students to receive quality instruction?

It must be stressed that these questions are meant only to be suggestive of the nature of the understandings sought. They are not meant to represent categories of questions. In addition, teachers and administrators were asked about other inducements which could be used to encourage teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory to leave the profession. Furthermore, some parallel cases from other segments of public administration, or from private industry were reviewed. The alternatives which are presented are ones in which the self-esteem of the teacher is respected while the rights of the students are protected.

As an example of one such alternative, Bridges (1992) indicated that in approximately five percent of the employing school jurisdictions outplacement services as well as other inducements were provided to the teacher who was pressured to resign. This sort of alternative could make the transition to another career or the search for another teaching position easier and more fruitful.

Thus, the study provides insights into the phenomena of forced resignation of teachers from a variety of perspectives. These insights may assist other supervisors in working more effectively with teachers whose performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study can be linked to five separate, but overlapping, areas of existing literature. These include teacher supervision and evaluation; teacher dismissals and terminations; stress associated with forced resignations; poor health and its relationship to teacher performance; and finally, organizational culture.

A. TEACHER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

The prevalent beliefs related to teacher evaluation are changing due to reviews of the strengths and weaknesses of present practices. While the purposes of teacher evaluation policy have remained relatively constant over the past 20 years, a number of studies into the effectiveness of the evaluation practices have suggested there should be a move to separate the summative and formative functions.

Purposes of Summative and Formative Evaluation

There is general agreement that there are two distinct purposes for teacher evaluation — teacher growth and teacher accountability. The evaluation practices which correspond to these purposes are often denoted as formative or summative evaluations. This distinction was elaborated on by Lecuyer (1986), who described them in the following manner:

> The purpose of formative evaluation, in the present context, is to improve teaching performance. Formative evaluation occurs in the course, rather than at the end, of the teaching activity. It is often accomplished through an interactive and relatively informal process.
>
> Summative evaluation aims to facilitate administrative decision-making....For teacher performance evaluation, it has traditionally been accomplished through direct and/or indirect observation and by monitoring achievement results. (p. 4)

Morgan (1986) provided a similar definition:

> Much has been made of the distinction, in the evaluation literature, between "formative" and "summative" evaluation. In general terms, formative evaluation refers to on-going assessment and monitoring which can lead to changes in method, materials, techniques, and professional development and which therefore is adaptive, not final. Summative, on the other hand, refers to final judgments on effectiveness of performance in relation to supervisory and organizational goals. (p. 20)

The key difference, then, is that summative evaluation is judgmental and formative evaluation is growth-oriented. Lecuyer (1986) noted that the policy implemented by Alberta Education in 1984 reflects these two purposes and, in addition, the policy assigns responsibility for teacher performance evaluation to local school jurisdictions. Furthermore, the Alberta Teachers' Association, in a position paper adopted in 1990, acknowledged the need for both types of evaluation, although it used the terms performance supervision and performance evaluation, rather than formative and summative evaluation. This position paper advocates:

> The teaching profession has a responsibility for supervision and evaluation of professional performance. School boards have a responsibility for the provision of adequate resources to implement programs of professional performance supervision and performance evaluation....Supervision should be initiated by the professional or by mutual arrangement with a colleague....Evaluation of an individual's professional performance should be initiated only by the individual or by certificated personnel with administrative responsibility for that individual. (pp. 1-2)

Thus, the purposes of teacher evaluation in Alberta are consistent with those found in other parts of Canada. In addition, the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education are in agreement with both the purposes and the assignment of responsibilities for evaluations.

The Need for Formative and Summative Evaluation

Teacher evaluation is a key to school improvement. If excellence in education is to be realized, school systems must establish and maintain sound evaluation policies and practices. Summative evaluation provides the foundation for the policy, because important personnel decisions such as the granting of a continuous contract or termination of contracts affect the quality of teachers employed in a school. Formative evaluation provides a means to improve the performance of the vast majority of teachers who already provide sound instruction to students.

Formative evaluation. The broad purpose of formative evaluation is to contribute to the professional growth of the teacher. Three objectives are generally associated with the attainment of this goal. These include the incorporation of recent educational research into

teaching practice, the creation of a culture of continuous learning and improvement among the teaching staff, and the reduction of the isolation in which teachers operate.

Leithwood (1988) speculated that meaningful appraisal and feedback could provide an opportunity to ensure that what has been learned through the teacher effectiveness research is incorporated into classroom practice. He identified a large and growing body of research related to teaching strategies and routines which can enhance the outcomes achieved by the student. A well-designed formative evaluation program should link the needs of the teacher to this research through professional development activities.

This suggests that the evaluator needs to remain current about educational research, and further, that the evaluator is able to discern which research findings should be passed on to the teacher being evaluated. The research findings can be either generic — those which apply to most teaching situations, or specific to a particular subject area or topic. If the material relates to the second, the evaluator should have acknowledged expertise in that subject area.

The second purpose of formative evaluation is to help teachers improve the art and craft which they practice. This will occur if teachers view themselves as learners and view the school as part of a learning culture. Barth (1991) advocated a view of schools which focuses on learning:

> I see in these kinds of endeavors the concept of the school as a community of learners, a place where all participants — teachers, principals, parents, and students — engage in learning and teaching. School is not a place for important people who do not need to learn and unimportant people who do. Instead, school is a place where students discover, and adults rediscover, the joys, the difficulties, and the satisfactions of learning. (p. 43)

Formative evaluation, if based on the belief that teachers are capable of improving their own performance, can help create the culture Barth described.

The third objective of formative evaluation is to break down isolation between teaching professionals, to encourage greater sharing of ideas, and collaboration on the various tasks which teachers must complete. Barth (1991) believed that collegiality among teachers is the key to developing a community of learners. He wrote:

> Collegiality is nice — but it is extremely difficult to introduce into the persistent cultures of schools. Schools display little collegiality because, like most good ideas in education, it is easier said than done. As we all know, enormous risks and frequent costs are associated with observation, communication, mutual visibility, sharing knowledge, and talking openly about the work we do. (p. 32)

A formative evaluation model which is based on the belief that the most growth occurs when peers talk with peers about matters of substance can promote this.

Summative evaluation. Teachers have accepted the need for performance appraisal which is designed to fulfill a judgmental function for various personnel needs. This is reflected in the position paper of The Alberta Teachers' Association (1990) which identified the following purposes: (a) the granting of a continuous contract; (b) recommendations for promotions; (c) consideration of the transfer of the teacher; (d) consideration of the possible termination of employment of the teacher; (e) recommendation for the issuance of a permanent teaching certificate; (f) recommendation of suspension or cancellation of a teaching certificate; and (g) to provide a record of teaching performance.

McLaughlin and Pfeifer (1988) added one more function to this list. They saw the affirmation of the work of successful teachers as an important outcome of summative evaluation. They "found that excellent teachers with high performance standards placed great importance on the feedback they received from a credible evaluator — on the account rendered to them" (p. 66). This feedback to teachers also provides a constructive form of organizational control as it re-enforces the professional values of the school district.

The Need to Separate the Two Types of Evaluation

There is a considerable amount of agreement among the various stakeholders as to the dual purpose of evaluation. There is also a considerable degree of acceptance that formative evaluation has much greater potential to improve the overall quality of the teaching profession than does summative evaluation. Also, there is a consensus about the important role of peer involvement in formative evaluation. However, there is disagreement over the question: Can one evaluation process combine the formative and summative functions?

The emerging consensus seems to be that while it may be possible to develop processes that effectively combine both purposes, it is more likely that such a system would not be successful at either. Therefore, there is a greater chance that both purposes will be met if the two processes are separated. This feeling has been reinforced by a number of recent studies which have concluded that policy which combines both approaches does not work.

A teacher evaluation policy impact study (TEPI) commissioned by Alberta Education (in press) concluded "because the study findings stress the limitations of the present teacher evaluation practices, the use of a single evaluation format to identify incompetence and simultaneously promote instructional improvement should be reconsidered" (p. 310).

Lawton, Hickcox, Leithwood, and Musella (1988) reported on "at least 80 percent of the teachers said they perceived little or no improvement as a result of the appraisal process" (p. 32). The authors concluded "it is clear that most school systems in the province have formal appraisal systems, but it is not so clear that they are being used with any particular effectiveness" (p. 39). Stiggins (1988), in a study in the northwestern United States found that "for 99.9 percent of teachers, all of whom are at least minimally competent, evaluation results (if gathered at all) are compiled, entered on the standard form, signed and filed away, never to be seen again" (p. 141). Morgan (1986), also concluded "a devastating finding, however, is that when asked for the primary purpose of appraisal, a majority of teachers (76 per cent) and about the same proportion of principals believed it was simply to comply with board policy" (p. 36). This re-enforces the idea that the outcomes of the appraisal had very little effect in enhancing or improving the teachers' performance.

These studies suggest that teacher evaluation, in the manner in which it is presently conducted is not very effective. Part of the required change would appear to be the separation the formative and summative aspects of evaluation. A number of different studies and articles have commented on the viability of this. The teacher evaluation policy impact study (TEPI), sponsored by Alberta Education (in press), concluded:

> In terms of their present policies on teacher evaluation, most jurisdictions could retain but continue to refine their teacher evaluation policies for teachers who are in their first year in the profession or in the jurisdiction, and for teachers requiring particular assistance; however, the routine evaluation of competent teachers using prevalent teacher evaluation practices should be reassessed. Instead, practices that consider teachers as partners in the development of school cultures which promote learning and those that encourage teachers to take initiatives to improve their instructional practices and the learning environment for students should become widely adopted. Since no single set of evaluation procedures is appropriate for all contexts or for all teachers, jurisdictions should attempt to develop policies which meet the needs of teachers for professional growth and the need of the public to be assured of quality education. (p. 311)

A similar concern was expressed by Garvie (1990) who believed the school administrator is often concerned about the dual purpose of teacher evaluations and feels that the duality of roles makes the process ineffective. He stated:

> The reality, of course, is that we administrators wear not one but two hats. One hat is worn on behalf of teachers and their professional growth; this is called the "developmentalist" hat. The other is worn on behalf of the organization, to assess the level of teaching competence; this is called the "evaluator" hat.
>
> The trouble occurs because of a clash between the reality (wearing 2 hats) and the way we wish to be seen (wearing 1 hat). We play up our developmentalist position and we play down, even deny (in the name of trust-building), our evaluator capacity. (p. 23)

The Alberta Teachers' Association (1990) has adopted a position which urges peer observation and peer support practices for formative purposes and evaluation by administrators for the summative function. This division of responsibilities is supported by the findings of Wise and Darling-Hammond (1985) who stated:

> Our study of effective teacher evaluation practices found that districts which are able to use evaluation for teacher improvement and for personnel decisions have adopted more professionally oriented evaluation strategies....The districts have addressed the dual functions of evaluation — monitoring general teaching quality and improving specific teaching performances — by dividing evaluation responsibilities between principals and expert teachers. (p. 32)

Stiggins (1988), following a two year study into the effectiveness of teacher evaluation practices, concluded "we must separate formative and summative teacher evaluation once and for all" (p. 150).

Problems with the Formative Evaluation Processes

Stiggins (1988) asked teams of teachers and administrators at a workshop to identify barriers to formative teacher evaluation. Four major themes emerged. These were:

> 1. Evaluators often lack important skills needed to evaluate, and the training needed to solve this problem is frequently not available, not used or ineffective. At least two sets of skills are lacking: (i) skills in evaluating teacher performance, and (ii) skills in communicating with teachers about the evaluation process and results.
>
> 2. There is often insufficient time for both evaluation and follow-up.
>
> 3. The process(es) for linking staff development and teacher evaluation is (are) not clear. We lack a clear goal for formative teacher evaluation...and a plan for achieving that goal....
>
> 4. Trust in the evaluation system is often lacking among educators functioning in that system. Unclear or unacceptable performance criteria, combined with lack of teacher involvement in developing performance criteria and infrequent and superficial observations tend to breed skepticism among teachers about the value of results. (p. 145)

Morgan (1986) had similar concerns about the effectiveness of the professional development tied to formative evaluation. He concluded "it is evident that, though lip-service is paid to it, little provision is made for the individualized professional development to improve performance and less for follow-up and monitoring" (p. 62). Therefore, it appears that despite the promise formative evaluation holds for the improvement of teaching, little real benefit is realized.

Problems with the Summative Evaluation Processes

The summative evaluation process often does not achieve desired goals due to a failure to ensure that the purposes are clear. Musella (1988) found there were many purposes cited for performance appraisal, but these purposes are often not stated explicitly. Problems become evident when the practices associated with summative evaluation are directed to implicit purposes rather than those stated explicitly. Furthermore, he found that administrators tend to develop "common procedures for all levels of personnel [which] serve no useful purpose other than to communicate the message that "sameness" is valued over individual need" (p. 179).

Similarly, Wise and Darling-Hammond (1985) were very critical of teacher evaluation methods:

> In many school districts, teacher evaluation is a perfunctory, routine, bureaucratic requirement that yields no help to teachers and no decision-oriented information to the school district. The process does nothing for teachers except contribute to their weariness and reinforce their skepticism of bureaucratic routine. (p. 20)

The concern for sameness and ritual in summative evaluations has also been expressed by Berliner (1990). He stated that formal evaluation systems based on checklists should not be used with highly experienced, expert teachers. Rather, a more informal means of teacher observation, in which the supervisor observes what is occurring in the classroom and then enters into dialogue with the teacher about the reason for the various activities, was preferred. Sergiovanni (1985) stated that supervision will not improve if we simply try to do a better job of what we are presently doing. Supervisors must begin to do things differently.

Summary of recent research on teacher evaluation. The review of the literature related to teacher evaluation identified a number of factors relevant to this study:

- There is agreement on two purposes: (a) formative evaluation to promote teacher growth, and (b) summative evaluations to make judgments about the quality of teacher performance.
- Present practices for teacher evaluation are not effective at achieving either goal.
- There is a need to separate the formative and summative functions.
- There are a number of problems associated with current practices. These include:
  - The evaluators lack the necessary skills.
  - There are insufficient resources, including time, made available for teacher evaluation.
  - The link between teacher evaluation and staff development is not clear.
  - There is often a lack of trust regarding the true purposes of evaluation.
  - There is a tendency to use common procedures for all types of evaluations.

The review suggests there is a need to make some fundamental changes in the nature of teacher supervision and evaluation.

B. TEACHER DISMISSALS AND TERMINATIONS

Working with incompetent personnel is a serious problem in many organizations, including public education. For example, Bridges (1984) stated that in the United States "incompetence in the teaching profession is a problem of major importance to publicly supported elementary and secondary schools...and surveys conducted...show that teacher incompetence ranks as the third most serious administrative problem." (p. 1). Furthermore, Bridges indicated that over a thirteen year period, the Gallup poll of attitudes towards public education consistently found that parents ranked the quality of teaching performance in the top seven problems mentioned.

Parents in Canada do not appear to share the concern to the same degree. While there is no comparable annual study, the Canadian Education Association did conduct a poll in 1990. This opinion poll found that the effectiveness of the teaching staff was rated as follows: "58.5% gave A or B for effectiveness of the teaching staff; only 3.2% said F" (Canadian School Executive, 1990, p. 26). As well, school systems in Alberta would appear to be more effective at terminating the contract of employment of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory than is reported from the United States. For example, more tenured teachers were dismissed in Alberta than California during a similar time period. Bridges (1992) reported that only 12 tenured teachers were dismissed in a two year period while the Director of Teacher Certification of Alberta Education reported 30 tenured teachers were formally dismissed in Alberta during the three year period — 1989-1991.

A great deal of an administrator's time and effort may be spent working with teachers whose performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. Bruce (1990) stated that "it is currently estimated that, at any one time, from 10 percent to 20 percent of the work force are problem employees and that this same 10 to 20 percent can require as much as 80 percent of your time in trying to motivate and deal with them" (p. 1). The incompetent teacher does not

only affect the principal. He or she affects the entire school. Jensen (1989) claimed that "although administrators estimate that unsatisfactory teachers comprise only 5 to 15 percent of employed teachers, these individuals take an inordinate toll upon students, colleagues, and the school organization" (p. 246). Bridges (1992) argued that "the large number of students who are being shortchanged each year by incompetent teachers underscores the importance and the seriousness of this problem" (p. 2).

Research on the topic of teacher incompetence has generally focused on the legal processes of 'managing' the incompetent teacher: board policy, summative evaluation procedures, recommendations for remediation, documentation and the various levels of appeals to which teachers are entitled. The studies have tended to attempt to define competence or incompetence and to describe cases which have gone to the courts or to quasi-judicial bodies. The role of the supervisor in the teacher evaluation process has also been examined carefully (See Harrison, 1980; Manatt and Daniels, 1990).

Gross (1988) reviewed over three hundred arbitration cases related to teacher dismissals in the United States and summarized criteria that various courts have upheld. The criteria included: poor knowledge of subject matter, inability to impart knowledge effectively, inability to obtain the respect of parents and students, improper use of corporal punishment, unwillingness to accept teaching advice from superiors, inadequate academic progress of students, inability to maintain discipline, lack of physical ability to perform the duties of a teacher, and emotional instability.

Teacher dismissals are rare. Nevertheless, while administrators see teacher incompetence as a serious problem, few termination cases based on incompetence actually occur. In a study done in a large urban school system in the mid-western United States, Brieschke (1986) interviewed 30 principals on the role of administrators in working with teachers with borderline competency. On average, these 30 principals worked with an annual total staff of 720 teachers. Over a five year period, only one teacher was formally dismissed and this dismissal occurred because "the teacher's behavior involved several

aggressive, hostile threats to the administrator's well-being" (p. 247). She argued that borderline teachers do exist and "it is the accumulation of small mistakes, such as occasional ineptness, laziness, unpreparedness, poor judgments, etc., coupled with low commitment and morale among teachers, which poses the most pernicious threat to our nation's schoolchildren" (p. 249). However, in spite of the adverse effect on the education of individual students, Brieschke concluded that most often principals either ignore or condone the actions of these teachers.

In a study of stress experienced by school based administrators in Edmonton, Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) found that principals and vice-principals ascribed considerable stress to "recommending the dismissal of a tenured teacher" (p. 161), even though such an event had the lowest frequency of any of the 93 tasks the administrators were asked to rank. This suggests that such an action is relatively rare among the over 200 principals and vice-principals surveyed.

Induced exits. Bridges (1984) stated that "dismissal of tenured teachers for incompetence is a relatively rare occurrence" (p. 6). However, the dismissal of teachers should not be confused with forced resignation, which is more common. Both practices result in the teacher leaving the organization against his or her will and so resolve the issue of incompetence. Forced resignations or induced exits were considered by Bridges (1992) in his study of incompetent teachers, and found that the frequency of induced exits was approximately 12 times that of terminations. Bridges surveyed and later interviewed administrators in California to determine the techniques and inducements they used to persuade some incompetent teachers to resign their teaching positions.

The types of inducements reported by Bridges (1992) were:

Administrative actions

- Remove negative information form the personnel file
- Provide favorable recommendations for non-teaching positions
- Support disability claim
- Terminate evaluation process
- Drop charges
- Drop 90-day notice
- Drop most recent formal evaluation

- Extend early retirement deadline
- Announce resignation after school year

Fringe benefits
- Medical coverage
- Paid leave for part of school year
- Supplement to state pension
- Life insurance
- Additional years of service credit toward retirement

Cash settlement
- Lump sum payment without restrictions
- Lump sum payment with restrictions

Future employment with district
- Consultant
- Substitute teacher
- Classified employee
- Half-time employment as a teacher

Outplacement counselling.
- Professional assistance in preparing resumes, creating job search plans, and/or preparing for job interviews. (p. 94)

It is doubtful that these induced exits would have occurred without meaningful summative evaluation as this process provides an opportunity for the supervisor to discuss with the teacher the need to consider other career opportunities. Furthermore, McLaughlin and Pfeifer (1988) found that at-risk teachers in school districts which had a strong commitment to performance appraisal and a reputation for fair treatment of teachers were more willing to consider career transitions. These school districts developed a culture which demanded and supported high standards from the teaching staff, and the staff responded. As an example of the importance of a strong culture, they reported that the superintendent of one jurisdiction with exemplary teacher evaluation processes conducted an annual personal interview with each teacher. This interview provided an opportunity to avoid misunderstandings regarding the focus on evaluation. In addition, there was an unexpected benefit:

> In many cases, . . . it was in these interviews that she learned of the frustration and unhappiness with teaching many of the district's poorest teachers experienced. This knowledge enabled her to assist these individuals in either improving or changing their careers while still maintaining their self-respect and professional pride. (p. 25)

Later, McLaughlin and Pfeifer (1988) re-enforced this idea by citing examples from each of the four jurisdictions they studied where teachers voluntarily left the district because the teachers had received fair and credible evidence which suggested they are not well-suited to teaching.

Working with the problem employee. Anderson (1991) provided a number of suggestions for supervisors who must work with marginal teachers. She argued that the first step was to determine if the teacher was culpable or blameworthy for his or her actions. If so, the correct approach for the supervisor is a disciplinary approach where "directives for action and progressive discipline are to be used" (p. 7). If the teacher is non-culpable, an appropriate approach is to provide assistance to the teacher to help remediate the problem. Anderson believed that supervisors must follow the rules of natural justice, and furthermore, must ensure that teacher evaluation reports are factual and written clearly.

In Alberta, teachers are guaranteed the right to natural justice in the event of the possible termination of their teaching contract under the provisions of the School Act. The concept of natural justice was elaborated on by Anderson (1981) who stated that "what natural justice means, in simple terms, is fairness in the procedure used. Its basic aim is to safeguard individual rights" (p. 8). She went on to say that natural justice involves two components: (a) an opportunity to be heard, and (b) the right to be heard by people who are without bias.

Anderson (1991) expanded on this concept as it applies to the supervision of the marginal or unsatisfactory performer. She stated that fairness implies:

- the teacher knows the performance standards expected,
- the evaluations are timely,
- the teacher receives directions for correction of shortcomings, and
- reasonable time and opportunity is provided to implement the needed corrections.

Anderson summarized these ideas by concluding:

> The issue of bias is of particular relevance when dealing with the marginal teacher.... In simplistic terms, this concept means that an evaluator must come to an

> evaluation process with a free mind and without having reached any conclusions concerning the adequacy of the performance of the teacher. (pp. 15, 16)

The concept of procedural rights extends the rules of natural justice. Its implication for educational law was discussed by MacKay and Sutherland (1992) who stated that:

> Generally school boards are required to develop evaluations procedures that contain teaching guidelines, provide for notice in cases where problems arise, provide for warnings, and opportunity for improvement, and finally some form of meeting with the employer, before a teacher can be suspended. If the end result is dismissal, a further appeal is available through the grievance process in the collective agreement. (p. 133)

Similar advice is provided by Steinmetz (1985) who urged supervisors to take a sequential approach to working with marginal or unsatisfactory performers. He suggested that it is important for the manager to understand the causes of the unsatisfactory performance, as this should determine the approach used by the supervisor to help change the undesired performance to desired performance.

Summary of teacher dismissals and terminations. The review of the literature suggested that:

- The number of teachers who provide unsatisfactory service is unknown, but it is estimated to be between 5 % and 15%.
- Teacher dismissals are rare.
- Many more teachers are induced to leave than are dismissed. Honest and accurate performance appraisals and a variety of inducements may help encourage those teachers who are providing unsatisfactory service to decide to leave the teaching profession.
- There is a growing body of literature on how to work with marginal or unsatisfactory performers.

C. STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH FORCED RESIGNATIONS

Confronting issues associated with unsatisfactory performance is a major source of stress for both the supervisors and the teacher. The increased supervision, and the possibility of job loss increases the stress felt by the teacher. However, the effects seem to

be most pronounced for the supervisor most closely associated with the unsatisfactory performer.

Frustration and intrapersonal conflict. Johns (1988) suggested there are two basic forms of stress: frustration and intrapersonal conflict. Both forms often occur in dealing with incompetent teachers. There is a great deal of frustration involved in attempting to terminate the contract of a teacher whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory, as the process is often marred by delays or failure to remove the teacher from the classroom. For example, based on a survey conducted in 1984, Bridges reported that administrators felt that between 5% and 15% of the teachers provide unsatisfactory service, yet the respondents indicated that only 12 tenured teachers — less than 1/10 of 1% — were dismissed for incompetence.

Johns (1988) further stated that intrapersonal conflict is a consequence of the potentially positive and negative features of the termination process. On one hand, the administrator recognized that quality instruction plays a significant role in the success of students at school. Successful termination of the incompetent teacher would enhance the prospect of this goal being attained. On the other hand, the administrator will normally care for and want to enhance the well-being of the teacher. In addition, experience suggests that a significant portion of the staff will support the teacher, even if they recognize that the teacher is providing unsatisfactory service. Thus, there is a negative consequence of the goal being fulfilled. This intrapersonal conflict elevates the level of stress the administrator experiences.

Clarity, ambiguity, and the ability to meet the demands. Role stress, the stress created by the inability to meet the demands defined by the role due to lack of resources or because of conflicting demands, was identified by Sarros (1986) as a major stressor following his exhaustive review of the literature on administrator stress. This supports the findings of two separate Alberta studies on teacher and administrative stress in which found administrators ranked 'working with teachers whose performance was

unsatisfactory' as the most stressful of the activities in which they participated. Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) surveyed over 200 administrators in the Edmonton Public School District and found that these principals and assistant principals ranked "dealing with a teacher whose attitudes or behaviors are considered unprofessional" as the most stressful activity, and ranked "recommending the dismissal of a teacher" 36th of 93 items, even though most had never participated in such an activity. A similar finding was reported by Jankovic (1983) who earlier had interviewed and surveyed 50 principals from the Edmonton Public School District. These principals identified "recommending the termination of employment or transfer of a teacher" as the most stressful activity.

Bridges (1992) responded in this manner to the question of why more actions are not taken to remediate incompetent teachers or remove them from the classroom:

> The inclination of administrators to tolerate and protect, rather than confront, the incompetent teacher is shaped by a combination of situational and personal factors. Two of the most important situational factors are the legal employment rights possessed by the majority of California teachers and the difficulties inherent in evaluating the competence of classroom teachers. The most important personal factor is the deeply-seated human desire to avoid the conflict and unpleasantness which often accompany criticism of others. (p. 20)

The effects of involuntary job loss. Involuntary job loss occurs when a teacher is forced to resign, take early retirement, go on long term disability leave, or has his or her contract terminated. When this transpires, the teacher is likely to experience a sense of grief similar to that which occurs when a close friend or relative dies, and will likely undergo an analogous grieving process. Jones (1979) stated that "involuntary career loss is often a traumatic and devastating experience for an individual....It is often accentuated by a grief reaction not easily understood by the individual involved" (p. 196). Furthermore, "it is also important to realize that grief over the loss of career may well be more acute than over the death of a loved one" (p. 197).

Support is required for the supervisor. The experience may well be difficult for the supervisor, as well. Bridges (1992) believes that "individuals are predisposed to avoid unpleasantness in social encounters. They prefer to be spared the emotional ordeal entailed

in criticizing and finding fault with the behavior of others" (p. 25). Phillips and Older (1977) indicated that the ordeal of working with the marginal or unsatisfactory performer involves strong feelings of anger towards the employee, guilt at not providing better and more effective supervision, and fear of confrontation with the employee. As well, many supervisors who hired the employee may deny inadequate performance for fear that it will reflect poorly on their judgment. Phillips and Older concluded that the problem employee had the potential to create tremendous stress for the supervisor and so the problems were often ignored.

Bruce (1990) also discussed the stress placed on supervisors who attempt to work with problem employees and stated that they "precipitate a series of predictable psychological stages in those who must deal with them....The stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and withdrawal, then finally, acceptance and active planning" (p. 157). These strong emotional responses to the possible consequences of confronting the concerns raised by inadequate performance often result in problems being ignored until the only viable alternative becomes dismissal. The manner in which this is carried out is often destructive to the self-esteem of the employee, difficult on the supervisor, and detrimental to the morale of the other employees.

Summary of the literature related to stress caused by increased supervision. Four major themes related to the stress experienced by the administrator or teacher emerged.

- Teacher evaluations involve frustration and intrapersonal conflict which are two factors associated with high levels of stress.
- Role stress, related to conflicting demands and insufficient resources is a potential source of stress.
- The grieving phenomenon of those who lose their positions is similar to that experienced with the loss of a relative or close friend.

- Supervisors need support from colleagues when working with teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory.

D. POOR HEALTH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Jevne and Zingle (1991) conducted an Alberta study into the possible interaction of health and teacher performance when they investigated the effects of disabling illness on teachers. The methodology included a detailed questionnaire, to which 312 teachers responded, and interviews with "a total of 72 educators according to guidelines which parallel the issues addressed in the questionnaire" (p. 1).

Insidious health competency spiral. They found that many tenured teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory underwent a gradual, yet insidious erosion of their teaching skills and self-esteem over a period of years. Jevne and Zingle (1991) believed that in many cases, this erosion of skills occurred partly because of health concerns or outside stress. This began a downward spiral of competency and health-related problems. "Regardless of 'who's responsible', the outcome is the development of a disabling condition which does not allow the teacher to continue to function in the classroom" (p. 22).

Furthermore, they concluded that teachers caught in this health/competency spiral most often denied the signs. The individuals felt they should be immune to the stresses and so the "signs of the difficulty are often not acknowledged, or are even ignored" (p. 22). In addition, peers, friends and administrators failed to acknowledge the signs and often seemed committed to a conspiracy of silence.

Stages associated with long-term health problems. Jevne and Zingle (1991) described the various stages through which teachers may move as they experience the onslaught of long-term health problems. The stages include: (a) the teacher recognizes he or she is in trouble, (b) the teacher makes the transition to long term disability, (c) the

rehabilitation, (d) seeking resolution by reintroducing a sense of stability into their lives, and finally, (e) daring to dream again. They stated:

> A person can experience feeling less enthused/idealistic, less valued, less able or competent and less connected. Being disillusioned, being devalued, depleted and depersonalized are described as important to this phase and are an important part of the differences experienced by recipients who have chronic illness and/or psychological/psychiatric conditions versus sudden, short term physical conditions. (p. 27)

The study revealed that, in many cases, teachers caught in the health/competence spiral wanted to get out of teaching but didn't know how to make the transition to other careers. Therefore, the outcome for the teacher was often either forced resignation or early retirement.

Human and financial costs. As a part of their investigation of teacher health, illness, and long term disability of Alberta teachers, Jevne and Zingle (1991) examined the human and financial costs of the overload faced by teachers. They found that healthy teachers, and those who have accessed long term disability benefits agreed that teaching was becoming a more stressful occupation. Among the many factors teachers identified were unclear goals, conflicting expectations, and increased workload. They believed the support of administration, and validation of their work by both administration and the school boards were factors which affected their ability to function effectively.

When Jevne and Zingle (1991) asked administrators for possible solutions, the following were among the ideas suggested: (a) limit expectations with respect to the teacher's responsibilities; (b) enhance school climate by looking after self-esteem needs; (c) enhance administrative and district support; (d) recognize the situations where teachers have dealt with stress cases successfully; and (e) respect the differences between and among teachers and students. The implementation of these ideas would change the organizational culture -- create common meanings and shared purposes, and change the way members of the organization think and act. It seems, then, that an important aspect of the systemic health of teachers is to fashion the culture of the school or school district in a manner which clearly defines its purpose and goals.

Summary of health and professional performance. The study by Jevne and Zingle (1991) revealed four aspects of the relationship of health to professional performance which affects the forced resignation of teachers:

- There is a downward spiral of health and competency related problems when the teacher's health deteriorates which leads to a decrease in professional performance, which leads to an increase in stress, which in turn, has a further adverse effect on health.
- There are clearly identifiable stages through which most teachers with long-term health problems pass.
- The human and financial costs of health-competency related problems were immense.

E. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

In his authoritative work, Schein (1985) argued that the term 'organizational culture' is affected by the shared beliefs of group members that influence the way in which they relate to one another and solve the problems faced by the organization.

Description of Organizational Culture

Schein (1985) defined the culture of an organization as:

> the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic "taken-for-granted" fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group's problems of survival in its external environment and its problems of internal integration. They come to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably. (p. 6)

Schein expanded on this definition by describing why and how certain basic assumptions become embedded in an organization. These assumptions provide direction and guidance to all members of the organization in dealing with both day-to-day situations and organizational crises. He described the organizational culture as:

> a pattern of basic assumptions — invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration — that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 9)

Bolman and Deal (1991) summarized various ideas about culture as the unwritten, implied rules about how things are done within an organization. This patterns of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts

> define for its members who they are and how they do things. Culture is both product and process. As product, it embodies the accumulated wisdom of those who were members before we came. As process, it is continually renewed and re-created as new members are taught the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves. (p. 250)

Culture is the non-rational aspect of an organization which stems from the values, norms and traditions of formal and informal leaders. The culture is formed from deeply ingrained patterns of behavior and so can give direction, impose coherence, and order, and create meaning for the members of the organization (Weick, 1985).

Transmission of culture. The group culture is shaped by the actions, and decisions of capable, competent leaders and is perpetuated, re-enforced, and transmitted throughout the organization in a variety of ways, including:

> (1) what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control; (2) leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises; (3) deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching by leaders; (4) criteria for allocation of rewards and status; (5) criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement, and excommunication. (Schein, 1985, p. 225)

In addition, Schein (1985) listed a number of secondary factors which help inculcate the basic beliefs and practices of the group members. These included the organizational structure, policies and procedures, design of building and physical space, the stories and legends which are told and retold, and the mission statement or espoused philosophy. Ritual, rights of passage, and ceremony also are important means of forming and reinforcing underlying assumptions and beliefs. Still, Schein cautioned: "The operating cultural assumptions will always be manifested first in what the leaders demonstrate, not in what is written down or inferred from designs and procedures" (p. 237).

Organizational culture and change. Strong, persuasive cultures develop in mature organizations which have on-going commitment to well-defined central beliefs and assumptions. These potent cultures can be of great benefit. They represent an effective

means of building commitment to the vision of the organization, and provide coordination and direction for loosely coupled structures such as those found in school systems. A well developed culture can lead to commitment and performance which far exceeds that which is attained through regulation and monitoring.

However, as Sergiovanni (1991) noted, the unchallenged acceptance of certain well-defined beliefs creates another feature — a less desirable feature — related to the development of such a culture. Strong cultures may be highly resistant to change, as they are built upon the shared understandings of successful dealings with each other and with the external environment. The entrenched culture can create a tendency to rely on the decision-making processes and relationships which have served the group well in the past rather than find new approaches more appropriate to the changing conditions. The restraining force which the culture may exert on the organization is especially damaging in turbulent times. Cohesive cultures only enhance the effectiveness of the organization if the cultural patterns fit the demands of the world in which the organization must operate. In these turbulent times, an effective culture is one which embraces change.

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991), when looking at educational change, concluded that the fundamental task of educational reform is to change the culture of the entire school district to one which creates and maintains

> a focus on instruction, teaching, and learning; creating the conditions at the classroom and the school level for collaborative teacher and principal professionalism; mobilizing parents and communities; using district resources to hire, promote, and support the right people and to orchestrate the pressure and support necessary for continuous classroom and school improvement. (p. 210)

Thus, a culture which embraces the concept of continuous change will likely be more successful than is one which is too caught up in tradition and stability. In these organizations, a major leadership role is to ensure that the members maintain their capacity for learning.

Organizational Culture and Leadership

The relationship between leadership and organizational culture has been constantly re-enforced in the literature. For example, Schein (1985) argued that culture and leadership "are two sides of the same coin, and neither can really be understood by itself" (p. 2). It seems that effective leaders are those who clearly understand their own fundamental beliefs, and the basic assumptions about people, education and organizations from which they operate.

The culture of an organization is affected by the manner in which its leaders act and react in critical incidents, the events they pay attention to and the sort of relationships they model. In other words, the actions of educational leaders send messages about their fundamental beliefs and assumptions, and the way in which these messages are interpreted influences the organizational culture. Paradoxically, the organizational culture also affects the actions of the leaders and the process by which decisions are made. Sergiovanni (1992a) argued that the mindscape of a school district's leaders affects both the process and the content of decision-making, and the relationships between and among the various members of the school jurisdiction. For example, if the underlying beliefs and assumptions of the trustees and superintendent of a school jurisdiction correspond to those manifest in a bureaucratic, hierarchical organization, official decisions will be made by the board, the superintendent or the principal — those in positions of formal authority. Teacher involvement in decision-making will tend to be limited to providing information to those in better positions to make the decisions; however, teachers will be directed to implement these decisions. Relationships between members in various levels of the hierarchy will be formal, impersonal, and based on the assumption that supervisors are trustworthy, while teachers are not. Such a belief system would create a heavy emphasis on traditional, summative evaluations, where teachers are expected to measure up to pre-determined standards, on measuring results by the use of standardized testing, and on the controlling and coordinating the various activities of the school district.

This is in marked contrast to a district culture which is based on professional authority and moral authority. Sergiovanni (1992a) argued that if authority is vested in "informed craft knowledge and personal expertise,... and felt obligation and duties derived from widely shared community values, ideas, and ideals" (pp. 38-39), trustees, superintendents and principals will develop strategies which are based on creating dialogue, providing assistance and support, identifying core values and promoting collegiality. In other words, authority, in this culture, is based on a belief in the professionalism of teachers and a common commitment to moral and ethical practice.

Sergiovanni (1992b) expanded the concept of professionalism by asserting that professionalism requires both competence and virtue:

> In teaching, professional virtue is made up of four dimensions:
> - a commitment to practice in an exemplary way;
> - a commitment to practice toward valued social ends;
> - a commitment not only to one's own practice but to the practice itself;
> - a commitment to the ethic of caring. (p. 43)

It seems that the forced resignation of a teacher may provide an opportunity for the educational leaders to affect the organizational culture as it is often seen as a critical series of events. Furthermore, the forced resignation of a teacher may provide considerable insight to the kind of relations those in leadership positions wish to model for all school district members. The events which lead to the forced resignation of a teacher, would then provide teachers in the school or school district with insights into the values of the supervisors. Therefore, there is a need to look at some fundamental beliefs and assumptions which underlie the organizational culture.

Organizational Values

Foster (1986) argued that "administration, though, is basically concerned with values and with ends; otherwise, why would we choose this profession?" (p. 72). He continued that "the administrator establishes the type and clarity of vision and purpose crucial to the organization" (p. 73). By this process, the actions of the administrator influence the values of the school or school system.

The organizational culture is affected by the manner in which the senior administrators respond to the incompetent teacher. Part of the responsibility of leadership is to determine what Greenfield (1991) identified as the "moral order" (p. 19) of the organization — to establish the hierarchy of values of the organization. If the administrator chooses to ignore the unsatisfactory performance, the message is clearly given that demands for educational excellence and high expectations for teachers and students take a lower priority than does the desire to maintain non-controversial relations with all teachers. Thus, the administrator's choices may strongly influence organizational values and culture.

Foster (1986) could have been speaking of the issue of unsatisfactory teaching performance when he said:

> . . . administrators must deal with moral dilemmas. Each decision carries moral, rather than just technical implications. This realization distinguishes the administrator from the technocrat. *Each administrative decision carries with it a restructuring of a human life;* this is why administration is the resolution of moral dilemmas. (p. 33)

He goes on to suggest that the resolution of the various moral dilemmas which administrators face demand that they examine and understand their fundament beliefs and assumptions. While there are many beliefs which guide the actions of both teachers and administrators, two beliefs, in particular, — belief in the ethic of justice and in the ethic of care — were raised frequently during the interviews. The values associated with these beliefs need to be explored further.

Care and Justice as Core Values

Schein (1985) suggested the task of leaders is to shape and manage the organizational culture, which implies that the leaders must be committed to the fundamental beliefs and assumptions which undergrid the culture. Part of the task of school or school system leadership is to promote and enhance an ethical environment in schools, for if members of the school community are to live in mutual respect, there must be some shared understandings, or principles to which all can agree. A moral setting provides the basis of the social contract necessary for students, parents, teachers, and administrators to work

together. Starratt (1991) wrote: "educational administrators have a moral responsibility to be proactive about creating an ethical environment for the conduct of education" (p. 187). He suggested that principals and teachers should be enabled to exercise greater autonomy to establish a more humanly responsive environment. As the school community accepts more responsibility to govern itself, it must pursue a moral purpose. Furthermore, Starratt argued that this was best done through a commitment to the ethics of justice and care.

The ethic of justice. Most educational administrators would readily endorse the ethic of justice as a fundamental belief of both schools and school systems. 'Being fair' is frequently seen as a basic tenet of school discipline policies and practices. Teachers generally subscribe to classroom management philosophy that is 'fair, but firm' while administrators attempt to create balanced teaching loads and treat all teachers in a manner which is fair.

> Most would also agree with Strike, Haller and Soltis (1988) who wrote of justice as due process, or 'natural justice'. This interpretation suggests that all persons have the right to be aware of charges that are made against them, to hear the accusations and to have an opportunity to speak to those accusations.

A modification of this concept suggests that those affected by an administrative or educational decision should have the right to appeal that decision. This interpretation is also readily apparent in the Act, which provides many avenues of appeal against perceived capricious administrative decisions. Likewise, it is evident in local and provincial teacher and student evaluation policies which ensure that teachers and students have the right to appeal judgments or practices considered to be unfair.

Another interpretation of the concept of justice advocates, as Kohlberg (1980) did, that school personnel must recognize the unconditional value of each person and that each person has the right to "equal consideration of his claims" (p. 164). Closely related to this variation is that of Callan (1991) who described justice as respect for human dignity. He added

> ...our common understanding of respect pertains not merely to what it is to *be* a person but also to the conditions that empower one to *flourish* as a person. Among other things, to flourish as a person is to be capable of the fulfillments of human

> intimacy and solidarity, to be free to perfect one's talents, to be able to make independent choices about religious affiliation, vocation and the like. (p. 8)

Collective versus individual rights. The concepts of justice outlined above describe the relationship between two individuals. However, school administrators often must arbitrate disputes which occur between an individual and the group of which the individual is a part. Thus, the administrator often must rely on a form of justice which makes a distinction between collective rights and individual rights. Starratt (1991) argued that an understanding of justice must embrace two aspects, "namely justice understood as individual choices to act justly and justice understood as the community's choice to direct or govern its actions justly" (p. 193). In a school setting, an individual must consider the values of the community when making choices. However, community choices — those choices which affect most members of the community — must be made with some awareness of individual choices that have become commonplace. In other words, the concept of justice will depend partly on the context in which the action is judged. Whether particular actions are judged to be just or unjust will depend, in part, on the norms of the community in which the actions take place. Consistency with community norms, then, becomes a part of this variation of the concept of justice.

A similar concept — the principle of benefit maximization was enunciated by Strike *et al*. (1988). This principle states:

> that, whenever we are faced with a choice, the best and most just decision is the one that results in the most good or the greatest benefit for the most people. Thus the principle of benefit maximization judges the morality of our actions by their consequences. It says that the best action is the one with the best overall results. It does not directly tell us what is to count as a benefit or a good. That requires additional reflection. It merely says that once we know what is good, the best decision is the one that maximizes good outcomes. (p. 16, 17)

Application of this principle suggests that if the unsatisfactory performance of a teacher is having an adverse effect on the students' ability to fulfill their educational needs, the dilemma faced by the administrator should be resolved by the choice which attains the greatest good for the most people. In other words, the decision should be made to protect the interests of the students.

Justice complemented by caring. However, the ethic of justice, alone, does not provide the necessary undergirding of a moral culture. The ethic of justice provides an understanding of how people can live and work together in such a way that the actions of one person do not infringe upon the rights of another. This, though, cannot be the sole piling on which an organizational culture is founded. Callan (1991) described the limits of the concept of justice in this manner: "...justice is a virtue designed for conditions of conflict and the equilibrium it establishes may be little more than the peace which enemies reluctantly live with after battle" (p. 3). Justice, as a concept which stands alone, is impartial, rational, and abstract. The concept is based on "...emotional disengagement. In giving justice, moral agents confront each other with wholly separate identities, each isolated in the pursuit of its own private ends, impervious to the call of human solidarity" (p. 7).

What is missing from such a notion is the sense of caring which must exist between the members of the school community. Starratt (1991) believed that justice and caring must be considered together:

> For an ethic of justice to serve its more generous purpose, it must be complemented or fulfilled in an ethic of love....Such an ethic does not demand relationships of intimacy; rather, it postulates a level of caring that honors the dignity of each person and desires to see that person enjoy a fully human life. (p. 195)

Callan (1991) argued that the ethics of justice and of caring form a powerful coalition, a coalition which recognizes that persons have worth, exclusive of the relationship between the people involved, but also that members of a community care for one another, and so have shared feelings which allow us to "respond to the crises and triumphs in each other's lives" (p. 13). Actions of support and assistance follow from the sense of caring.

The Ethic of Caring

A variety of scholars have written about caring, the ethic of care, or of the relationship between the concepts of caring and community. Noddings (1988) described aspects of care when she said (a) caring is a relationship; (b) it focuses on both the relationship and the people in the relationship; (c) people try to create or preserve a caring relationship; and (d)

the ethic of care is based on the natural caring which exists between people who respond to the needs, wants, and feelings of each other. She argued that people who are committed to an ethic of care attempt to make all relationships into caring relationships. The primary concern of such people "is the relationship itself — not only what happens physically to others involved in the relation and in connected relations but what they may feel and how they may respond to the act under consideration" (p. 219). This focus on the relationship between people was elaborated by Starratt (1991) who wrote:

> This ethic places the human persons-in-relationship as occupying a position for each other of absolute value; neither one can be used as a means to an end; each enjoys an intrinsic dignity and worth, and given the chance, will reveal genuinely lovable qualities. An ethic of caring requires fidelity to persons, a willingness to acknowledge their right to be who they are, an openness to encountering them in their authentic individuality, a loyalty to the relationship. (p. 195)

Rather than attempt to define the concept of caring, Beck (1991) described the conceptin terms of the goals of caring. She suggested that these may include concern for human growth and development, being responsive to the needs of others, being concerned about the welfare and protection of others, and encouraging belonging, or of creating a sense of community.

Beck urged that educational administrators and teachers operate from an ethic of caring. She argued that

> leaders using this ethic would seek to understand the many needs of individuals and groups within schools and of the larger society and would strive to discover strategies to address these needs in ways likely to result in long-term well-being. It would allow administrators and teachers to alter strategies as needs and situations change, and it would encourage all involved to treat each person with respect and dignity, regardless of her/his actions or choices. (p. 28)

It is worth noting that Beck suggested that caring relationships should be based on a commitment to treat persons with 'respect and dignity', while Callan (1991) described justice as "respect for human dignity" (p. 8). This suggests that the ethic of justice and the ethic of caring should be combined into a single ethic of caring and justice.

Caring and Justice

The separation of morality into the ethics of justice and caring, according to Callan (1991), is a serious mistake. He argued that neither caring nor the "justice worth having" (p. 1) can be understood in abstraction from one another — that justice is needed even when there are unselfish caring relationships. Furthermore, by ignoring the importance of caring relationships, educators may lose the motivational power provided by the sense of justice. He concluded "if the sense of justice is aligned with unselfish caring, then it has a formidable ally in resisting any slide toward injustice; and even if one's only interest is the avoidance of the latter, it would be foolish to overlook the power of that alliance" (p. 13).

Flanagan and Adler (1983) and Cottingham (1983) both stated a belief in a single fundamental principal of caring and justice. They each took the position that no moral principles can be applied without considering the context in which the situation occurs. Furthermore, one seeking to apply these principles cannot divorce oneself from the other individuals involved; she or he cannot be completely autonomous. If the person is not autonomous, is not completely divorced from the emotions and feelings of those affected by the actions, then there will be a relationship between the people. That relationship can and should be a caring relationship. Thus one can subscribe to the basic principle of justice — a basic regard for human dignity and in the basic principle of caring by rejecting only the concept of impartiality from the notion of justice.

The concept that one cannot know justice in the absence of caring was also put forward by Higgins (1989). She provided an example of caring and justice where in a family of five the parents met the physical and material needs of all three children, but provided care to only the eldest. Higgins argued this would not be a just situation as the parents have not treated all children equitably. The missing aspect of justice was care. From this example, Higgins made the claim that (a) we can know care only in the context of justice, and (b) there is a difference between the feeling of care, and care as an activity. The activities of care are based on feelings of love, charity, benevolence, community responsibility and

valuing. In this context, one's actions would be guided both by "what is right and what is good toward others" (p. 199).

Thus, the organizational culture should be partially based on the ethic of justice and the ethic of care. These two concepts are closely related; in fact, many would argue there is a single ethic — the ethic of care and justice.

Summary of organizational culture. The review of the literature related to organizational culture considered the views of organizational culture which emerged from the work of Schein. In addition, the core values which undergrid ethical organizations were considered. The review suggested that:

- Culture is comprised of the shared beliefs and assumptions, which operate unconsciously, and define how people interact with one another, and how they solve problems. Quite simply, it defines how the people in the organization work together.
- Culture is transmitted by what leaders pay attention to, by leaders' reactions to critical incidents, by role modeling and coaching, and by what is rewarded.
- The beliefs of the leaders determine the beliefs of the organization.
- Actions are shaped by beliefs which are rooted in values. Therefore, it is necessary to examine and understand the organizational values.
- Various interpretations of the concepts of the ethic of care and the ethic of justice were considered. Caring was considered as a relationship between two people, and also as respect for the dignity and well-being of the person. Justice was viewed as "natural justice," as fairness and as being impartial. The concept of a single ethic of caring and justice was also considered.

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature related to the forced resignation of teachers identified a number of factors which appeared to affect the teacher, the supervisor and the organization. These included (a) teacher supervision and evaluation; (b) the studies of and research on

teacher dismissals and terminations; (c) stress; (d) health and their relationships to teacher performance; and (e) organizational culture.

- **Teacher supervision and evaluation.** There is an extensive body of research related to this area. The literature recognized two main purposes for evaluation — to promote teacher growth, and to make judgments about the professional performance of teachers. Recent studies have suggested that current policies and practices have met with limited success in achieving either goal. As a result, separation of the two functions is recommended.
- **Studies of and research on teacher dismissals and terminations.** Much of the literature related to teacher dismissals is tied to the legal procedures related to teacher dismissal. However, there is a considerable body of literature related to working with the unsatisfactory performer in business. This research indicates working with marginal or unsatisfactory employees often follows a series of stages. These include:
  - Identification of the problem employee
  - Diagnosis of the reasons the employee is experiencing problems
  - Provision of time and assistance to remediate the problem
  - A performance appraisal to determine if the employee is now providing satisfactory service.
- **The literature related to stress.** There is a very large, and growing body of literature related to this topic. However, only that material related to causes of stress, and the effects of intense supervision on the teacher and the supervisor was considered. The literature suggested:
  - The loss of employment is comparable to the loss of a loved one, and a person who loses his or her job with often experience the same grieving process as one experiences with the loss of a loved one. An understanding of this should be an

important aspect of administrators' activities when they are deciding how to work with teachers whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory.

- Administrators rate the dismissal of a teacher as one of the most stressful activities in their work. Because of this, supervisors should receive support during the supervisory process.
- Causes of stress included role ambiguity, frustration, and intrapersonal conflict. Boards need to take steps to greater role clarity while senior administrators should consider ways of providing more support to front line administrators.

- **The relationship of health and competency.** Jevne and Zingle's study into the effects of long-term health problems found a definite relationship between long-term health problems and the level of competency. They found that where there was a slow, progressive deterioration of health, there was often a corresponding deterioration in the quality of the teaching performance. The decrease in performance tended to increase the stress, which further exacerbated the health problems.

  The implications for administrators included:

  - the need to limit expectations with respect to the teacher's responsibilities
  - the need to enhance school climate by looking after self-esteem needs
  - enhance administrative and district support for the teacher
  - recognize situations where teachers have dealt with stress cases successfully
  - respect the differences between and among teachers.

- **The literature on organizational culture was extensive.** Five themes emerged:

  - Various definitions of organization culture were considered. Among these was "the patterns of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts which define for its members who they are and how they do things" (Bolman and Deal, 1992, p. 250). The fact that cultures are often deeply engrained into the mindscapes of the members of the organization may make the organization resistant to change.

- The primary means by which culture is transmitted to various members of the organization is through the actions of the formal and informal leaders. Thus, leadership has a significant impact on the culture.
- The leaders have a responsibility for defining the core organizational values.
- Justice is a core value. The review provided many interpretations of the concept of justice, including fairness, natural justice, and acceptance of the unconditional value of every person.
- Another core value considered is the ethic of care which suggests that caring can occur only when the parties in a relationship recognize the dignity of the other person.

Many of the topics which have been considered in the literature review emerged from the interviews with the supervisors and teachers. For example, the administrators felt that manner they supervised and worked with marginal or unsatisfactory performers affected the organizational culture. This, then became an important strand in the review. In addition, most supervisors were conscious of the need to act fairly, and many described attempts to maintain a caring relationship with the teachers they were supervising. Furthermore, the teachers talked extensively about how they had been treated unfairly, and how they became isolated from administration and other teachers during the supervisory process. Thus the issues of caring and justice were themes which were referred to in almost every interview.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

This study has been conducted within the interpretive paradigm in an attempt to gain greater understanding of the experiences of both selected teachers and supervisors involved in efforts to resolve issues of unsatisfactory performance and of the meanings attached to those experiences. Stainback and Stainback (1988) suggested that an interpretive study is appropriate where the researcher is willing to sacrifice the scope of the problem to allow for greater depth of understanding. This research approach provides a means to gather a broad range and variety of types of data, including certain types of data that traditionally have not been collected. An interpretive study allows the researcher to gain an understanding of a situation, how the situation developed and outcomes which followed. These insights are necessary if viable alternatives are to be generated. Lipson (1989) advocated interpretive research as a means of "describing the complexity of human experience in its context, with emphasis on describing daily events of people's lives using their own world...on learning from 'informants' rather than approaching 'subjects' with pre-set hypotheses" (p. 62).

Rationale for this Approach

The issues which underlie this study are not so much questions of "how many teacher contracts were terminated?" or "what settlements are provided to teachers who appeal the termination to a Board of Reference?" The issues touch on, but are not intimately concerned with the description of the type of policies which have been developed for teacher evaluation and supervision. The goal is "gaining an increased understanding of the ideas, feelings, motives, and beliefs behind people's action" (Stainback and Stainback, 1988, p. 4) which can be accomplished through interpretive research. This approach allows for a more holistic view of the problem than would result from other research designs.

Reason (1988) also saw the importance of an holistic or complete approach:

> The emphasis on wholeness also means that we are not interested in either fragmented knowing, or theoretical knowing that is separated from practice and from experience. We seek a knowing-in-action which encompasses as much of experience as possible. This means that aspects of a phenomenon are understood

> deeply because we know them in the context of our participation in the whole system, not as the isolated dependent and independent variables of experimental science. Our holistic concerns lead us to a form of theory-building and understanding which is descriptive and systemic, what Geertz (1973) would call a 'thick description', or Kaplan (1964) a 'concatenated' theory. The essential quality of a pattern model is that it creates a dense web of knowing. (p.11)

The non-directive nature of the interpretive approach is important in generating new understandings and alternatives, and as such is a major reason for selecting this approach. Stainback and Stainback (1988) stressed that this allows the researcher to uncover the points of view of those interviewed without restricting these by predetermined categories of questions or rating scales. "In qualitative research, direct quotations — often obtained through unobtrusive observations and/or non-directive interviewing — are the raw data that reveal people's thoughts and perceptions" (p. 14).

Interpretive research begins with a fundamental belief in the ability and freedom of people to make choices. Because of this, it is not possible to predict what the person will do in a given situation. When dealing with issues such as those which surround the teacher whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory, it is important to recognize that both the teacher and the administrator choose how they will act. This approach helps the researcher gain meaning from the choices and the impact of those choices on the educational system.

The qualitative researcher, according to Stainback & Stainback (1988), assumes that social reality is created in the minds of individuals. It is a socially constructed reality, constructed by and through the interaction of individuals and groups. In contrast, the positivist assumes there are facts with an objective reality which is separate from the beliefs of the individual. The assumption that reality is a social construct is important: if the researcher is to gain an understanding of the feelings, emotions, and motives of those interviewed, the 'informant's' definition of reality must be accepted as that.

METHODS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The focus of the study is on the experiences of both teachers who were involved in the involuntary exit from their teaching position and on those of supervisors who have been involved in the actions which lead to the forced resignation of teachers. However, in order

to attain a broader perspective of the series of events which lead to such an outcome, three associated studies were conducted. The first involved a survey of school superintendents in order to gain insight into the frequency of involuntary exits, and into the nature of inducements used to encourage teachers to leave their positions. The second study involved an analysis of the Alberta Teachers' Association files of those teachers who requested assistance from the Member Services department because of concerns the teachers were providing unsatisfactory service. The Coordinator of Member Services agreed to provide access to the files with the provision that the findings would be used to form generalizations about the supervisory process, that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained and that the findings would be used only for research purposes. The final study involved a review of the judgments of the eleven Board of Reference cases heard in Alberta since 1972 in which the major reason for dismissal was the failure to meet the standards of minimum professional competence. Thus, a variety of data collection strategies were used: (a) the semi-structured interview, (b) a survey, and (c) document analyses.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The semi-structured interview was the primary means of data collection. May (1989) described the focused or semi-structured interview as one which is organized around topics of particular interest to the researcher while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth. May also stated that

> the investigator's initial approach may be informed by previous knowledge, observations, and experience, but these sources of information are carefully subordinated to the process of discovering the informant's perspective on the topic of interest. If more than one interview is completed, the early interviews are likely to be more unstructured, with increasing structure developing as analysis of informants' stories begins. (p. 174)

Lipson (1989) referred to the importance of the unstructured interview as a data-gathering method and emphasized that the quality of the interview is greatly enhanced if it is conducted in an atmosphere of trust and mutual rapport. As the trust increases, the conversation will become more candid and the data more complete.

Interviews with teachers. Interviews were conducted with four teachers; each occurred in the teacher's home. While a list of possible questions was developed, it was not used in any of the interviews as the teachers were very willing to tell their stories, and apparently, were very candid about their experiences and their emotions. The teachers told their stories; only questions of clarification were asked.

Interviews with supervisors. Interviews were conducted with twelve supervisors. Eleven were currently central office personnel, and one was a practicing principal. However, two of the supervisors were principals at the time they were involved in the involuntary exit of a teacher. The supervisors were very open in describing the supervisory process, but were less inclined to talk about their personal emotional response. Because of this, more probing questions were used than were required with teachers.

Following that series of interviews, I felt it would be worthwhile to bring the administrators together. Because many of the experiences were shared experiences, a co-operative inquiry in which all participants are seen as co-researchers and co-subjects was considered to be valuable. Reason (1988) describes co-operative inquiry in this way:

> A group of co-researchers meet to inquire into some aspect of their life and work. . . . At Stage 1 they discuss and agree *what* it is they wish to research; what *ideas* and *theories* they may bring to the inquiry. . . . In Stage 2 they take these decisions about research action into their lives; they engage in whatever behavior has been agreed to, note the outcomes. . . and record their discoveries. . . . the co-researchers (Stage 3) become fully immersed in their practice. They encounter each other and their world directly, as far as possible without preconception, bracketing off any prejudicial influence of the ideas they started with in Stage 1, and so opening themselves to novel experience and discerning so far as possible what is actually happening. (p.5)

This possibility was discussed with each of the supervisors, and all heartily endorsed the idea. A date was set when all indicated they could meet. However, the demands related to their position prevented most from attending, and so the follow-up discussion was canceled.

Selection of Teachers and Superintendents

Teacher respondents. The staff officers from the Member Services department of the Alberta Teachers' Association provided assistance in identifying a pool of teachers with appropriate histories. Additional candidates were identified following the review of selected files. In total, eleven teachers with a suitable history were identified. A staff officer of the Alberta Teachers' Association agreed to make the initial contact with teachers to determine willingness to participate. The staff officer indicated to the teachers that the research was part of a doctoral study into the experiences which surround the forced resignation of teachers. Furthermore, she indicated that the A.T.A. had provided me with access to the files with the provision that all identities would remain confidential and that the findings were to be used only for research purposes.

The staff officer was able to contact five of the eleven teachers identified, and of these, four agreed to participate. Five teachers had moved and left no forwarding address, and the staff officer was unable to reach one possible respondent, even though there was a current telephone number. The one teacher who was contacted but who was not willing to participate gave no reasons for his decision.

Following the initial contact with the teachers, I contacted by telephone those who agreed to participate. During this conversation, I outlined the purposes of the research, indicated what steps I would take to ensure that both confidentiality and anonymity, and made arrangements for the interviews.

Administrator respondents. A brief description of the study was distributed to all Alberta central office administrators through the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents, and those supervisors with relevant experience were requested to participate. Seven supervisors were identified in this manner. In addition, three supervisors heard of the study through other means and volunteered to tell their stories. As well, two superintendents who do not engage in the practice of forced resignations were interviewed in order to obtain a different point of view.

SURVEY OF SUPERINTENDENTS

A survey was developed to determine the answers to questions related to: (a) the identification of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory; (b) the number of such teachers who were pressured to take early retirement, go on long term disability, or resign; (c) the number of tenured teachers whose contract of employment was terminated; and (d) the nature of inducements which were used. The surveys were distributed to each of the 124 chief superintendents according to a list provided by Alberta Education.

The survey instrument was modeled on a questionnaire developed by Bridges (1992) in his study of teachers in California who were deemed to provide unsatisfactory service.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Different approaches were used to analyze the data obtained from the various parts of the overall study. The methods included statistical analysis, repeated readings of transcripts, and grid analysis.

Analysis of the surveys. Almost all of the data on the survey were numerical; thus a statistical analysis was appropriate. The data were entered into a computer program which generated the frequencies, means, and ranges of the responses.

Analysis of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed and read a number of times. During each reading, key paragraphs were noted, and paraphrased in the margin. This lead to the identification of concepts, which were later clustered into themes. After tentative themes were identified, the transcripts were re-read to determine if concepts found in some transcripts were apparent in other transcripts, and whether the themes accurately reflected the stories that were told.

Analysis of the files. The files compiled by the Alberta Teachers' Association were often very large, as they included copies of all communication between the staff officer and the teacher, as well as copies of teacher evaluation reports, and any other material that was considered relevant to the case. A summary of important events or conclusions was developed for each case. The summary included a time line, a listing of pertinent

information, the reasons which lead to dismissal, the supervisor(s) involved, and the outcome. In addition, judgments were made about the quality of individual teacher reports and the overall supervisory process. The information was further summarized onto a grid which allowed similarities in the supervisory practices and the outcomes to be noted.

Analysis of Board of Reference judgments. The Legal Services department of the Alberta School Boards Association maintains files of the judgments of all Board of Reference hearings. These are categorized according to the reasons for dismissal. Only those cases in which the most significant reasons were related to teacher competence were reviewed.

The reasons were normally explicitly stated and provided in the form — "The teacher has failed to meet the expectations of the school board with respect to...." A grid was developed which allowed the reasons cited for dismissal to be compared. Clusters of reasons related to various teacher competencies, such as 'planning and preparation' emerged. The entire set defines a series of minimum competency standards which the Boards of Reference have upheld.

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF DATA

The concept of trustworthiness is used to indicate an emphasis on using multiple methods, sources of information, and theories to reveal the varied aspects of the topic under consideration. Knafl and Breitmayer (1989) suggested that

> the investigator does not expect multiple sources of data to confirm one another, rather the expectation is that each source will contribute an additional piece to the puzzle. Multiple strategies are selected and combined because of their unique contribution to addressing the research question and not because of their counterbalancing strengths and weakness. (p. 212)

Furthermore, Stainback and Stainback (1988) emphasized that in qualitative research, the purpose of using multiple data sources is to increase the depth and completeness of one's understanding of whatever is being investigated as well as increase the probability that the research findings will be seen as credible by others.

Taylor and Bogdan (1981) felt that "qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as the fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study" (p. 76). They viewed the subjective nature of the data as a strength of qualitative research and urged researchers to "examine their own subjective states as a source of understanding the setting and subject under study....Through a critical examination of one's own perspective, one often obtains insights into the perspectives of others" (p. 77).

Stainback and Stainback (1988) agreed with the thoughts expressed by Taylor and Bogdan but used different terminology. They suggested that

> qualitative researchers, in contrast, are not as concerned about reliability. They tend to concentrate on validity, data that represents a true or full picture of what the researcher is investigating....It is imperative to gain a thorough, rich, and deep understanding of the topic under investigation. (p. 7)

According to Stainback and Stainback (1988), the transferability of findings in qualitative research is often limited. However, where the characteristics of people and situations are similar, the meanings gained from the study may assist others in gaining a better understanding of their own experiences.

Multiple sources of data. In total, 39 teacher files maintained by the A.T.A. were read. Files related to each of the four teachers interviewed, and to three of the cases described by the supervisors were among those reviewed. This provided a different source of data for the stories. In addition, the preliminary findings were presented to three groups of central office personnel. The feedback received from various members supported the themes which were identified.

Maintaining a journal. I maintained a journal to ensure that my perspectives were noted, and to record any change in perspective as a result of the interviews. In addition, an audit trail was kept of all persons interviewed, the sites and times of interviews and of my observations and reactions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study met the requirements of the Department of Educational Administration University of Alberta Ethics Review Committee. In addition, special attention has been paid

to questions of confidentiality and anonymity due to the possibility of recognizing participants and to the potentially sensitive nature of the information disclosed. References to specific places or events which could identify the informants have not been included in the final report, and pseudonyms for both people and place names have been used throughout this document.

Tapes, transcripts and journals have been kept in a secure and private location.

Stainback and Stainback (1988) provided a caution about ethical considerations which gives a fitting reminder to the importance of trust in the research process.

> When the researcher succeeds in gaining informants' confidence and trust, ethical considerations require attention. With acceptance by participants more in-depth personal, private information is revealed. In such cases, the researcher needs to evaluate carefully what and how much of the information should be disclosed. Assuming a position of trust carries with it ethical responsibilities that must be seriously evaluated by the researcher. (p. 112)

Delimitations

As stated earlier, surveys of administrators in the United States suggest that between 5% and 15% of teachers provide unsatisfactory professional service. While it is believed that the concern is not as great in Alberta, with a teaching force of approximately 30,000 teachers in Alberta, the most optimistic suggestion would still result in a large number of teachers who could be described as "providing unsatisfactory service".

1. Because of the potentially large pool, it was necessary to delimit the sub-group of teachers. Those considered in the study had the following history:
   - All were experienced Alberta teachers who were in danger of having or had their contracts terminated due to unsatisfactory performance.
   - There was formal involvement by an administrator acting in a supervisory role.
   - Supervisory pressure was applied to the teacher.
   - Initially, these teachers would have been considered to be competent. However, over a period of years, their effectiveness in the classroom decreased to the level that their performance was judged to be unsatisfactory.

2. The selection of administrators was based on their involvement with teachers with a history similar to that described above.
   - The administrators were directly involved throughout the summative evaluation process and in informing the teacher that his or her service was unsatisfactory.
   - The administrator applied pressure on the teacher to resign.
3. The study was further delimited by the time frame. All teachers had resigned within four years of the time of the interview. Initially, a time frame of two years was going to be used as it was felt that general economic conditions could influence a person's decision to resign, and these conditions had been relatively stable over this period. However, the time frame had to be increased in order to obtain sufficient numbers of teachers to interview.
4. The study is delimited by the fact that it was conducted in the Alberta context. Thus, there may be little transferability to other locations.

Limitations

1. The study is limited by information obtained through the analysis of data supplied by the teachers and supervisors interviewed, from the files that were reviewed, or from the information obtained by the survey of superintendents..
2. The recollection by the teacher of the events which led to the forced resignation may have been affected by the significance of leaving the profession.

Summary

The study focused on the experiences of some tenured teachers whose teaching performance was judged to be unsatisfactory and on some administrators who were involved in attempting to resolve the issues created by unsatisfactory professional performance. The purposes were two-fold. One purpose was to gain an understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of both the administrator and the teacher as they experienced this series of events. The second aspect was to provide a province-wide perspective to the issue of marginal or unsatisfactory teaching performance.

The study was an interpretive study with emphasis on depth of understanding rather than the scope of the problem. Semi-structured interviews served as the major data-collection technique.

It was anticipated that the study would provide significant information, insights and practical suggestions to educational administrators in dealing with teachers whose performance is perceived as unsatisfactory, and to teachers who find themselves in difficulty.

CHAPTER FOUR

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Three separate studies were conducted to gain some information on the number and nature of forced resignations and dismissals of teachers for issues related to competency. The three studies involved: (a) a survey of school superintendents with a questionnaire entitled *Teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory*, (b) a review of the Alberta Teachers' Association files related to instances were teachers requested assistance because school or system administrators had questioned their professional competency, and (c) a review of the Board of Reference hearings where the teacher was dismissed for reasons of professional competency.

The results from the questionnaire provide information on the frequency of forced resignations and on the nature of inducements used to encourage teachers to resign.

SURVEY RESULTS

Questionnaires were distributed to each of the 124 superintendents in Alberta. Ninety four surveys or 75.8% were returned. Approximately 19,700 teachers were employed by the boards whose superintendents responded.

Superintendents were asked to indicate the relative use of each of six methods used to identify teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory on a four point scale. They indicated that the three primary methods were: (a) supervisor ratings through teacher evaluations, which was used to some extent by all supervisors; (b) complaints from parents or students, which were also used by nearly all supervisors; and (c) informal observations by supervisors. Student test results were not used to any great extent. The full results are presented in Table 1.

A number of questions were asked about teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory. The results suggest that very few such teachers are identified, and even fewer are induced to leave the employ of their board. Only 213 of 19,700 teachers, or

Table 1

Methods used to identify teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory

Method	High %	Moderate %	Low %	N/A %
Supervisor ratings through teacher evaluations	81	16	4	0
Complaints from parents or students	43	39	14	4
Student test results	6	27	54	13
Student ratings	6	23	36	36
Complaints from other teachers	6	12	48	35
Informal observations by the supervisor	34	50	16	0

about 1% were identified, and less than half of those were forced to leave their teaching position. The responses are summarized in table 2.

Table 2

Number of teachers induced to leave

Question	Total Number Reported
Please estimate the number of teachers in your jurisdiction, during the 1991-192 school year whose professional performance was perceived by supervisors to be unsatisfactory.	213
Please indicate the number of teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory who were counseled to take early retirement during the 1991/92 school year.	29
Please indicate the number of teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory who were counseled or pressured to resign during the 1991/92 school year.	34
Please indicate the number of teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory who went on long term disability during the 1991/92 school year, and who have not returned to a teaching position.	36
Please indicate the number of teachers, in the 1991/92 school year, whose contract of employment was terminated by Board motion under Section 88 of the School Act due to unsatisfactory performance of his or her teaching duties.	12

Superintendents were asked to relate information about the inducements provided to teachers in exchange for their resignation or for taking early retirement. Cash settlements were by far the most common inducement used. Table 3 provides the results.

Table 3

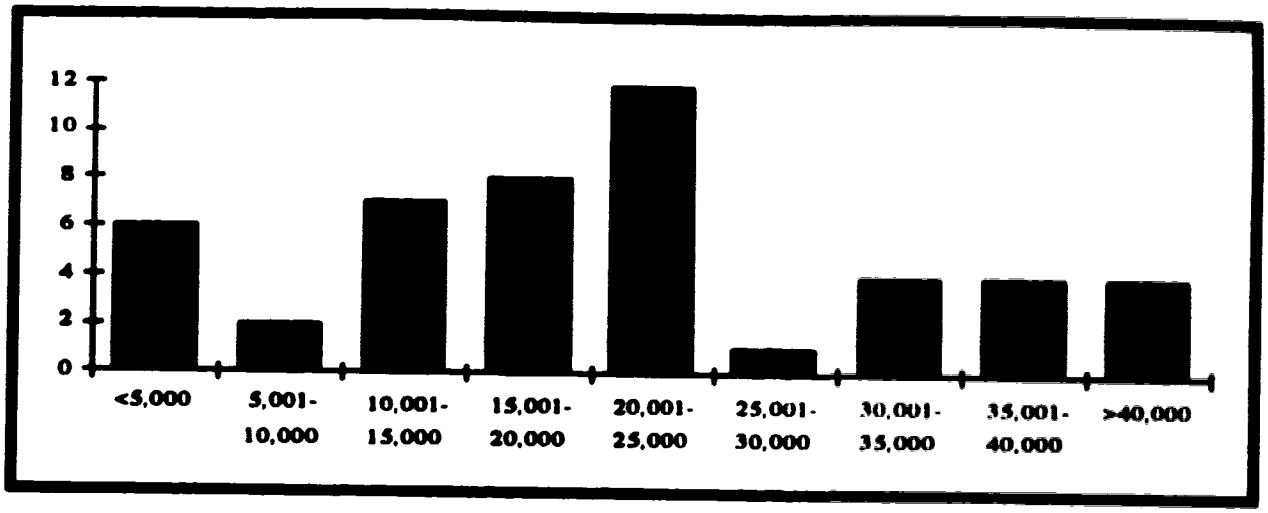
Inducements used to encourage a teacher to resign

Inducement	Most often %	Occasionally %	Rarely %	Never %
Cash settlement (n = 55)	25	24	16	35
Sabbatical, followed by 20 days of return service (to provide pension benefits for the teacher) (n = 54)	0	9	13	78
Employment as a substitute teacher (n = 53)	0	6	25	70
Continuation of benefits for fixed period of time (n = 54)	6	17	22	56
Career transition counseling (n = 55)	9	25	18	47
Letter of recommendation for a different type of position (n = 53)	2	13	28	57
Removal of reports from personnel file (53)	4	4	21	72
Agreement to give no information about quality of teaching performance (n = 52)	4	6	21	69

Superintendents were also asked to indicate the size of financial settlements which were provided to teachers pressured to resign for the period September 1, 1988 to June 30, 1992. Forty-eight settlements were reported. The manner in which this information was provided varied, as some related the dollar amounts while others said they based the settlements on a certain number of months salary. However, the latter have been converted to dollar amounts based on an estimated annual teacher's salary of $45, 000. The settlements ranged from less than $5,000 to more than $40,000, and the mean, median and mode were $21,150, $17,500 and $22,500, respectively. This information is illustrated in figure 1.

The questionnaire distributed to superintendents provided considerable information on the number of teachers who are forced to resign, take early retirement, go on long term

Figure 1
Range of Financial Inducements



disability, or whose contracts are formally terminated due to concerns about the quality of their professional service. The information suggests that such events are relatively rare, as superintendents reported a total of 111 teachers induced to leave through the various methods. This represents less than 1% of the teaching force employed by the boards whose superintendent responded.

REVIEW OF ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION FILES

A review was conducted of the files of 38 teachers who, faced with the possible termination of their contracts, requested assistance or advice from a staff officer of the Member Services Department of the Alberta Teachers' Association . The selected files were identified from the annual summaries of "Requests for Assistance", prepared from the telephone log of staff officers of the Member Services division.

Requests for assistance. The staff officers complete a telephone contact sheet after each request for assistance received from teachers. Each year, Member Services prepares a summary of the "Requests for Assistance" and group these under the headings: (a) assault, (b) discipline for violation of the A.T.A. Code of Professional Conduct, (c) professional relations, (d) terminations, (e) transfers, and (f) miscellaneous. Table 4 shows the number of requests for the five year period.

Table 4

Number of "Requests for Assistance" 1987-1991

Category	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Assault	24	33	43	32	36
Discipline	39	34	32	46	24
Prof. Rel.	308	282	288	364	260
Termination	98	52	34	30	42
Transfers	41	27	19	19	14
Misc.	216	178	162	210	166
Total	726	604	578	701	542

In total, there were 256 requests for assistance with respect to possible terminations. These were further sub-divided into six categories: a) non-tenured teachers, b) unsatisfactory professional performance, c) termination of designation, d) reduction of professional staff, e) wrongful dismissal, and f) other. Table 5 shows the distribution into these categories. It should be noted that in some cases it was not clear whether the teacher had tenure. When this occurred, the teacher was assumed to have tenure and the request was then placed in the appropriate category. Thus, some teachers included in the category "Unsatisfactory Performance", for example, may not have had tenure.

The number of requests for assistance where the reason was given as concerns about unsatisfactory performance averaged less than seven requests a year. This was even lower than the number of requests from administrators who faced the possible termination of their administrative designation, as this averaged nearly 8 requests per year.

Over the five year period, the staff officers received a total of 34 requests for assistance with respect to possible termination due to unsatisfactory performance. In addition, four requests from the "Other" category appeared to be related to unsatisfactory performance. Therefore, these files were also reviewed.

Table 5

Requests for Assistance from Teachers

Regarding Possible Termination of Contract

Year	Total Number	Non-Tenured	Unsat. Perform.	Term. of Desg.	Reduction of Staff	Wrongful Dismissal	Other
1991	42	9	5	8	5	6	9
1990	30	12	4	4	3	0	7
1989	34	9	10	7	3	0	5
1988	51	3	9	9	15	0	15
1987	98	13	6	11	49	0	19
Total	255	46	34	39	75	6	55
Average	51	9.2	6.8	7.8	15	1.2	11

Summary of the files reviewed. The files of the thirty eight teachers identified through the "Request for Assistance" summaries as being related to the possible termination of contract for reasons of unsatisfactory performance were reviewed in detail. Of these, 30 were tenured and eight were either on a temporary or a probationary contract. Four tenured teachers retained their position following the intervention of the staff officer. Eighteen teachers resigned, seven had their contracts terminated by Board motion and one teacher was still under contract, but on long term disability. Two cases in which the teacher's contract was formally terminated are still ongoing, pending a hearing before a Board of Reference.

Successful terminations. The reasons for the dismissal or forced resignation for the 25 teachers who left the employ of the board were categorized and are provided below:

1.	Unsatisfactory performance	17
2.	Alcohol Abuse	4
3.	Sexual Harassment	1
4.	Failure to Follow Policy	1
5.	Reduction in Force	1
6.	Lost Confidence of Board	1
Total		25.

Most cases related to "incompetence" gave variations of the following as the reasons for the termination: a) failure to provide adequate instruction, b) failure to plan appropriately — either long-term or for daily lessons, c) failure to maintain or utilize appropriate discipline, and/or d) failure to establish and maintain a climate conducive to learning. As was noted earlier, seven teachers had their contracts terminated by board motion. Three of the teachers appealed to Boards of Reference and the cases have been heard. In each case, the Board of Reference upheld the decision to terminate and supported the reasons as valid grounds for dismissal.

The review of the twenty-five cases where the administrators conducted a thorough evaluation, and which resulted in the teacher leaving his or her teaching position, found that the supervisory process involved the following steps:

1. School board policy defined standards for minimum competency.
2. The teacher was evaluated against the standards outlined by policy.
3. The evaluator successfully demonstrated that the teacher failed to meet the standard(s).
4. Recommendations were made with respect to the changes required to meet the standard.
5. Assistance and adequate time was provided to the teacher to attempt to incorporate the changes.
6. The teacher was evaluated again and the evaluator again demonstrated that the teacher failed to meet the standard.
7. In most cases, more than one evaluator was used.
8. The teacher was informed in writing of all evidence which would be used against him/her.
9. The requirements of natural justice were met.

In each case where most or all of the above steps occurred, the outcome was either a forced resignation or a formal termination which, if heard, was upheld by the Board of Reference.

Crisis intervention. There appeared to be a tendency for some supervisors to fail to make a forceful intervention with teachers whose performance was deemed to be unsatisfactory until the situation reached a crisis stage. Notes and letters in the files indicated that this crisis appeared to be sparked by either an outcry from parents or by concerns expressed by members of the Board.

In these cases, the terminations often appeared to be poorly done; the evaluations were rushed, and/or requirements of natural justice were violated. For example, in one case the teacher reported that members of the public were shown an external report on her teaching performance prior to it being made available to her. In another case, the teacher, who had received a number of satisfactory evaluations, was given one unsatisfactory report. On the basis of this, the superintendent, within days, gave notice of a hearing to discuss the possible termination of the teacher's contract. In a third case, it seemed from the body of the teacher evaluation report that the teacher was providing satisfactory service. However, the report concluded with a statement that the supervisor was going to recommend the possible termination of the teacher's contract. By way of a final example, one school board did not accept the recommendation of the superintendent to terminate the contract, as the A.T.A. staff officer was able to demonstrate inadequacies in the documentation the supervisors had prepared. The teacher was reinstated; however, within a year the supervisor had been forced to resign.

The examination of the documentation available in the files indicated that some supervisors followed a evaluation process which was thorough and fair, albeit lengthy. In these cases, the supervisors were successful in forcing the resignation or in dismissing the teacher. In other instances, the supervisors appeared to hurry the evaluation, or conducted the evaluation after there was evidence that a decision had been made to terminate the

teacher's contract. In these instances, the attempts were either unsuccessful or the financial settlements were large.

Inducements to resign. The inducements negotiated in exchange for the teacher's resignation involved: a) financial settlements; b) leave of absence followed by one month of return service to allow the time to be classified as pensionable service; c) letters of reference; and d) "cleansing of the file".

The range and distribution of the financial settlements were as follows:

No settlement	3
≤ $10,000	3
$10,001 - $20,000	1
$20,001 - $30,000	2
$30,001 - $40,000	2
$40,001 - $50,000	4
> $50,000	3

There were no settlements in any of the seven cases in which the contract was formally terminated, including the three which have been heard by a Board of Reference.

The review of files related to dismissal of teachers suggested that only a small number of teachers, in danger of having their contract terminated for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, received assistance from the Alberta Teachers' Association over the five year period 1987 — 1991. There appeared to be only 17 cases where a tenured teacher resigned or was dismissed for reasons related to competency, and eight for other reasons related to unsatisfactory performance of their teaching responsibilities during this time. However, in those instances when an A.T.A. staff officer was involved, the staff officer ensured the teacher was treated fairly — both school board policy and the rules of natural justice were followed, and if either was breached, the teacher was reinstated or received a large settlement.

BOARD OF REFERENCE HEARINGS

The Legal Services Department of the Alberta School Boards Association maintains a file, organized according to the reasons for dismissal, of the judicial summaries of all Board of Reference cases. Since 1972 there have been 11 hearings where the major reason

for dismissal was related to issues of teacher competency. The Board of Reference upheld the terminations in ten instances.

The approach most often used by school boards was to argue that they set clear performance expectations through their teacher evaluation policies, and the teacher consistently failed to meet those expectations. The demonstrated, repeated failure to meet these expectations provided the grounds for the school board action. As these grounds have been upheld, the reasons for dismissal now seem to define a set of minimum competency standards acceptable to Boards of Reference.

In each case, the school boards provided more than one reason as grounds for dismissal. However, similar reasons for dismissal were given in the various cases, and these have been categorized as follows.

The school board charged that the teacher failed to:

- Demonstrate adequate preparation and planning — long range, unit and daily lesson plans; plan for the needs of individuals or special groups.
- Demonstrate instructional and curricular competence.
- Develop and maintain standards of pupil work; secure the desired results.
- Conduct meaningful student evaluation, and maintain appropriate records.
- Treat students with respect, establish rapport, and maintain an effective learning climate.
- Establish effective classroom management and organization, and maintain student discipline.
- Operate within the policies and directives of the Board.
- Cooperate with the administration, behave in an acceptable manner, and/or maintain a cooperative relationship with other adults in the school.
- Maintain a constructive working relationship with parents.

This list seems to define a set of minimum competency standards which Boards of Reference will uphold. In some judgments, the Justice indicated that failure to meet any one of the standards would be grounds for dismissal, while in other cases, the Justice contradicted this by saying that failure to meet one of the standards would not have, in

itself, been grounds for dismissal, but in total, it was apparent that the teacher was not meeting the performance standards expected by the employer and so the decision to terminate was upheld.

Summary of Findings — The Provincial Perspective

During this phase of the research, three separate but related studies were completed. These combined to provide a provincial perspective on the forced resignations and termination of teachers for reasons of unsatisfactory professional performance. Each of the three studies indicated that few terminations or forced resignations occur.

- **Teacher competence surveys.** The questionnaire was responded to by 124 superintendents who worked for boards who employed approximately 19,700 teachers. These indicated that 29 teachers whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory were encouraged to take early retirement, 34 were pressured to resign, 36 were counseled to go on long term disability and 12 had their contract terminated by board motion during the 1991-92 school year. Thus, a total of 111 tenured teachers whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory were induced to leave their teaching position.
- **The review of Alberta Teachers' Association files.** This study indicated that only small numbers of tenured teachers requested assistance due to their concerns about possible dismissal for reasons of unsatisfactory performance. During the five year period, 1987 to 1991, only 30 such files were identified, and in only 25 instances did the teacher leave the employ of the school board.
- **Board of Reference.** Only 11 cases related to teacher competency have been heard by the Board of Reference since 1972.

The A.T.A. files and the Board of Reference summaries provided considerable insight into what constitutes a fair and valid process of teacher evaluation, and grounds for dismissal. As well, the three studies provided data on the nature and size of inducements given to teachers to resign.

DISCUSSION

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE

The most surprising aspect of the three studies was the small number of terminations or forced resignations which were noted. The survey of superintendents indicated that during the 1991-92 school year only 111 teachers had been forced to resign, encouraged to take early retirement, directed to long term disability or were formally dismissed by their school board. This represented approximately 0.5% of the teachers employed. The review of the teacher files of the Alberta Teachers' Association indicated that only 25 tenured teachers had been forced to resign or were dismissed during the five year period 1987-1991 for reasons of unsatisfactory competence. Furthermore, only 11 Board of Reference cases related to teacher competency have been held since 1972.

This information strongly suggest that very few teachers who provide unsatisfactory service are even identified, and that even fewer are pressured by the means described to improve their performance. This, in turn, suggests superintendents believe that few teachers actually do provide unsatisfactory service.

This supposition is very different from one of the findings of Oliva and Jesse (1993) who found that principals rank "teacher qualifications and competence" (p. 19) third among the most serious problems they face. The difference in the findings may be accounted for in part by the difference in respondents — superintendents responded to the survey, while principals took part in the structured interviews. Superintendents are further removed from the teachers and so may not be as aware as are principals of the number of teachers providing unsatisfactory performance. Regardless of the reason, the finding of Oliva and Jesse lends credence to my belief that there are a number of teachers who are providing unsatisfactory performance, yet are never challenged to improve. Some reasons for this will be considered in later chapters.

The nature of induced exits. The findings do suggest that an approach which begins with rigorous but fair evaluation, and then moves to a stage of a negotiated

settlement, is favored over the formal termination of the teacher's contract by board motion. It would appear that about 90% of these cases are resolved by some form of agreement, rather that termination. This is consistent with the findings of Bridges (1992) following a study of the dismissal of teachers in California which found there were approximately 12 forced resignations for every formal termination. However, it should be noted that Bridges determined that a sample of school jurisdictions in California only averaged six formal dismissals of tenured teacher a year, from a combined teaching force of more than 40,000 teachers. Thus, the frequency of dismissals in Alberta is considerably higher than that found by Bridges.

A related aspect of the findings is that where the evaluation is done fairly and rigorously, the supervisors have been successful in having the teacher leave the employ of the board. Dismissals or forced resignations resulted in 25 of the 30 cases which involved tenured teachers and which were in the A.T.A. files. In those instances where the teacher left the employ of the board, the supervisory process included evaluation against the standards set in policy, evidence that the teacher failed to meet the standards, provision of recommendations, assistance and time to implement the recommendations, and, finally, further evaluation to determine whether the improvements had been made. Thus, it is possible to end the contracts of teachers who provide unsatisfactory service, if supervisors are willing to complete the entire supervisory process thoroughly and carefully.

The review of the Board of Reference cases suggested a set of minimum competency standards which formed the basis for hearings related to unsatisfactory performance. In addition, in some cases, the presiding judge stated that failure to meet one or more of those competencies could result in dismissal — the supervisor did not need to show the teacher failed to meet all the standards. Following nearly six years of reflection on the results from the study he conducted in California, Bridges (1992) concluded that teachers should be dismissed for marginal performance. He stated that marginal performance occurs when "the person's performance falls just short of fulfilling one or more of the professional duties of

a teacher" (p. 176). Bridges suggested that a list of professional duties could be identified, and furthermore, claimed that the responsibility of the supervisor should be limited to offering "a reasonable basis for the judgment that students are not receiving a quality education from the teacher" and providing "evidence to substantiate its claim that the teacher's performance falls just short of fulfilling one or more of his/her professional duties" (p. 176). He felt that by such an approach, administrators could "hold tenured teachers accountable for a higher and more reasonable standard of performance than now exists" (p. 177).

The effects of hurried evaluations. In most cases where the teacher remained on staff, the evaluations appeared to be hurried and or poorly done. As was indicated earlier, in these instances there was reference to parental or board complaints about the teaching performance. In addition, the superintendent often seemed to be in personal difficulty with his Board, as five superintendents involved in the cases deemed to be poorly done lost their jobs within a short time. Each of these superintendents was forced to resign or had his contract of employment terminated. This suggests that the superintendents responded to the complaints by conducting an evaluation, but did not take the time or have the skills required to ensure a just and fair evaluation.

This review of files from the A.T.A. and the Board of Reference hearings raises a question: If the effective supervision of teachers can be perceived as a straight forward process, why are there not more forced resignations or dismissals? The interviews with teachers and supervisors provide some insight into that question.

Involvement of the Alberta Teachers' Association

There was relatively little involvement of the A.T.A. staff officers in support of teachers who were pressured to resign. It appeared the staff officers represented fewer than ten tenured teachers a year who had concerns about possible job loss due to unsatisfactory performance — a number far less than the number of teachers reported by superintendents as having been forced to resign or dismissed for the same reason.

It is possible that some of this difference may be accounted for by research error. There may have been files which were not reviewed. However, extensive conversations with staff officers and secretaries indicated they were unaware of any additional cases. It is also possible that the superintendents did not accurately report the number of cases of teacher termination. In some cases, the termination of contract could have occurred for reasons other than unsatisfactory professional service. However, it appears likely that many teachers choose not to contact their professional association when charged with satisfactory performance, a finding consistent with that of Jevne and Zingle (1991) who found that many teachers who needed long term disability did not contact the Alberta Teachers' Association for either information or assistance. However, this is contrary to the widely held belief among supervisors that teachers turn to the A.T.A. for assistance and counsel at the first sign of trouble with a supervisor.

It is possible that the small number of requests for assistance was affected by the degree of isolation experienced by the teachers. The interviews conducted with teachers as a part of the larger study suggested that they tended to become more isolated as they received more unfavorable supervisory reports. Furthermore, they tended to feel isolated from friends and colleagues, as well as administrators, and so tended not to reach out to the staff officers of the A.T.A., even though they represented a potential source of help.

In the instances where A.T.A. staff officers were not involved, the decision appeared to be made through negotiations and or counseling between the supervisor and the teacher. The nature of such meetings will be considered in the next two chapters.

Inducements to Resign

The most prevalent form of inducement was a financial settlement. Other types of incentives were used, but these appeared to be much less common than financial settlements. Furthermore, the size of the monetary inducements appears to be affected by three factors:

1. The values and beliefs of the supervisor or board. Some school systems offered a settlement even when they had a very good case. Other systems appeared unwilling to make even a modest or token settlement, even when this would have provided a means for the teacher to resign with some degree of dignity. To illustrate this point, a teacher who had been notified of a hearing to consider the possible termination of his contract offered to resign if the Board would give him a settlement of $5,000. The superintendent refused to take the offer to the Board.
2. The manner in which the supervisor developed the case. Larger settlements tended to occur where there was administrative error. For example, one first year teacher received a settlement equivalent to 3 months salary while a second received 5 months salary. In both cases, there was evidence of administrative error. There were nine terminations of employment or forced resignations of tenured teachers in which the settlement was valued at least $30,000. In five of these cases, the necessary evaluation was either not done or was done poorly. For example in some cases, a very large number of evaluations were conducted after the decision to move to termination appeared to have been made. In other cases, the actual evaluations did not attempt to compare the performance of the teacher to the standards outlined in Board policy.
3. The size of the settlement appeared to be influenced by the length of service with the Board and by the total amount of teaching service, but no discernible formula was used.

Other strategies used to encourage the teacher to resign are limited. Letters of recommendations and the "cleansing of the file" occurred. Career transition counseling was provided to some teachers and benefits were maintained for some.

Thus, from the provincial perspective, the forced resignation of teachers is a relatively rare phenomena as less than 1% of tenured teachers had their contracts terminated or were forced to resign. However, where administrators worked through the entire supervisory

process, and conducted the process fairly and thoroughly, the teacher generally left the employ of the board. The cases which went to a Board of Reference tended to be resolved in favor of the school board. Furthermore, in many cases, settlements were reached with the teacher, but no apparent pattern for the size of the settlements emerged.

In the following chapters, the effects of forced resignations will be considered from the perspective of teachers and supervisors.

CHAPTER FIVE

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

This chapter presents findings from interviews with four teachers and is told from their perspective. The common thread which unites these teachers is their forced exit from the teaching profession due to questions of professional competency. In each case, the file with the Alberta Teachers' Association was reviewed before the interview, and the teachers were aware that I had read the file. It should be noted that my review of three of the four files suggested that the evaluations were poorly done, as there seemed to be evidence of hurried supervision and/or biased decision-making. These stories from teachers, then, differ from those told by supervisors in both perspective and in the sort of supervisory process that was conducted, as those supervisors who volunteered to tell their stories, for the most part, seemed to have conducted their evaluations in a more professional manner.

Three main themes — the supervisory process, issues of caring and justice, and the emotional impact on the teacher — emerged from the interviews. The findings related to each theme are presented, followed by a discussion of these ideas. However, the chapter begins with a brief description of each teacher.

Description of Teachers

Four teachers described the experiences which influenced their decision to leave the teaching profession. The pseudonyms of Allan, Betty, Charles and Debra will be used in order to protect their identities.

Allan, a teacher with perceptual problems. Allan was employed by the same school board for over twenty years. During that time, his main course load was in social studies and language arts. Allan described himself as a competent, traditional teacher, but acknowledged that he had problems with classroom control.

The perception gained from the interview was that Allan is a kind, diligent person, but one who, at the present time, would be providing marginal service, at best. The review of

the transcript would tend to support this perception. Following are some comments that Allan used to describe his teaching style:

> *I think I tended to be more of the old school type of teacher. I didn't use a lot of audiovisual stuff.... They're not very effective.... So I didn't use that a lot, I tried some, because I think it's good.*

> *I know I have a tendency to lecture a bit, although it's trying to explain rather more than lecture.... OK what about this situation? And we'll talk about it a bit.... and explain a bit. I had them do written work, a fair amount of written work, assignments, do readings and questions, I did work sheets, or assigned questions from the book, a lot of work sheets.... I suppose one of the things I could have done is to change my teaching style. I know I tend to lecture – and to be more of a dry type. I use some humor, but I guess my type of humor isn't very effective with most of the students. I think I probably bent over backwards too much with some of the students – maybe I needed to use more of a "Tough Love" approach with them.... I tended to bend over backwards and give the kids a second, third, fourth chance, that type of thing.*

> *There have been a few cases where I've blown up, so to speak, in the classroom. But they're rather isolated....*

> *I don't have any illusions that I'm a top-notch teacher, but I don't think I'm a lousy teacher. I think I'm competent. I know my material, I can present it in varying ways.*

During the interview, Allan revealed that he had been off work for six months with stress-related illness, an illness from which he was still recovering. When he met with the superintendent in June to discuss Allan's placement for the fall, the superintendent asked him to resign. After discussions with his family and with a staff officer from the A.T.A., Allan agreed. He also indicated that he had been contemplating retirement, although he still was not eligible for pension.

Betty, a teacher who overcame a personal crisis. Betty began her teaching career as a grade two teacher in October, 1987. During her second year, she was off work for three months due to illness. Following a happy and successful two years at the Christopher Day School, she was transferred to the Evert Farr Elementary School, but

> *... they wouldn't give me a permanent contract because if they transfer you to a different school, well, then you are taking over another position so of course I was on temporary again.*

The following year, Betty experienced a personal crisis. She was hospitalized for two weeks in November, and by February her health was so bad that the principal suggested she take the rest of the year off. She and her husband agreed:

> *But the superintendent said that the best thing would be for me to quit because the school board wouldn't be paying me any money and it would look better for when I wanted to come back in the fall..... I felt that that was probably the thing to do because I felt guilty because I'd missed so many days and that's probably the thing that you do. You know — you just quit so don't feel like you're taking advantage of them, and so that's what I did.*

Betty was offered another probationary contract for the 1990-91 school year, and returned to the Evert Farr Elementary School. At the end of the year, the superintendent decided not to offer her a continuous contract, and so Betty lost her teaching position.

The impression gained from the interview and repeated readings of the transcript was that Betty had the potential to be a very good teacher. She indicated that she loved teaching, and, despite the problems, viewed herself as an "above average" teacher. Betty had received very good appraisals prior to her illness, but seemed to experience a personality clash with both the principal and vice-principal during her last year which may have influenced the decision to allow her contract to lapse.

Betty returned to substitute teaching in neighboring jurisdictions and was frequently called back to two schools. During her time in these schools, she received considerable praise for the quality of her work.

Charles, trapped in a changing environment. Charles had taught in a highly structured, insular community school for 19 years prior to immigrating to Canada nearly 20 years ago. He settled in northern Alberta, and was employed by the same school jurisdiction for 16 years, spending five years in a small rural school and the remaining years teaching in the largest community in the jurisdiction.

Charles transferred to Fracus, where he taught math and science in the junior high school. In the last three years, his assignment was changed, so he taught half time in the elementary school, and half time in the junior-senior high school.

He acknowledged that over the past 10 years, he had problems with classroom management which began when he moved to the larger center. The students and parents there had a different attitude to school and to authority, and so there was constant conflict between the teacher and the students. Charles felt he would have been able to continue teaching and would have been more effective, had he not changed schools:

> *I'm just sorry I left Dickens. I would have been able to stay the distance then. I thought I had more parental support there. I could have taken those kids and gone to see their parents. But here there was such a different attitude. Right away, you were the one who was at fault....*
>
> *I think the major problem was the kind of situation in the home. It has no parental authority. And especially in some homes where there is actual hostility towards the teachers. I have never been tested as much as I'd been tested in this school.*

Charles revealed that he had wanted to leave teaching much earlier, but felt trapped as his years of experience prior to coming to Canada wouldn't count; therefore, his pension was very small. He admitted *any day was really a trial, you know. It simply became more and more of an effort for me to go to school.*

During the last two years, Charles was off work for stress-related illness on three occasions. After the third instance, the Board gave notice that they were going to meet to consider the possible termination of his contract. However, with the aid of an A.T.A. staff officer, Charles was able to negotiate a settlement in exchange for his resignation.

Debra, still struggling to find her niche. Debra's story is different from the others in that she neither resigned, nor had her contract terminated. In fact, Debra is still teaching with the same school jurisdiction in which she began her career over 15 years ago. What makes her story unique is that she had been threatened with the termination of her contract on a number of occasions for unsatisfactory teaching performance. The emotional turmoil of one such threat prompted her to take a year-long leave of absence, with the intent of investigating other career opportunities. Upon returning, she was placed in a school on a Hutterite colony. Debra recalled:

I was evaluated right away. Well [the superintendent] evaluated me until January. He came 2 or 3 times a month until January and everything was great. He gave me excellent evaluations.

Over the years, Debra has been the subject of a number of formal evaluations. Some evaluators have judged her to be a satisfactory teacher, while others have indicated that her teaching was unsatisfactory and they were going to recommend termination of her contract. She constantly received mixed messages about the quality of her teaching performance and now seemed unsure of whether she was a good teacher, an average one, or in fact, a poor teacher.

Debra revealed that she would like to leave teaching, but continue to work in a related field. She feels trapped as she is the sole bread winner in the family, and the other jobs she has investigated do not pay nearly as well as teaching.

Four teachers, four very different stories. The stories told by the four teachers relate to a wide range of experiences. However, in spite of the uniqueness of the stories, a number of themes emerged. The themes were related to the supervisory process, issues of caring and justice, and the emotional impact on the teacher.

THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

The teachers did not recognize a "supervisory process"; rather they described a series of seemingly ad hoc events which led to the supervisor making decisions which had significant impact on their lives. In spite of this, the transcripts provide indications that a number of steps related to the supervisory process did occur. The steps were (a) identification of the teacher as providing unsatisfactory service, (b) formal and informal supervision, and (c) the decision to dismiss, or try to dismiss the teacher.

Identification of the Teacher

Each of the four teachers felt the supervisory process began following complaints about their teaching performance.

Poor discipline approaches caused problems. Discipline and classroom management were frequently mentioned concerns, as some teachers found the manner in

which they attempted to discipline students led to complaints. In some instances the complaints followed an outburst from the teacher, or an incident in which the teacher punished a student physically. For example, Charles indicated that, at times, he would shake a student as a means of discipline:

> *Occasionally I would physically shake a kid, you know. That brought me into conflict with parents and so they would come to the school and complain to the principal or they would go straight to the superintendent and he would get on to the principal and the principal would get on to me. And somehow the kids sense that you don't have the backing.*

Problems with discipline were common in his classroom, and were a factor in creating the perception that Charles was not providing satisfactory service.

Complaints from the teacher aide. Not all complaints originated with parents or students, as Betty found out. Those about her came from the teacher aide who had been assigned to work with a special needs student in her class. Betty recalled a conversation with the resource room teacher who also worked with the special needs student:

> *She said "I feel that I need to tell you this. Your teacher's aide is undermining you. [The aide] came to me and said that she felt that there needed to be a better program – a more structured program for her and the little boy that she was hired to work with." So that was the first piece of evidence I had that something was not right between this aide and me. So I took it to the principal right away. And then we called her in and I told her some of my concerns. Also, she was telling parents how these kids were doing and telling them things that weren't really true at all. So I confronted her on all of it. But after that, the dynamics of the class – the tension was just terrible....*
>
> *So then the vice-principal came in and the vice-principal and [the aide] seemed to be quite closely linked, so that was an awful situation.*

The principal responded to the teacher aide's criticism by sending a letter to all parents of students in Betty's class indicating the aide had been moved from Betty's classroom, and placed the blame for that on the teacher. The letter concluded with the following statement:

> *Teachers are regularly evaluated and [the teacher's] classroom will be visited by District Office Administration and quite extensively by School Administrators this year to prepare a thorough teaching and program evaluation.*

It appeared that the principal not only identified a concern with the teaching performance, but also made a decision about the outcome of the evaluation.

Changes in teaching strategies. In the last case, the complaints seemed to surface following a change in teaching strategies. The students were having trouble getting along, and so Debra decided to try a cooperative learning approach:

> *It took awhile. It started working really well with the kids. But the parents came in [and said] "No! We don't like this. I don't like my smart kid working with this dummy kid." And so the principal told me to stop it.*

Thus, in each of the histories there was evidence of complaints about the teacher, and in each case the principal took some actions to determine the validity of the complaints. Classroom supervision and, in most instances, increased monitoring occurred. The two approaches led to the confirmation of specific problems.

Formal and Informal Supervision

Formal teacher evaluations occurred in each of the case histories, although the nature of the evaluations varied greatly. However, in some instances, the teachers did not seem sure if the supervisor made up his or her mind following the evaluations, or if the evaluations were merely window dressing for a decision which had already been made. The following case suggests the decision was made before the supervision began.

Concern over planning. Betty's principal was good to his word — a formal evaluation was conducted within weeks of the date the letter went home, and this evaluation identified concerns with the quality of planning. Betty found this both surprising and distressing:

> *I was thoroughly evaluated. And all of a sudden, my plans weren't good enough anymore. I had just been evaluated and my plans were excellent. It got so bad that I had the vice principal in and she said that I had to account for every single minute — like every minute from that moment on for the rest of the school year. I figured out the hours that I was working putting in plans. It was non stop. I had to do every subject and I already had the long range plans and then the weekly unit plans and then break it down to daily plans. And they were good.*

During the previous year, Betty had been evaluated by the same principal, and received a glowing report. In fact, the report was so good, the superintendent sent a note congratulating her on the quality of her performance. This raised questions about the

principal's true concerns. Were the concerns about her teaching performance, about her working relationship with the aide, or some other reason?

> *And I felt almost like because I was off sick... because I was also in counseling and I was going through a depression, [that] they're of the mind that if you are depressed, you will never get over it. Basically, they feel that you are an untouchable person and you [will] just accost them. And I felt bad, you know. I was doing every thing I could to get through that personal crisis and, of course it took the toll on my health. So that was hard.*

In spite of the doubts, Betty attempted to meet the planning requirements demanded by the administration. For example, the principal blamed Betty because there were no individualized program plans for special needs students in place. She recalled:

> *They said "Well, we need individual program plans. Where are they for these three kids?" So first of all, I don't have one of the kids. He's in grade three. And I said "I never was aware that I had to do these things." And then they said "Well, being a fourth year teacher, you should know enough that these things need to be in order. I said "But if these things are supposed to be in order, why didn't they start in kindergarten? Why, all of a sudden, do I need to come up with these program plans that I know nothing about?"*

> *So I had a days's notice that I had to have these individual program plans for these two students so [the Director of Special Education] from head office phoned — the woman who was helping me with the plans in the first place. She came and we stayed after school until they were all done. So I had them all in order so the next morning I said "Yes, here they are. Basically, you know, I've got everything covered."*

However, it seemed that she was unable to satisfy their requirements: *But they just kept digging, and they said these plans weren't good enough and this wasn't good enough.*

Mixed messages. While some of the experiences Betty endured seemed to be exceptional, Debra's story may be more common. Over her 15 year teaching history, she was frequently told her performance was not good enough. Following are some excerpts which indicate the conflicting messages she constantly received from her supervisors:

> *[The principal] threatened me, said that he was going to get rid of me. He picked on absolutely everything I did. He said that I was going to lose my job; he was going to make sure that I did. I didn't know what to do. So I went to the superintendent and the superintendent, who had evaluated me the year before, came in and watched me teaching and then went and talked to the principal, and the principal laid off....*

> *A new superintendent came. Right away, [the principal] went to that superintendent and said that "I want to get rid of this teacher." He started hassling me again. Just anything that I did. He'd come into my room, stand at the back, and*

glare at me. Anything I did. I had to be at the door of my room when the kids came in from recess — he didn't say anything to any of the other teachers, but I had to be there. And he would go out and watch to make sure. Just a whole bunch of little piddling things.

I tried everything to cooperate with him, and I could not get along with him. There was an opportunity for a transfer. So I requested a transfer. The superintendent said to me "You're not going to be teaching next year, anyway."

I thought, he hasn't even come out to see me and he's already got this judgment of me? He says "I'm going to come out there and evaluate you". I thought, well, if he's going to come out and evaluate me, and he's already decided I'm not going to be there next year....I'm not going to get a fair evaluation. So I went to Alberta Education and asked for an external evaluation. They sent someone out. He was there for a day and evaluated me — gave me a super evaluation. He couldn't understand what the problem was at all.

So after that, then the principal would still hassle me a bit, but the superintendent laid off. He came and evaluated me that year too, and it was fine.

While Debra received considerable feedback from the evaluations, the messages contained in the evaluations always seemed to contradict previous findings. As a result, the recommendations supplied by the supervisors were often in conflict:

And it didn't matter if I would do what one person wanted, (say the principal). I'd talk to him about my problems, and he'd say "Well you should be doing this." I'd go do this and the assistant superintendent would come in. — "Well, no, you shouldn't be doing that, you should be doing this." You're trying to do the things they would like you to do; you want to do something that works, but there's always people who say you should be teaching this way. You're never going to please everyone. It's always a vicious circle.

It appears that the formal supervisory process failed to confirm, but did not dispel the feeling among some administrators that Debra was providing unsatisfactory service. Furthermore, the feedback did not seem to be specific enough, nor was the assistance sustained long enough to enable Debra to grow in her teaching ability.

The use of informal monitoring. In some instances, the principal was able to confirm the existence of problems through informal monitoring, rather than formal supervision. The example which Charles provided illustrates this approach. Students in his class had been misbehaving for some time, and the teacher finally reacted:

So eventually, on one particular occasion, I really got mad at them, and I was berating them. And the principal happened to come around. I don't know if he was there by design or not, because this had been going on for awhile. This must have gotten back to him, so he had the opportunity [to be there]. So he comes in and his

whole attitude is hostile, his whole attitude is one of contempt, of condemnation, you know. "What's going on here?" So anyway, I ended up on the carpet.

Charles went on long term disability for the remainder of the year, and returned the following September. Despite the opportunity for renewal, the problems continued. However, the principal's approach changed:

But, as I said, all the other classes continued [to misbehave] and the principal warned me he would be on the watch. But he was taking a more sympathetic attitude now, you know. So rather than come barging in my classes, if he found the classes too noisy, and seemed to be out of control, he would call me into the adjoining, unoccupied room and we discussed things.

At this time, Charles was teaching half time in the elementary school, and half time in the high school. In addition to the more stringent monitoring, there was also an increase in the number of formal teacher evaluations:

And so I had this problem of [the elementary school principal] coming into my classroom from time to time. Oh, by the way, that was beginning to happen at the high school, too. Unscheduled drop-ins — goes back, sits down and listens to me. It's very disturbing to a teacher. You really know what it is about.

Perceptual problems. Allan was also aware of problems with classroom management, and that parents had complained to the superintendent about certain aspects of his teaching. However, he did not realized the depth of the concerns. The inability to conduct a meaningful self-assessment was described by some supervisors as a perceptual problem. However, in Allan's case, the perceptual problem was exacerbated by a lack of specific feedback from supervisors throughout the period he was experiencing difficulty. For example, the principal conducted a formal evaluation of his classroom performance but the report did not seem to indicate serious problems:

The principal had come in and observed me, but as far as I understood, it was normal procedure. He was observing all the teachers as part of the ongoing supervision they have to do. So he came into my class. He had been in there, I think, on one or two occasions — I can't remember if it was two. And the write-ups, the reports I got were all — nothing really negative, a few minor things that were negative. What needed to be done was minor. So I was a bit surprised, although the principal did come to me. I think he saw what I couldn't see. He said something to me about.... I should be thinking about taking some time off.

In most of the case histories, the formal evaluations did not appear to help the teacher understand the nature of the concerns, nor did the recommendations appear to help the

teacher improve his or her teaching performance. Furthermore, in some cases, the evaluations did not even seem to be a factor in the decision to remove the teacher from his or her teaching position.

The Decision to Dismiss

In each of the four case histories, a supervisor encouraged the teacher to resign, threatened the teacher with dismissal or dismissed the teacher. The process seemed to be affected by extraneous events as much as by the teacher's performance.

Pressure on the supervisor. In Allan's case, the superintendent was under considerable pressure from the school board with respect to his own professional performance:

> *So in June, about the middle, [the superintendent] called and asked if I was ready to go back. I said, "Well, I should be ready come fall" and he said "Fine ...you'll need a doctor's OK".... So I got that [letter] and took it over to the office, central office, and a few days later I got a call from [the superintendent] to come in. And that's when he again brought up the question of if I would resign and that they would give me some sort of a termination amount that was negotiable.*
>
> *I didn't know what to do, so I contacted the A.T.A. and I contacted the doctor and my counselor and they asked "What are you going to do?" I didn't know. I needed some time to think it over. At about the same time negotiations weren't handled by [the superintendent] anymore because shortly after he talked to me [the board] began his termination process and so it was handled by [the acting superintendent].*

The superintendent was released by the board at about the same time as Allan decided to resign. Allan later talked about his feelings towards the superintendent:

> *But there were complaints to the board, and the board had gone to [the superintendent].... That caused a bit of bitterness on my part for a bit. I was bitter at [him] for awhile, but now I realize his position (I had gotten over it even before I knew he was in the same kind of straits I was in). He was doing his job as he was instructed, as I understand it, so I wasn't too bitter about that.*

Thus, Allan wondered how much the pressure the administration was under affected the decision to force him to resign.

Communicating a decision made earlier. It seemed that the decision to not renew Betty's contract was made in November, following the dispute with the teacher's aide. Other events which occurred during the year seemed to confirm this feeling. The

assistant superintendent visited Betty's class in February, and commented on some minor details. She suggested that Betty pay more attention to the transitions between activities as these took too long. This visit was followed by a formal evaluation by the superintendent in May. This is how Betty described that visit:

> *The superintendent came in at the end of last year during a drama class. No, it was art, and of course, I decided, because we had spent so much time on language arts, that I would give them art, so I was flexible and I changed my timetable around.... But, the superintendent, of course, caught me on that one when he came in and he didn't even stay for the full half hour. And then he came back, not too long after, with his letter, and his letter was already written, like he had his mind made up that he wasn't going to hire me back on. And I said "But not even for temporary?" And he said "No. Why should I pay a teacher like you the money that I pay you when I could be getting better quality from somebody else."*

Thus, the decision was made to end what seemed to be a promising teaching career, and Betty was left to speculate on the real reasons for the decision. In another instance, the teacher was also left wondering. Debra had received a number of unsatisfactory comments and evaluations, although none seemed to identify specific concerns. The evaluation which prompted her to take a year long unpaid leave was similar:

> *I had my evaluation done in June. Everything I did was excellent, except she [the supervisor] said I was too nice. She didn't think I should be teaching.... She said she was going to recommend termination.*

Following this evaluation, Debra approached the superintendent who agreed to the request for an unpaid leave of absence. Thus Debra was able to take control of the decision which affected her future. This approach seemed to be successful as, since returning, she had taught in a position where she was providing more satisfactory service.

The Supervisory Process as Described by the Teachers

The supervisory process seemed to go through three vague, indistinct stages:

- Identification of concerns.
- The formal and informal supervision.
- The decision to dismiss the teacher.

In each instance, complaints lead to closer scrutiny of the teacher. However, the supervisory process tended to be disjointed, and seemed to be affected by events from outside the classroom. Factors which tended to disrupt the process were:

- Most of the teachers suffered from psychological distress during the period of the intense supervision.
- Changes in supervisory personnel, which resulted in different messages being given to the teachers.
- The evaluations also seemed to be affected by the personal relationships between the teacher and the supervisor.

ISSUES OF CARING AND JUSTICE

All of the teachers talked at length about how they had been able to teach successfully in one situation, but had experienced considerable difficulty in others. The teachers suggested that a major factor was the degree of support they received from administration, and whether they felt the administration had treated them fairly. Each teacher felt that a meaningful personal relationship with the administrators was a necessary condition for support to occur.

The Need for a Supportive Environment

The teachers talked about the need for positive re-enforcement from administrators, parents or from other teachers. They felt this affected their teaching performance.

The climate affects motivation. Betty talked about the differences in climate between Christopher Day and Evert Farr Elementary:

> *And the administration is much different. I go in there and you can just feel that the atmosphere is a different kind. Whereas, I can walk into the first school that I was at, right now and I could have coffee in the staff room and I could feel totally at home. I could never do that at Evert Farr. The whole time I taught there, I felt on edge. It was the type of school where if for some reason, you didn't have specific enough plans for that day, you had better not tell anybody, because, "Boy, what are you doing? Are you slacking off?"*
>
> *Whereas at the other school, if you make a comment "Well, I don't really feel I'm planned enough for the next class"..."The next class," people would say, "Try the whole week." It was just like everybody was with everybody and there was that*

space for not keeping quite up to professional standards. You felt with that you wanted to do an even better job.

The feeling of working together, and of believing in each other seemed to make the job much more enjoyable. In addition, Betty talked about the effect of praise on one's self-confidence, and on the quality of work they want to do.

It's amazing when people give you a little bit of praise how much confidence you can build and how much better a job you want to do. You know, automatically, you do a better job. But it's amazing how much more you want to put into it.

The need for a personal relationship with the supervisor. Most teachers talked about the need to establish and maintain a relationship with the supervisor, a relationship in which they were recognized as people with feelings, hopes and needs. However, each person, at times, felt that the administrators were not interested in such a relationship. Charles recalled his feelings after he came back from long term disability:

And, I got some snubbing on staff, not the ones who really mattered to me — you're bound to meet some people who dislike you on first sight. But, I must say the principal here, and the vice-principal deliberately set out to ostracize me. So we're in a group — they are there, too. I'm in that group and make some kind of conversation, and they would turn their backs on me, and walk away.

Betty described a situation which illustrated the impersonal relationship which existed between her and the principal:

The principal runs a very tight ship, there. Everything has to look just so. He's a perfectionist, but he basically has no emotion. Like everything is by the book and if you don't follow it, you get this little memo in your mailbox. He never comes to you and says "Can I help you with anything?" It's all done with little notes. Like, after all of this stuff, he wouldn't even talk to me.

And, I had a field trip planned for the grade 2--3 and the grade 3 [classes]. Well, the day of the field trip, one of my little girls couldn't come. And I was walking by his office to get to my classroom. He knocked on the window of the office and held up a sticky note which said "Angie won't be coming today." He ripped it off the window and walked away from me.

Some administrators seem to have the right combination of attitude and abilities to work effectively with marginal teachers. Debra spoke of the different feelings she had about various supervisors.

Some [supervisors] have a natural tendency of how to deal with situations. They have tactfulness and foresight and they think of you as a person, too, not just

as "Well, you're a 'teacher', and we want the best for our students. We have to get something different. You're just an item."

Later she recalled a conversation which illustrated a lack of tact and thoughtfulness, and which affected her trust in administrators:

The principal had called me into his office and told me that he was going to see that I never taught again, and he was going to get rid of me. He's done this before and he knows how to do it. He knows how to get rid of teachers, and he's going to be rid of me. Now, things were going good, I didn't have any discipline problems in my classroom — there were no problems at all! It was just something, I don't know what, [that] I had said or done that got him on my case.

These comments from Debra were not uncommon as a number of teachers talked about the sense that they were viewed as replaceable parts in the educational enterprise, rather than as people who were teaching. In some instances, the teachers described specific events which revealed the lack of consideration for the joys and frustrations they were experiencing.

Critical Incidents

Each of the teachers talked about one or two incidents which had a profound effect on the relationship between the teacher and the supervisor. In each of the these, the teachers felt the supervisor was both unjust and uncaring. What follows are the teachers' descriptions of two of those incidents. The first was described by Betty.

Well, there was the little boy who had special needs. He couldn't read when he first came into the class, so the resource room teacher really helped me.... We worked out an extensive program and I thought, okay, we're going to get Courtney to read. So here he was, in grade two — he had nothing to follow him from kindergarten to grade two except these new I.P.P.'S that I had made up. We thought, "Okay Courtney, you're going to read." And we worked and worked with him.

After Christmas, I think it was February, the assistant superintendent came in, and she was ready to evaluate me. So she came in for the last half hour before noon time, and usually I take five minutes where the kids would read to each other, or I would read to them. And it just so happened that it was Courtney's turn. It was the very first time that Courtney was going to read to the class. And I thought, well, I don't know about this. Here she is, sitting for the five minutes. Courtney can't read — and he was going to read to the class. Well, he started reading and it was one of the Mercer Mayer books, and of course a lot of it is memorization. So he got up there with his book, he read the title. And all of a sudden he started reading, and of course, a lot of it he was just remembering. And I thought, what is she going to think. And then one of the kids said "Courtney, you are reading very well." And of course, Courtney sat a little bit higher. And I thought "Well, bless your heart." And

then another kid said, "Courtney, you are a very good reader. You're doing very well." And so Courtney just kept on reading. When he was done the book, he closed it and they all clapped for him.

And I just thought, "Surely, she can see the goodness in this. Well, this is a miracle and I'm glad she is here to see it." So she said, in her sort of coldish tone, "Well, I'll be back to see you when you're in library and discuss what I've written about you." So she came in library and I was so excited, I thought "She has just witnessed a miracle. This is the greatest thing. Look what it did for Courtney." I mean, she could see what it did for the little guy, and all the rest of the class were behind him. I mean, for him to go from not reading at all to sit up in front of the class.... I thought, "Well, I've got it. She'll see that we're doing something." She came and talked about that the classroom was decorated beautifully, and then she said, "But your times for moving from one subject to another to another was too long, way too long." She felt that the transition times — that I had to work on it because it was way too long. And basically, she went over the obvious things, like, you know, my dress, and how I take care of myself was very good, and I mean, like "Big deal!" and then very obvious things but nothing about my teaching, and then at the end, she said, "Oh, it looks like Courtney has fit in quite well into your class." Period. That's all.

That was February and it was just like "How much more can I do here? I mean, what do you want me to do?"

So there was nothing that I could say to her, and I felt like I just wanted to just rip up the evaluation. But I felt that if I did anything then they can pin me for it. You know, if I tell her off or if I tell her this is a crock, they'll just throw that into my face, too. So basically, I just had to grit my teeth and bear it.

The superintendent's intervention. The second incident was described by Allan. He had been off for sick leave for two weeks prior to the Christmas break. After the break, he returned and taught for about two weeks before getting sick again. At about this time, some parents complained about his teaching performance to the superintendent.

When I went out in January, about a week or so before exams, I had the exams all made up. I was reviewing with the kids, in one particular class, so when I got sick, I got a sub in. [The superintendent] came over to the principal, and told him that he had gotten a few calls from parents that I hadn't been doing some things for them, and that [the students] were getting nothing out of it, and that kind of thing. So he wanted [the principal] to go down to the classroom and tell them that, because of the situation, they could take their books into the exam. [The principal] refused to and told [the superintendent] he'd have to. So [the superintendent] did, — he went into the class and told the kids.

The sub, who was in at the time, told me this.... a couple of the kids came up to her afterwards and told her that some kids had been lying because they had worksheets, they had review sheets, they had covered all the stuff and I was in the process of telling them what was going to be on the exam. In fact I had given them a worksheet just the day before, a review sheet, to cover everything that was going to be on the exam. They told this substitute teacher, so she went and told the principal.

> *I talked to him about it too, I went and saw him, because I was really upset, I was just fuming - whew! I was fuming when I heard that.... So, I went over and talked to [the principal] and he said that he hadn't got hold of [the superintendent] — he had tried to, but [the superintendent] was in a meeting or something. So after that I never went back again. So I don't know if he ever got hold of [the superintendent to tell him] that these kids were lying.*

This incident seemed to have a serious impact on Allan, and on his subsequent decision to leave teaching. He felt that he needed the support of the administration before he could perform his teaching duties in a satisfactory manner, and this incident convinced him that he did not have that support. In addition, it appeared that the incident suggested that the superintendent questioned his personal integrity. Allan could accept that his performance was not as good as it could be; however, he could not accept the interpretation that he would treat the students unfairly in any manner.

Flaws in the Supervisory Process

The teachers raised a number of issues related to the ethic of justice when talking about the supervisory process. These included concerns about:

- Observer biases.
- Hurried evaluations.
- Mixed and conflicting messages to the teachers.

They also felt the supervisory process provided evidence of a lack of caring on the part of the administrators. The teachers recognized that the relationships between the administration and the teacher varied greatly from administrator to administrator. They indicated that this relationship affected their teaching performance in the following ways:

- They taught better in an environment where they felt supported.
- Some administrators treated them as replaceable objects, rather than as people with hopes and fears.
- Praise was important to motivate and sustain them.
- Some incidents had a profound effect on the way they viewed the administrator.

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON THE TEACHER

Throughout the interviews, all teachers made numerous comments about their emotional well-being. Some teachers experienced problems with classroom control and so found teaching very stressful. These teachers expressed that they wanted to leave classroom teaching, but were trapped by financial pressures and the inability to move to another occupation. Some teachers experienced health problems due to the stress from teaching or from personal problems, and, in addition, the supervisory process proved to be very distressing for each of the teachers. Each of these had an effect on their emotional well-being. However, because the various factors were entwined, it was difficult to determine the emotional impact of the supervisory process.

The teachers experienced a range of emotions during the evaluations. Some indicated they felt at times as though they lost control of their teaching and of their lives. Some said the experiences affected their self-esteem, sense of worth and confidence. At times, they felt angry or bitter, while at other times they felt distraught and nearly overcome with despair. They tended to become isolated from staff and students, and had to struggle to overcome this.

Losing Control

The teachers talked of many different forms of losing control, including control of their time and of choices in their own lives. For example, Allan talked of the incredible amount of time he spent marking student assignments and preparing for classes:

> *And then I'd go down and work in the den, doing corrections and lesson planning and what not. I'd be down there as early as 7:30 probably, sometimes a little later, depending upon whether I had a meeting or not. And generally it would be midnight or after when I went to bed, sometimes as early as 11:30, but quite often later than that. Really, I didn't have much time with the family.*

> *I knew that, I sensed that, I didn't have any control, I didn't have any choice. On Sunday, afternoon and evenings were always back to work again. I had too much work to do. At least I felt I had. Well, I did, I did have a lot of work to do. It just kept piling up. I just couldn't get it all done.*

It was reported earlier that some of the teachers felt as though they had lost some of their autonomy in the classroom, as they attempted to change their planning and teaching

practices to satisfy the demands of the supervisors. In addition, some felt like they had been shunted from one school to another, while another felt she had allowed the administrators to take advantage of her:

> *Basically, when I look back, I was pretty much someone just that they could walk on. And I didn't really fight for myself. But I thought, well, he's a superintendent — he knows whether or not I'm a good teacher. So I basically put all of my faith into what he said.*

The loss of the sense of control was affected by the way the teachers viewed themselves. In each case, their sense of self-worth was very low.

Effects on the Psyche

Some teachers tended to talk quite a lot about the effects on their emotional well-being, while others were more restrained. What follows are selected comments from three teachers. Debra experienced a number of formal or informal unsatisfactory evaluations from administrators, and this lowered her self-confidence, and created a distrust of administrators. She described her fear of evaluations and of confrontations:

> *After I had gone through all this with that principal, my self-confidence — I had lost weight, I couldn't sleep, I had to take sleeping pills, I went through a series of physical and mental problems. Because of that, I was very edgy. Every little thing would bother me. I would even feel paranoia, because [the principal] told me he was always watching me. And I know, because I would get these little notes from him all the time. I finally was working again, bringing myself up. Now it was time for an evaluation again....*

> *That's how it has been. Problems with evaluation, or anyone coming in — right now I totally clam up and freak out. Any criticism whatever, and it's the end. I just can't take it. There's a lot of psychological [damage]. You work so hard to build up your self-confidence again, [your self-] assurance. And one little thing can just cause it to tumble down right to the beginning again.*

The notice from the assistant superintendent that she was going to recommend the termination of her contract was particularly distressing to Debra:

> *I cried for days. I had to go home that day when she told me — she told me in the morning. I couldn't teach. I had to go home and calm myself. I was just totally distraught.*

The effects were long lasting, and affected other members of her family:

> *You go through a long depression. You even have suicidal thoughts. That's something you deal with. You think that your whole world has ended. Plus being in a small community. My parent and my relatives live in this community. The*

shame — you don't want to tell them. I did tell them, I was very open with them. They have to deal with it too.

Debra experienced a loss of confidence, a sense of betrayal of trust, and emotional problems as a result of the supervisory process. Betty had similar experiences.

It was May so I had another five weeks to go. I was devastated, so much so that I felt that I couldn't apply any place else because I felt I wouldn't be able to sell myself. And still, basically, going into another school year, I'm very content to sub. It's like I'm too fearful to sell myself. And I never used to be like this, ever. I mean, I felt like I was a very good teacher, and I felt like I had the confidence behind me and I felt like I could stand up for what I was saying. And after the report that I was given — I don't have that now, and that's devastating. And that's part of the reason we're wanting to move.

Betty felt the stress from teaching in the Evert Farr Elementary School, and from the evaluations affected her physically as well as emotionally:

When you're stressed out, I mean, everything else in your body is just so and I could feel it, I could feel how wired I was. You know, when you have constant headaches, and then, my weight dropped really badly, because I felt like I can't eat anything because it all makes me sick. Yes, it's much better; it's much calmer, except there is still that nagging feeling of what if I don't get a job.

The experience caused her to doubt her abilities as a teacher:

But there's this awful feeling, still, well, maybe I am just a terrible teacher. I've got to really fight with that.... Like when you asked me a question like that, my first immediate response is because I'm a terrible teacher, and that's why I was treated like that. Obviously, I must have done something terrible to [have this happen].

While Betty's experiences affected her belief in her teaching ability, she has had enough family and professional support to overcome many of the doubts. She talked about the substitute teaching she was doing in a different jurisdiction, and her success in dealing with the medical problems:

So basically, what we're doing is we're moving on a lot of faith. We're even buying a home, our first home and it's like "Gee whiz, I don't know if we should be doing this, because I don't know what kind of work I'll be getting." But, for me, it's just the feeling of being in a new environment. I am really excited and I'm starting to feel some of that excitement and energy come back.

And the depression actually lifted in February, too. We got through a lot of things so that was a miracle. I had thought I will probably feel this way for the rest of my life. And I feel hopeful now. I am looking forward to things, and my husband is really behind me so, that's a really great thing.

Betty is hopeful about her future, and is looking forward to returning to teaching. Allan, on the other hand, has grave doubts that he will ever teach again, or even want to teach again. Allan had suffered from stress-related illness, and, consequently found it difficult to separate the emotional responses to the illness from the responses to the supervisory process.

When asked for his reactions to the superintendent's suggestion that he resign, after coming back from the sick leave, Allan responded:

> *Yes. Well the second time wasn't as great a shock, I suppose, as the first time. I thought – I was really – what really hurt was it seemed like I was being kicked while I was down. I think the timing was terrible. I don't know from his perspective or the board's perspective that timing would make a difference. That's what hurt me – I had no inkling that this was coming.*

When faced with the decision of whether to accept the Board's offer, and resign, or stay and return to place a long term disability claim, Allan considered the following:

> *Well, I guess I've never been not wanted. There's not much point in me staying. How am I going to feel? Am I going to be looking over my shoulder all the time? Am I going to be back to where I was before?... But, I decided if I really wasn't wanted, I might as well [resign]. And it wouldn't be fair to the kids to dump them in the middle of the year again. It might be different with the kids, but...I might end up being back to where I was, which I didn't want.*

Allan recognized that teaching has changed, and he wasn't sure if he had the skills and attitude necessary to succeed in the different environment:

> *I've had time to think about it, and I think teachers and kids are not the same as they were. There's as lot of differences and I don't think I've adjusted as well as I should have. I don't know if I could. To be honest with you I don't know if I could readjust to that. I find the kids a lot less mature.... I'm not too sure I even want to go back. Like I said earlier. I don't think I can cope with it anymore.*

Allan was not sure what he would do after he recovered, but the longer he talked, the more apparent it became that he would not return to teaching.

Becoming Isolated

Receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation caused some teachers to withdraw from any form of interaction with the administration or with other teachers. They were aware that the principal wanted them to leave the school, and felt that many staff members shared that feeling. Debra made the following comments about her experiences after the assistant

superintendent informed her that she was going to recommend the termination of Debra's contract:

> *So I felt very isolated and had nowhere to turn. Maybe, because once that happened, the principal says, "I really don't want you to be teaching here next year, either" Everybody deserted ship, too. I was a wreck for a while. Thank goodness it was a Friday when she came, so it gave me time to work things out so that I could come back on Monday. It was hard. The only support I had was my husband.*

Illness, and the need to take a long term medical leave also tended to make teachers feel isolated from staff, students and the administration. Two factors seemed to affect this sense of isolation. The first was that the teachers seemed to feel that other staff members didn't believe they were ill, and so they felt a sense of guilt. This sense of guilt caused them to avoid association with the staff or with students. The second was a lack of understanding about the nature of mental illness, and especially the recognition that it can be treated successfully.

Allan talked of his feelings while he was on long term disability leave:

> *At first I tried to schedule my walks to go when I was least likely to meet students or teachers. And, of course, with the open climate, when kids are off and they don't have to go to a classroom, they can leave and they do. Occasionally I'd run into them. After the first couple of times, it became easier. A student worked in the store, and when I went in there, he was always friendly, and wanted me to come back [to teach]. So that helped a lot.*
>
> *I think the hardest part was with the teachers, to be honest with you. Some of the teachers, some of my friends that are teachers have been really supportive. There's a couple that have been very supportive. But others — there are a couple that just can't [accept I'm ill].... I did go to a couple of staff parties. The first one was tough, really tough. Most of the teachers didn't know how to talk to me. I think I felt very unconfortable because I knew they felt uncomfortable.*

Charles experienced similar feelings of isolation and discomfort after his return from illness. He had this to say:

> *And, you know, I still couldn't believe that I was burned out. I really felt like a cheat, you know, that I was taking advantage of the system. And anyway we suffered through March to November. Then, I decided I must try again. So I went back and stuck it out for 3 months....*
>
> *My best friend on the staff came to me one day and said "What's this I hear about disability?" And I said "yes." And he said, "Oh, you just need a rest. There is nothing wrong with you." But he was skeptical, you know. And this was a guy I had been teaching with, at that stage, for something like 16 years. But I understand,*

now, that it is difficult to accept this, you know. They've known you and it really shouldn't be because you've proved yourself.

Betty felt that the administration did not believe that a teacher could recover from mental illnesses such as depression or anorexia, and so the administration simply refused to acknowledge the personal problems she was experiencing.

And of course, people with anorexia are totally nuts. I could feel, I could feel that kind of tension in the school and nobody would talk about it with me. I would be more than willing to discuss it. I mean, you know, if people come up to me and say "You suffered with anorexia, can you, can you...?" I'm more than happy to talk about it. You know, it's just when everything is kept so secretive and so you just feel like you're living in this dark place where nothing is suppose to come out and you're just suppose to look like you're very professional on the outside....

Also, another thing that I would have really appreciated is for it to have been totally brought to the front. You know, and said "Is it true that you have anorexia? and is it true that you are dealing with all kind of abuse in your background? and tell us about it." I mean, I would have been more than willing to have say this is the process that you go and all these things that you see on Oprah, I mean, that really happens. It just made me feel like an outcast and it made me feel like I wasn't strong enough to deal with it.

The teachers experienced a range of emotions which were directly or indirectly affected by the supervisory process. These included:

- Feeling a sense that they had lost control over time and over events in their lives.
- Loss of self-confidence, and increased doubts about their abilities to teach successfully.
- Increased health problems related to stress. The health problems often led to long term medical leaves, which created a sense of isolation from staff and students, and in some cases, a feeling of guilt that they were not teaching.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS — THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

Four teachers who had been forced to resign, or forced to take a year's leave of absence were interviewed about their experiences before, during and after the decision to leave their position. The teachers had very different backgrounds; thus, their stories were very different. However, three themes, related to the supervisory process, issues of caring and justice, and the emotional impact of the events on the teacher did emerge.

The supervisory process. The evaluation of the teachers followed a vague, indefinite series of stages. The stages included:

- **Identification.** The teachers were identified through complaints to the principal or superintendent. In most instances, the complaints originated from parents, although in one case history, the complaints were generated by a teacher's aide.
- **Formal and informal supervision.** The supervisors followed up the complaints with formal evaluations, or increased informal monitoring. This part of the supervisory process seemed to be poorly done, as there were instances of conflicting judgments, and biased evaluations. Furthermore, none of the teachers felt the feedback received from the supervisors helped them improve.
- **The decision to dismiss.** The decision to dismiss the teacher often appeared to have been made for non-instructional reasons as much as instructional reasons. It did not appear that the formal classroom observations had much impact on the final decision.

Issues of caring and justice. Throughout the interviews, the teachers made reference to the importance of being treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They felt this occurred when the following conditions were in place:

- **A supportive environment.** The climate of some schools was conducive to teachers working together, and this enhanced the teacher's motivation to do well. However, the climate of other schools seemed to lead to confrontation and to teachers working in isolation. The key person who influenced the climate was the principal.
- **A personal relationship with the principal.** Each teacher was affected by the behavior of the various administrators with whom he or she worked. Some administrators did not seem to recognize them as people, but rather treated them as replaceable parts who were to be kept around if they provided a useful service,

but who were to be discarded as soon as the service was no longer considered satisfactory.

- **Critical incidents.** The teachers each described one or two critical incidents which had a profound effect on them. They felt they were treated both unfairly and in an uncaring manner, and this symbolized how the teachers perceived the administrators felt about them.

The emotional impact on the teacher. Three sub-themes emerged from the teachers' comments related to the emotional impact of the series of events which lead to them leaving their teaching position. These included:

- **Losing control.** The teachers suggested that they felt as though they had lost control of many aspects of their lives. Tremendous amounts of time were required to deal with the real or imagined pressures they experienced. This affected their family life, and their teaching. In addition, some expressed the feeling that they had lost much of their decision-making ability as they tried to teach in a manner which would satisfy the supervisors.
- **Effect on their psyche.** Each of the teachers experienced a dramatic decrease in self-confidence, combined with increased self-doubts about his or her teaching ability. This was often coupled with physical symptoms of weight loss, headaches, and difficulty with sleeping.
- **Becoming isolated.** The teachers reported they felt isolated from the administration and staff both during the time of intense supervision, and during periods of medical leave. The isolation was affected by a sense of guilt for being off work, and by a lack of understanding of stress-related or mental illness by members of staff.

The stories of four teachers who were forced to leave their teaching positions provide personal perspectives into the issues associated with the forced resignations of teachers. These findings will be discussed in the next section.

DISCUSSION

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

The discussion will be organized around the three themes which emerged from the findings: (a) the supervisory process, (b) issues of caring and justice, and (c) the emotional impact on the teachers. However, before those aspects are discussed it is necessary to review some aspects of the study of the A.T.A. files, and to provide some concluding comments about each of the four teachers.

Review of Alberta Teachers' Association Files

An earlier chapter contained the summary of the analysis of the files of 39 teachers who had requested assistance from the Alberta Teachers' Association because their supervisors perceived the teachers were providing unsatisfactory service. A group of 11 teachers was identified as ones who would be suitable respondents for this portion of the study. Of that group, only five teachers could be contacted, and four agreed to be interviewed.

The review of teacher files suggested that in some cases, the supervisory process was conducted in a professional and competent manner, while in other cases, the process was handled inappropriately. Three of the four teachers interviewed were among those whose files suggested the supervisory process was done poorly. The perceptions gained from the interviews and from the repeated reading of the transcripts have re-affirmed the conviction that the evaluations could have been conducted more effectively. Thus, the supervisory process experienced by three of the four teachers may illustrate many practises which are to be avoided.

The Teachers Revisited

One of the central issues in a summative evaluation is "Should the teacher continue teaching, or should the teacher be dismissed?" What follows is my judgment about the four teachers. This judgment is based on my interpretation of the information found in the files provided by the Alberta Teachers' Association and from impressions gained through interviews with the teachers and informal conversations with the A.T.A. staff officers who

had worked with the teachers. The criteria used to formulate the judgments were the standards of minimum competency as defined by the Board of Reference hearings and outlined in Chapter Four.

Allan, a teacher with perceptual problems. Allan acknowledged that he had experienced problems with classroom management for a number of years, and that he was experiencing increasing difficulties in recent years. He recognized that the students had changed, but that he had not made appropriate adjustments to his teaching.

His description of his teaching practice further suggested that he was not providing satisfactory service. The lesson plans were geared to the use of worksheets, and this is a technique which, at times, is used by teachers to control, rather that teach students. He selected audio-visual materials on the basis of convenience, rather than effectiveness. In fact, he acknowledged that many of the materials were so old that the students tended to disregard them.

In spite of these obvious weaknesses, it was apparent that Allan cared for the students, and was committed to providing the best quality of instruction possible. However, the stress he experienced affected his confidence and abilities to the point that it was taking longer and longer to complete the work he felt was required. Allan recognized this, and it seemed to be a major factor in his decision to accept the board's offer and resign.

It is my belief that both Allan and the students were best served by this decision. It is doubtful if Allan would have recognized the degree to which his teaching performance had deteriorated, and therefore, some form of intervention by the supervisors appeared to be warranted. However, it appeared that he was not given adequate or clear enough feedback on his teaching performance to overcome perceptual problems related to his teaching effectiveness, and so he left doubting the fairness of the superintendent's stance that he should resign.

Betty, a teacher who overcame a personal crisis. The interview with Betty occurred about a year after she left Evert Farr Elementary School. During this year, she

resolved many of the personal problems which had plagued her throughout her teaching career — the depression had lifted, and the eating disorders were under control. She looked, talked and acted like a person who had great enthusiasm and energy. Thus, the image which was formed during the interview may have been very different from that which would have been formed a year earlier.

However, throughout the interview, Betty talked about her relationship with students, and with other teachers. The relationships she described were ones which were based on a sense of caring and commitment to a common goal — that of helping students learn. Repeated readings of the transcripts reinforced the perception that Betty could be a very good, dynamic teacher. It appeared that the decision to not renew her contract was made primarily for reasons other than her teaching ability — conflict between the principal and the teacher, concerns about her health, or simply the desire of the principal and the superintendent to exercise power over the teacher. In Betty's case, it appeared that the evaluation and decision-making process were both flawed and unfair.

Charles, trapped in a changing environment. Charles was the oldest of the four teachers and, by his own admission, would have retired a number of years earlier had it not been for financial pressures to continue. The supervisory process was long and drawn out, but this was due, in part, to the various periods of illness Charles experienced. The administration tried placing Charles in a elementary school position in the hope that he would have fewer discipline problems. However, the problems persisted in both the elementary and the junior high placement, and Charles seemed to have trouble being accepted at the elementary school. There was evidence of formal and informal supervision in both schools, and the high school principal did attempt to work with him with regards to the discipline concerns.

Charles acknowledged that some of his teaching skills had deteriorated during the last years, and further, that he had been unable to adapt to the changes in the students. The teacher seemed to be a very kind and gentle person who, at one time was likely a competent

teacher. However, he seemed relieved and happy to be out of the teaching profession. The process used to force him to resign seemed to be both fair and effective, and the financial settlement was a means of assisting him through the transition to retirement.

Debra, still struggling to find her niche. Debra and her account was the most puzzling of the stories told by the four teachers. The file accumulated by the Alberta Teachers' Association, and Debra's story both indicate that she has been accused of providing unsatisfactory performance by a number of administrators over many years. The fact that at least two principals and two central office administrators were concerned enough about her teaching performance to consider recommending the termination of her contract suggests there were more problems that she revealed in the interview. She also indicated on two occasions that she would like to leave teaching, although she would like to remain in a related field. These factors combine to suggest that her teaching performance was not satisfactory.

Throughout her teaching career, Debra has been the subject of both formal and informal evaluations. However, the file and her comments both suggest that the evaluations tended to be 'one shot' events, rather than part of a sustained supervisory process. Perhaps she was unable to improve from the feedback provided or was not forced to resign because no one administrator or group of administrators worked through the entire supervisory process. In other words, it appears that Debra is continuing to provide marginal service, despite numerous attempted interventions by the administration. It seems that the supervisory process was flawed, and so was ineffective.

Thus, of the four teachers interviewed, it would seem that three were providing unsatisfactory service, while the fourth may have been unjustly dismissed. This suggests the supervisory processes used should be examined more carefully.

THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

The discussion related to the supervisory process will focus on the strengths and the weaknesses of the evaluation and monitoring, and on other factors which may have influenced the supervisor's decision to consider the possible termination of contract.

Apparent Strengths

In each of the four case histories, the teachers were identified through parental or non-certified staff complaints. The administrators acted on these complaints and increased both the formal evaluations and the informal monitoring. Thus, the administrators were responsive, and reacted in a manner which allowed them to determine the validity of the complaints. It is apparent from the subsequent actions that the supervisors felt there was some validity to the complaints, and so further actions were implemented.

Some supervisors also attempted to provide assistance to the teacher involved. The person who supplied the assistance varied; in Betty's case, it was provided by the director of special education, while in Debra's case, one assistant superintendent was particularly supportive and helpful. Some supervisors also attempted to help the teacher find the right niche. Charles was given the opportunity to teach in the elementary school in hopes that he would be more effective in classroom management. Debra was given the opportunity to transfer to a school on a Hutterite colony, where the students were less disruptive, and where her teaching methods were better accepted.

Thus, throughout the supervisory process, there was some evidence that the supervisors were responsive to complaints from the community, and made efforts to help the individuals grow as teachers.

Apparent Weaknesses

Some of the case histories illustrate a number of weaknesses. These include biased observers, unethical practices, hurried evaluations, and mixed messages to the teacher following the observation.

Biased observers. Most teachers felt the supervisors concluded prior to the evaluation that he or she was providing unsatisfactory service and carried out the evaluations to gain support for that conclusion. For example, the administrators who conducted the evaluations of Betty seemed to have decided early in the school year that they were going to release her. The evaluations tended to be short, and focused on the negative aspects of the lesson while ignoring the more positive aspects. Furthermore, it appeared that the evaluators were not willing to acknowledge Betty's attempts to improve upon the perceived weaknesses in planning. Thus, Betty's concerns about problems of bias appear to have some basis.

This concern about bias is not unique to these four teachers. The Joint Committee on Standards of Educational Evaluation (1988) acknowledged this problem and developed a standard to assist educational organizations in dealing with the concern: "The evaluation process should provide safeguards against bias, so that the evaluatee's qualifications or performance are assessed fairly" (p.114). They continued by stating "there is constant potential for the intrusion of bias in personnel evaluations. Evaluations are biased if judgments are reached partially or totally on considerations irrelevant to the job" (p. 114). Furthermore, they indicated that a common error of educational institutions is to continue using evaluators where their biases are apparent.

Unethical practices. The findings that relate to the supervisory process revealed actions which may be considered unethical. An example was the letter sent by the principal to parents which explained the reasons why the teacher aide was moved from Betty's classroom. The letter concluded with the statement: *"Teachers are regularly evaluated and [the teacher's] classroom will be visited by District Office Administration and quite extensively by School Administrators this year to prepare a thorough teaching and program evaluation."*

Because the discussion of any aspect of a teacher's evaluation with parents is considered unethical, this practice should not be condoned. Furthermore, this statement

amounts to a threat as it implies that the teacher has been engaged in some actions or practices which are inappropriate. In addition, it suggests that the true purpose of upcoming evaluation was to control the teacher, rather than promote teacher growth, or to lead to judgments about performance.

The second example occurred when Debra asked the superintendent to transfer her as she felt she could not work with the new principal. The superintendent replied:

> *"You're not going to be teaching next year, anyway." I thought, he hasn't even come out to see me and he's already got this judgment of me? He says "I'm going to come out there and evaluate you".*

In both cases, the threat of evaluations could be viewed as mechanisms to control the teacher; to exert power over the teacher, and to ensure the teacher carried out the directives of the administrator without complaint. Unfortunately, this is not an unheard-of purpose for teacher evaluation. For example, Barth (1991) stated "Evaluation can also serve the needs of the principal. For some administrators, supervision is an opportunity to exercise 'power,' to 'show the flag,' to remind teachers who has authority over whom" (p. 56).

Such an approach to teacher evaluation is likely to have an undesirable effect on the relationship between the teacher and the administrator, and on the school climate. This was a finding of the TEPI Study which referred to the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the evaluator:

> The studies in this report reinforce the notion that teacher evaluation involves the relationship of two people both of whom must share a willingness to participate in and an understanding of the process. When either person was unable or unwilling to participate fully in the venture, the process had little chance of success. This speaks to the importance of trust in such relationships. A lack of understanding of the process due to lack of information or to the deliberate manipulation of information suggests that one partner in the relationship seeks to retain power. (Alberta Education, in press, p. 306)

The authors also commented on the importance of the school culture on the teacher evaluation policy:

> Many teachers used their teacher evaluation experience as an opportunity to reflect on their philosophy and practice but, unless there was a school culture which supported discussion and reflection about their practices, few teachers were able to sustain this beyond their preparation for the experience of being observed. A school culture which supported teachers' exploration of their teaching, where annual goal-

> setting was practiced, and where teachers themselves had set high standards for their teaching proved to be essential to sustaining this practice. (Alberta Education, in press, p. 305)

The two examples of unethical practice described earlier effectively destroyed the relationship between the teacher and the administrator. Furthermore, it is highly likely that these practices also affected the administrator's relationship with other teachers, thus influencing the school culture. As we will see in chapter seven, the manner in which administrators conduct evaluations has more of an effect on the organizational culture than does the final outcome of a teacher evaluation.

Hurried and insufficient evaluations. As was noted earlier, the formal evaluations conducted through classroom observations were viewed by teachers as an ad hoc event, and in most cases, were virtually unrelated to the day-to-day teaching practice. For example, during her final year, Betty described two evaluations, conducted by two different evaluators, each lasting less than one half hour. Allan received one evaluation from the principal, which he viewed as routine, while Debra reported receiving one evaluation at the end of June from which the assistant superintendent concluded she was going to recommend the termination of her contract. Only Charles reported receiving somewhat regular supervision following the complaints about his teaching ability.

This approach can be contrasted with the examples of an effective supervisory process evident in some files provided by the Alberta Teachers' Association. Recall that the process deemed effective involved at least four distinct stages: (a) the identification of the problem, (b) making recommendations, (c) providing time for improvement, and (d) subsequent re-evaluation. In comparison, the evaluation process revealed through the interviews appeared to involve one visit, with the judgment made following the visit. Furthermore, there seemed to be very little relationship between the observations and the decision reached.

The need to ensure comprehensive supervisory practices is supported by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) who recognized that

> evaluations vary in complexity and importance, [but]...when a personnel decision is in doubt and might have to be defended in court, prudence dictates a thorough

> and well-documented evaluation....In general, more time and effort should be devoted to applying standards when personnel actions are doubtful or potentially controversial. (p. 9)

It would appear that hurried and insufficient evaluations had more of an adverse than a constructive effect on the stated goals of promoting teacher growth and ensuring accountability.

Mixed messages to the teacher following the observation. There were numerous examples of inadequacies in the feedback given to the teachers following formal evaluations. Three of the teachers remarked that the comments and recommendations they received were general, and somewhat inconsequential. It would seem that the evaluators needed to be more specific in the both the observations and the interpretations of those observations. For example, McLaughlin and Pfeifer (1988) argued that

> Specificity is important to effective feedback in all organizations; it is especially critical in education where teachers...judge their effectiveness primarily in terms of student responses. Generalities or theoretical abstractions have little meaning for teachers' assessments of their performance or as a guide for growth....
>
> Specificity also is critical because it enables the evaluator to engage the evaluatee in assessment of evidence. Whereas interpretations may be disputed, data closely tied to the observation or event allow individuals to draw their own conclusions. And where disagreement occurs, evaluators and teachers can refer to what actually occurred and interpret it together. (pp. 47, 48)

In some instances, the supervisory process could have been improved by providing more meaningful, specific feedback. This feedback would have assisted the teacher in formulating a clearer understanding of his or her strengths and of areas of professional performance which required improvement. Rather than concluding that he or she was providing satisfactory service, the teacher would have emerged from the evaluations with a realization that continued performance at the current standard would result in dismissal. Some of the teachers did not gain this understanding due to the manner in which the evaluator conveyed his or her findings, and so the pronouncement that the administrator was going to recommend the possible termination of the teacher's contract came as a surprise.

The importance of the post-conference and of the written report have been recognized by Carey (1988) and by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988). Carey suggested that the two most common problems which occur following the evaluation of a troubled teacher are (a) the supervisor is too nice, and (b) the comments and subsequent report lack focus. He stated that such actions by the evaluator leaves "open the door to accusations of inconsistency, whimsy, or unclear standards, none of which will serve the interests of the district" (p. 132). It was apparent that at least two of the teachers received feedback which would be subject to such accusations.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) indicated that one of the standards of functional reporting was to provide reports which are "clear, timely, accurate and germane, so that they are of practical value to the evaluatee" (p. 64). They argued that the reports should form the basis for important judgments related to personnel matters, and so must contain clear, useful and relevant information. Thus, the need expressed by the teachers to receive more specific and substantive feedback following formal supervision is strongly supported.

The Need for Fair and Comprehensive Supervision

What has emerged from the interviews is insight into the adverse effects of a poorly defined, poorly implemented supervisory process. The case histories illustrated a number of weaknesses in the supervisory processes. There were examples of (a) biased observers, (b) unethical practices, (c) hurried evaluations, and (d) unclear and contradictory messages about the quality of the teaching performance. Contrast this with the findings of McLaughlin and Pfieffer (1988) who stated:

> We also found that the same norms and values that lead teachers to improve on the basis of evaluation feedback also lead teachers to resign voluntarily when fair, credible evidence suggests that they are not well-suited to teaching. Among the three California districts we visited, none has been forced to institute formal dismissal proceedings for incompetence against any tenured teacher. However, each district has secured voluntary resignations from several teachers in conjunction with the evaluation process....
>
> Without exception, the poorly performing teachers were unhappy in their current position, yet economic pressures prevented them from giving up their teaching

> position and maintaining a comparable standard of living. The district was able to craft an individual package involving early retirement, career counseling, and benefit packages for individuals who secured their resignation, which...enable them to leave with positive attitudes. (pp. 64, 65)

It seems that a fair and comprehensive approach would have been more effective than the ad hoc supervisory process evident in these case histories.

ISSUES OF CARING AND JUSTICE

The interviews with the teachers suggested that they were concerned about the ethics of caring and justice. They wanted the supervisors to treat them fairly, but at the same time, they expressed the need to have a meaningful relationship with their supervisor. They did not want to be treated in an impartial, detached sort of way but rather, they wanted to respected as complete people, each with a unique history, with their own needs, and with their own hopes and fears.

The teachers talked about the differences they experienced in the various schools in which they had worked and how, in some schools they had enjoyed teaching and felt successful, while in other schools, they felt heavily criticized and under attack. They attributed the difference to the degree of support they received from the principal, and they felt that the relationship between the teachers and their principals had a significant impact on the success they experienced. Barth (1991) argued that this is common:

> My experience suggests that as it goes between teacher and principal so shall it go in the other relationships. If the teacher-principal relationship can be characterized as helpful, supportive, trusting, revealing of craft knowledge, so too will others. To the extent that teacher-principal interactions are suspicious, guarded, distant, adversarial, acrimonious, or judgmental, we are likely to see these traits pervade the school. The relationship between teacher and principal seems to have an extraordinary amplifying effect. It models what *all* relationships will be. (p. 19)

The importance of the relationship between the teacher and the administrator extends further than just to the principal. The two critical incidents which were described in some detail demonstrate the importance of a caring supportive relationship between the teacher and the central office staff. These incidents are note-worthy because they illustrate how easily the supervisors, through their actions, stripped the teachers of their dignity, and created the feeling that they, as teachers, were unimportant.

Betty found the reaction of the supervisor painful on a personal level, because the reaction caused her to realize that no matter how well she performed, it would not be good enough. However, she was also hurt on the professional level because Courtney's success provided a very special opportunity — a chance to celebrate the very essence of teaching — that rare moment when a student makes a dramatic breakthrough. The supervisor, through her indifference, squandered that moment, and thus ruined an opportunity to share, with Betty, the joy of Courtney's achievement.

Allan interpreted the superintendent's action of allowing students to write Allan's exam using their textbooks and notebooks as both unfair and uncaring. It was unfair because the superintendent made the decision based solely on the comments of some parents of a few students. The superintendent did not attempt to determine if there was another side to the story. It was uncaring because the action revealed that the superintendent believed that Allan would test students unfairly, and it showed how little the superintendent knew about Allan. Although Allan recognized that he was not providing the quality of teaching service to which the students were entitled, he worked exceptionally hard to provide the best service he could, and so would not do anything to put the students at a disadvantage. The superintendent's actions demonstrated that he was unaware of this commitment.

Noddings (1988) indicated that an essential aspect of caring is to listen intently, and to take the message of the other person seriously. The superintendent made no effort to listen to Allan's viewpoint, and so acted in an uncaring manner.

These examples re-enforce the importance of the relationship between teachers and administrators, and suggest that the way the teacher feels about his or her work is influenced by this relationship.

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON THE TEACHER

The emotional impact of the supervisory process cannot be separated from that caused by the health problems each teacher experienced. However, it is obvious that the combined effect had a tremendous impact on each of the teachers. They described going through a

series of stages which correspond very closely to those described by Jevne and Zingle (1991) in their study of the experiences of teachers who went on long term disability. Jevne and Zingle found "a common predictable describable process appears to be associated with the onset of a health disabling condition" (p. 236). This included denying the signs, coming to acknowledge the symptoms, feeling less able to teach, less enthusiastic about teaching, less valued by administration, and more isolated from other staff members. They found that "the experience of being on long term disability is riddled with multiple losses for all involved: this reality engenders strong feelings on behalf of all stakeholders" (p. 236). The teachers described the sense of lose of control of the work load and of control over their own teaching. In many cases, they experienced additional stress when the teacher "has an insidious onset of an invisible disorder" (p. 12). As well, many of the teachers felt that a decrease in teaching competence accompanied the onset of the medical problems.

One of the conclusions reached by Jevne and Zingle (1991) was "the administrator has the potential to profoundly influence, negatively or positively, the quality of the experience of teaching, as well as the impact and experience of being on long term disability" (p. 238). Thus, the manner in which the administrator interacts with the teacher tends to be vitally important to the emotional well-being of the teacher. It appeared that some supervisors did not conduct careful classroom observations of the teacher, nor establish a caring relationship which would have allowed the supervisor to talk openly with the teacher and possibly gain a better understanding of the reasons for the poor performance.

Steinmetz (1985) argued that there is a variety of reasons why employees perform poorly. He grouped the reasons into three broad categories: (a) managerial and organizational shortcomings, (b) individual, personal shortcomings of the employee, and (c) outside influences. He further suggested that the first step in working with marginal employees is to diagnose the reasons for the poor performance. The diagnosis requires careful observation, and a good understanding of the employee. Had the administrators recognized and understood more about the nature of the health problems the teachers were

experiencing, they may have acted differently toward the teachers. The administrator could have changed the way in which he or she interacted with and evaluated the teacher, and made a conscious effort to provide support to the teacher.

Each teacher spoke of the desire to talk openly with the administrator about his or her illness and its effect on his or her teaching. However, instead of candid dialogue, the teachers felt shunned or, in those rare instances where conversations did occur, felt like they were "talked to" rather than "with." As a result, most teachers felt as though they were replaceable commodities, rather that valued individuals. For example, Debra commented:

> *You're just an item, the way some people look at it, not a person going through those things.*

Charles had similar thoughts:

> *That's the other thing, you know. You get the feeling that all these guys want is some kind of a deal — that they're not really too worried about what happens to you afterwards.*

The supervision and forced resignation of a teacher who is providing unsatisfactory performance has a profound emotional impact on the teacher. The teachers interviewed tended to become isolated and to feel less valued. This emotional impact could be lessened if the supervisors took the time to get to know the teacher as a person, and to use this knowledge to help the teacher plan for his or her future. Debra seemed to speak for each of the teachers interviewed when she said:

> *I just think that the basic thing is that everyone has to look at you as a person, not just a teacher. They have to look at you as a whole [person.] You can't separate what you're teaching and how you teach from your personal self. I think you have to have support from the person, somehow, some way.*

CHAPTER SIX

FORCED RESIGNATIONS -- THE SUPERVISORS' PERSPECTIVE

In the previous chapter, the discussion focused on the experiences of teachers which led to their resignation or to the termination of their contracts and of the effects the supervision and termination have had on them. In this chapter, the focus shifts to the experiences and emotional response of the administrators.

Interviews were conducted with ten supervisors who had been directly involved in the forced resignation or formal termination of a teacher. The ten supervisors included one principal, as well as an assistant superintendent and a superintendent who were principals at the time they were involved in the forced resignation or termination of contract, three assistant superintendents of larger rural boards, and four superintendents of small rural boards. In each interview, the supervisor reviewed the case history, and in doing so, revealed many of his or her perceptions of the teacher, as well as providing considerable factual information on the series of events.

In addition, two interviews were held with superintendents who have been in their current positions for long periods, who are well respected within the superintendency, and who have found alternative approaches to forced resignations.

The cases indicated that five of the persons forced to resign were classroom teachers, another was a teacher who chose early retirement, and one had his contract formally terminated by the school board but was subsequently re-instated by a Board of Reference. The remaining three cases involved principals. One agreed to resign his designation, one resigned both his designation and his teaching position, and the third had his designation removed by board motion. He subsequently appealed to a Board of Reference, but the removal of designation was upheld.

In seven of the ten histories, the teacher or principal had been a long serving member of staff. One teacher had been transferred onto the staff, and had come to the school with

a long history of poor performance. The remaining two teachers were hired within two years of the time of decision to move to terminate.

The teachers described in five cases had health related problems, and took extended sick leaves or long term disability during the time of the intense supervision. Six teachers consistently demonstrated low teaching skills, two had serious difficulties relating to students, and two seemed to have other commitments which took priority over their professional performance.

The analysis of the transcripts from the interviews with the ten supervisors revealed themes related to (a) the supervisory process, (b) the sort of disruptive actions engaged in by the teacher, (c) the emotional costs to the supervisor, and (d) the effects of the series of events on the organizational culture. This chapter will explore the first three themes while the implications for the organizational culture will be discussed in the next chapter.

THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

The supervisory process related to teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory tended to follow a sequence, although the length of time associated with each stage in the sequence varied greatly. The stages were: (a) the identification of the teacher whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory, (b) confirmation of concerns, (c) identification of specific problems, (d) attempts to remediate the problems, and (e) the decision move to sever the contract between the teacher and the Board as the supervisor came to recognize that the teacher would not or could remediate the problems. Often, three stages – confirmation of concerns, identification of specific problems and attempts to remediate the problems – were repeated a number of times before the decision was made to end the teacher's contract of employment with the school jurisdiction.

Identification of the Marginal Teacher

In most cases, the supervisors indicated that the teacher whose performance was unsatisfactory was identified through informal observations, or complaints from parents or students. Following are comments from some supervisors who discussed the means by

which teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory were identified. The names of schools and of teachers have been changed to maintain anonymity.

An assistant superintendent who had been employed with the jurisdiction for an extended period acknowledged:

> *I knew her as a teacher in the Greenwood School. I had heard numerous gossip stories about her.... I've heard stories before, in the community. I know that my son went through her class. There were incidents in the class that I questioned, but I tended to put it off to my son exaggerating what was happening.... Anyway, the principal came to me and she was concerned. She indicated that she was going to go in and she was going to start doing some evaluations with the class.*

Another assistant superintendent, who had also been employed by his jurisdiction for a long time, stated:

> *From time to time, we would have reports of problems in the classroom. It could have been discipline, kids skipping classes, parents complaining that not much is happening, and a general feeling, within the school and the community that "Really, why are we employing this fellow?" Because he had built up this reputation with the town, within the school and within the community itself.*

A superintendent recalled the manner in which he became aware that the teacher in question may not have been providing satisfactory performance:

> *So the initial conclusion that I drew was that this guy was a top notch teacher. But some of the things that I started hearing, then, certainly didn't corroborate that. Then I found, in fact, that there were severe problems with classroom discipline, and the reason the kids were doing so well in the program was he essentially gave them the questions and the answers, too. So naturally, everyone did well.*

An associate superintendent was well aware of potential concerns when a principal was transferred into his area:

> *It was a situation where he was appointed as a principal for the first time [ten years ago]. He was in a small high school situation—grades 7 to 12. He was in that position for 3 or 4 years. Then he encountered some difficulties — parental concerns, not only about his teaching, but his administration. Central Office, the superintendent in the area, felt that maybe he could benefit from a different situation. He'd be better off to start with a clean slate somewhere else. So a transfer was arranged and he was then placed in a junior high situation, 7–9. He was there for about 3 or 4 years, and similar kinds of problems arose. So then another transfer was arranged to my area, where he was in a Grade 1–9 situation....*

An assistant superintendent initially heard of the concerns about the teacher during his first days as the principal of a large school:

> *While working in August, I was there by myself up until the last 10 days, or so, and I received a number of requests from parents to ensure that their son or daughter didn't have this particular teacher. That wasn't new to me—that kind of thing happens. But, then when the vice–principals came on board, I quizzed them a bit about this particular case, and they said that's nothing unusual.*

A superintendent, new to her position, very quickly heard of concerns with the principal of the community school. She recalled:

> *What was really representative of how badly he was affecting the community was that as soon as people became aware that I was someone whose door was open, that I was someone they could speak to, people just came flooding in.*

Students and parents also complained about the quality of the principal's classroom instruction:

> *Almost right away in September, we started to get parents and students complaining about what was happening. I had droves of students – remember, I was the one they were coming to because they didn't have a principal to go to. I was getting these groups of students coming and saying "Can't you do something? We're not learning anything."*

Another newly hired superintendent found that the identification of the principal whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory was straight forward:

> *When I was hired, one of the things I was asked to do was quote, unquote, clean up the high school and particularly focus on the administration in the high school.*

The identification of teachers who are perceived to be providing unsatisfactory performance was often an easy matter. The concerns of board members, parents, or students were brought to the supervisor and he or she was expected to deal with the concerns. The first step seemed to be to confirm whether or not there was a basis for the complaints.

Confirmation of the Concerns

In almost every instance, the various concerns which had been expressed to the supervisor by way of board, parent or student complaints were verified through a formal evaluation process. In some cases, this observation was done by the school principal, and

reported to the central office supervisor; in some cases, the central office supervisor carried out the evaluation on his or her own; and in still other cases, the evaluation was conducted jointly by the central office supervisor and the principal.

A few central office administrators spoke of the need to observe other teachers working in the same area before visiting the teacher in question as this provided an opportunity to determine a performance benchmark, and so increase the validity of the subsequent judgments.

> *Every teacher gets a school-based and a system-based evaluation, so the teachers see that a pattern is there. But I believe that having external evaluation is very important, because we're in a position to make comparisons — we can see a bigger picture and we can recognize what might not seem like a problem. We can pick it out.*

Another superintendent took steps to ensure he was acclimatized to the standards and expectations of the grade or class in question:

> *What I do is go to 3 or 4 other classrooms first to see what the teachers are doing and how they are doing and then I go to the teacher in question. Because I need some points of reference. And I can say the job is done well enough because I've been in four classrooms where they are good teachers and are doing the same. Or the job is not well enough done. I don't make reference to the other four. I simply say it's just not good enough.*

In most of the cases described, two or more administrators were involved in the supervisory process. However, not all administrators wanted to take part. One superintendent had to direct the principal to conduct a formal evaluation before the superintendent would become involved:

> *I had some discussion with the school administration, and the principal was a little bit behind the eight–ball. But I said that "I can't or won't do anything until I get something formal from you, so you better get on the process." As soon as an evaluation report came in from the school, with the recommendations that were there, I felt that I had to get involved.*

Concerns about principals. The confirmation seemed to be more difficult for the evaluation of principals as often the process was not included in board policy. One assistant superintendent clarified the assessment procedure with the principal before implementing it:

> *We set out different goals and timelines to try to achieve certain ends, [and agreed on] an assessment procedure. Part of that assessment procedure was interviewing different staff members on certain points. We sort of wrote out the script together, and then I went through the interview procedures, consolidated the results, and then came back and discussed them with him.*

The supervision of the administrative aspect of the principals' performance caused some central office administrators more concerns than did the evaluation of their teaching abilities.

> *I feel very confident about the supervision and evaluation of teachers but the evaluation of administrators is different. For one thing, their job role is not so clearly defined. And, in addition, in this school system, there was no documentation of any sort for performance standards for administrators. There were no documentation procedures for administrators. This just had not been done.*

To alleviate this problem, the superintendent found it necessary to have the Board pass a policy on the evaluation of administrators before she conducted the assessment.

Thus, although the teacher who was perceived to be providing unsatisfactory performance was identified through parents' or board members' complaints, the supervisors engaged in formal supervision before making a judgment on the relative merits of the teacher's teaching practice.

Identification of Specific Problems

During the formal evaluations, the supervisors observed the teacher or principal at work, attempted to identify specific problems which affected the teaching or administrative performance and, in almost all instances, gave suggestions to help remediate the concerns. Following are a number of examples of the manner in which the various supervisors proceeded.

A principal talked about the evaluation process he implemented. He was committed to ensuring the process was fair, valid and rigorous, and this was apparent in his approaches.

> *Between the AP and I, we spend approximately 40 hours on the supervisory process. That would be writing up initial meetings, describing evaluation processes, doing pre-conferences which would address what was going to be looked at in that particular portion of the evaluation. The evaluation is divided into 4 different sections, and each section would require a minimum of 2 visits and a maximum of 4. It ended up that between the AP and myself, we did 16 individual visitations, including pre-and post-conferences ....*

> *I would go into the class, as did the AP, and look at certain aspects of teaching. We would write up what we saw. The teacher would then get the copy back, and then we would set a date to sit down and to discuss the teacher's perceptions of the evaluation.*

The approach this principal used was more rigorous than that described by other supervisors. However, the basic approach was consistent. For example, an assistant superintendent acknowledged that the informal data gathering process was replaced by a more formal system of gathering information about the quality of performance provided by the teacher:

> *We've got that on file, a number of suggestions that indicated that the school administration and the department heads are there to help him. They are going to visit on a regular basis.... And then, in writing, we said, "Classroom management, to deal effectively with pupils, and plans, organization and implementation had to be up to the school's expectations. We advised him that "Your performance will be monitored closely to ensure that the necessary improvements are made."*

Following are comments from an assistant superintendent related to the manner in which he and the principal identified specific concerns about a teacher. These reflect the cyclical nature of the supervisory process, as in many instances, the same problems tended to re-appear after it seemed the teacher had corrected the concerns:

> *I know that the principal in the situation started to try to set some goals with her to work on. [The teacher] actually tried to do some work on those goals and improve the situation. [The principal] did an evaluation of the teacher again in 1988, and at that time, there was a realization that things had slipped again. What had happened was the teacher had been targeted with some areas [for improvement]. The principal had said, "Okay, you've got to fix these." She had fixed some of them; the targets had been removed, and then right away the problems came back... So we had a problem. You have to fix it; it looks better. Yet a few months down the line — "Hey, we've got to get back into this."*

This pattern of improvement and subsequent regression was apparent in a number of the cases which were reviewed. It appears as though a number of the teachers were able to provide satisfactory performance, but were unable or unwilling to sustain that performance over time.

The data collection portion of the supervisory process often revealed the problems were worse than had been anticipated. For example, a superintendent who was involved with the evaluation found more problems than he had anticipated. The formal assessment

of a school principal revealed that many of the concerns were systemic, and so pervaded the entire school.

> *That part of it we followed up with the deputy superintendent and I doing staff interviews to check staff perceptions and understandings of what the difficulties were in the school because the school had been identified as having difficulties by both the board and the principal. During the course of that, several other problems came to light from staff comments, that required some follow-up. It was looking less and less optimistic. One of the things that the principal had taken great pride in and had spoken often of was his tremendous concern with special education and the good work he had done developing a special education program for the school....*

> *Unfortunately, when I started to look, I found that there were students in the program — up to three-quarters of the time, with no program plans in place. No I.E.P.'s, no I.P.P.'s. And, indeed, I found three students for whom there weren't even any cumulative records in place. Nobody had ordered cumulative records for these kids. So what I had started out optimistically to do didn't turn out very optimistically. What I found was some pretty inadequate supervision, administration record-keeping and some real problems. So that didn't help the situation.*

Student-teacher relationships. In a number of instances, the specific problems the teacher was experiencing were centered around the relationships between the teacher and his or her students. The behavior of the students provided the supervisors with information on these relationships, and so the students' behavior was a factor in assessing the teacher's performance. Following are some examples of student behavior and results which influenced the administrator's decision.

> *When I first walked into the classroom, I interrupted the flight of two or three paper airplanes. Students were walking in and out of the classroom at will. The teacher really was conversing with probably no more than three or four students out of the entire class, and everybody else was kind of doing their own thing.*

Another supervisor looked at the student progress, as a further indicator of the performance of the teacher:

> *The department head reports that a number of students are not making satisfactory progress in typing class.... The department head tells us these guys should be much further into their work then they are, at this point.*

A superintendent who placed a heavy emphasis on classroom observation indicated that it is important to provide actual descriptions of what is occurring in the teaching-learning process, and this includes a description what students are doing.

> *You might say "In the class observed, three students were talking to each other, they were not paying attention to what you were doing".... You also say that "It would appear that students weren't finding the learning activities meaningful because this and this was happening." Meaningfulness of learning activities is something that we use as a guide that is quite fundamental – whether students were meaningfully involved, whether they were experiencing success, whether there is a positive relationship between teacher and student. You'd have to quantify it to some extent or to give some indicators that it isn't there.*

These examples have illustrated that teacher evaluations generally take into account student behavior and outcomes. The judgments were not solely based on what the teacher was doing, but rather seemed to be based on a number of factors, including indicators of student involvement and success.

Attempts to Remediate

In each instance, after the instructional or organizational concerns were identified and confirmed, the supervisors attempted to provide suggestions and assistance to help the teachers improve their teaching practices. As the following examples illustrate, this was often a time-consuming, frustrating process.

> *So I'd spend some time over the weekend sitting down and outlining what I thought were three definite areas that had to be addressed and addressed immediately. I used some of the Dick Mannet material on supervision – working on the separate performance improvement commitments and went through and identified them very clearly, and stated the expectation that I had very clearly, and outlined the time frames, and the expectations there. I set up a supervision schedule which was to be conducted by the school administration. Then I would come in at the end of the prescribed period and do another evaluation myself.*

Another supervisor also attempted to provide specific suggestions for a teacher who had a long history of poor performance.

> *Throughout the process, although it was summative, it was meant to be formative [as well]. Throughout the process we would bring this teacher in, talk to her, and give suggestions for remediation. They were specific strategies which would remediate the teacher's inability to teach to the level which we classified as being satisfactory.... In fact, what happened was she would accept the strategies, but would never implement them. Or she would implement something one day, and when you went back the next day, she was back to her old ways.*

The administrators often had to be prepared to provide assistance over a long period of time but seldom witnessed on-going improvement. For example, a principal worked

with a teacher for about one and one-half years before deciding the teaching performance was still not adequate.

> *Throughout that first year, it was just obvious to me that I had to bring in some more help, I had to get some more expertise in the subject area.... I worked with him that first year, and I got the assistance of the science consultant to help him with methodology for teaching science, but the problem wasn't knowledge. He tried his best to try different approaches to make it more interesting. It was really his self-confidence that came across in the classroom.*

> *In the second year, after talking with the superintendent, we had to develop a plan of assistance with the individual, to make sure that he had the opportunity to improve. We'd already done that to a certain degree in the first year. We felt he deserved another shot.*

Mixed messages. In many instances, the supervisors were able to identify the areas of concerns and provide specific recommendations and assistance to the teacher. However, there was at least one instance where the teacher received a mixed message about the severity of the problems.

> *Then, a couple of weeks later, the principal was walking by the door and all hell was breaking loose. So another evaluation by the principal, in the first part of March, and things are starting to deteriorate, and a number of recommendations and suggestions such as "continue planning, intervening with students." Basically, there was a lack of consistency in applying the strategies in terms of discipline. So again, more recommendations — "You've got to keep working on it. It's still not satisfactory, but things are coming along."*

> *That's in March — March 14. On March 21, another memo from the vice-principal. "I felt your class was satisfactory, but encourage you to stretch even further."*

The concern about sending mixed messages to the teachers is genuine. In fact, a central office administrator commented that about the importance of ensuring that the teacher receives an honest and straight forward report.

> *We have a supervision manual with guidelines. Last year we spent our entire administration retreat on the topic. We talked about the importance of being honest in reports and went through some samples. We've given them a binder on writing a report, about what to include in it. We've said that they're not doing anybody any favor by not being up-front.*

Generally, the supervisors attempted to remediate the instructional problems by providing specific recommendations, or by asking a resource person to assist the teacher. In some instances, the teacher appeared to improve, and then seemed to go back to

unproductive practices. In others, there appeared to be little or no improvement. This lack of sustained improvement usually forced the administrator to make a decision about the next step in the supervisory process.

The Decision

There did not seem to be a sharply defined decision to either move to termination or force the teacher to resign. Rather, it seemed that there was a series of decisions which moved the supervisor and the teacher along the path towards that end. However, there often seemed to be a point were the process was changed from an emphasis on formative evaluation to an emphasis on summative evaluation. The major factor seemed to be whether there was sustained improvement in the teacher's performance. Following are examples from the interviews of two assistant superintendents:

> *During '87-'88, discipline problems continued and our guys are on his back, "Listen, we can't let this continue. You've got to improve." And his behavior in and around town, as well, seemed to deteriorate. So now, he's bringing disrepute to his profession.*

The second assistant superintendent commented:

> *That decision was made after it was obvious to me that despite the help I was giving, there was no improvement.... But it didn't work. I think I had made the decision in my own mind, after a lot of observation on my part. I just didn't see any improvement. I saw it as a personality issue, not something one could do or work on. There are things people can do, that you can work on, and there's other things that are inherent in a person's make-up and personality that you're not going to change.*

Some supervisors quickly arrived at the conclusion that the only solution was for the teacher to leave the employ of the Board. In the example which follows, a major factor was the unwillingness of the teacher to acknowledge his shortcomings and to make attempts to improve the weaknesses.

> *The point is, while this person [a teacher the superintendent had worked with previously] was devastated with the shock [of facing up to her shortcomings], she also was willing to sit down and work as equals on that kind of project, that's pretty powerful. Frankly, in this situation, I saw none of that. As I say, just a total denial. And then, watching what was going on in the classroom, you can't even imagine how bad it can be when things get bad. I guess I had to make that judgment in a very short time. I just didn't see any possibility of assisting here.... I just didn't see any hope for rescue at that point. That's a pretty heavy judgment to make on another person.*

The health of the teacher was a factor which a number of supervisors considered. An assistant superintendent wanted to know what impact health problems were having on the teacher's performance:

> *We wanted a second opinion. We wanted to make sure that he was medically fit. And, if he was medically fit, then he would be able to conduct his work in the classroom to a satisfactory level. If he is on the top of his game, and discipline problems continue, then we are going to have to go after termination of this guy, because we can't let this continue....*
>
> *So we're constantly living with this thing of whether to press for improvement in performance, or whether we press for termination or wait for him to get sick again so he can go on L.T.D.*

The effect of intense supervision on a teacher who was not well was a concern to a new superintendent who was involved in the evaluation of a person who was the subject of numerous complaints:

> *But I really did come to think that there was something physiologically, neurologically, emotionally really the matter here. So there's another issue here. Do you keep the pressure on when you think this guy is mentally unwell?*

In some instances, the supervisors felt the teacher was capable meeting the expectations, but chose not to. A superintendent indicated that the decision to terminate occurred when he realized the principal refused to complete tasks he was capable of doing:

> *I think probably if there was a point, it was where, after we had set down some very specific things -- the month end forms -- a three page form.... It's an important document, but not a particularly onerous document. We'd gone through that. I'd shown him some examples of ones that I thought were well done. He'd agreed that he understood the need for that, and that he could have that done.... We'd gone through a process where we got one in. It was a model, a good month end return. It did all the things, it was timely, it was on time, it was well done. So this demonstrated to me that he was quite capable of doing it very well, and doing it in a timely fashion. That lasted for one month. The second month, two letters, fifteen days after the fact,... only when there was an ultimatum that this thing will be in did I get the report. Why, at that point, I guess I thought that I was spinning my wheels.... It indicated to me that he wasn't likely willing to do the things to make this thing work. And at that point, it was a matter of trying to find a way for him, hopefully, to leave with dignity.*

In another instance, the teacher allowed aspects of her personal life take priority over her commitment to provide satisfactory teaching performance:

One of the first problems that came to light was the principal found she was teaching and nursing a child at the same time. She would go home between classes and nurse and come back. That was covered up to us until we actually found out that she was actually spending a fair bit of time at home versus being at school. That was causing a lot of problems in the community.

One assistant superintendent used the results of formal evaluations and the obvious lack of improvement as the basis of the decision to move to termination.

But we were still getting concerns coming down. In tabout November of 1988, the curriculum department worked with her. It was right after the intensive assistance that we ended up going in and evaluating her again. And at that time we pulled in someone from central office to do an evaluation, along with the principal.... The person I sent in was the supervisor that I had in the department. She had been a principal in our system, had done evaluations before, and was looked on as being a fairly neutral person.

She [and the principal] went in and did an evaluation. Both evaluators were saying that performance was not of an acceptable standard to this district, and to move to termination.

The decision to move to termination was also affected by whether supervisors felt they had developed a strong enough case to win at a Board of Reference. The fear of losing the legal battle was prevalent in the minds of a number of supervisors:

I talked to a lawyer and found out, as there was no documentation of any sort, it would probably take me a minimum of a year, possibly two years to get any kind of documentation in place that we could go to a Board of Reference with. As the lawyer said to me, "I just don't want to go to any Boards that I can't win at, so it has to be that good, or that long."

An assistant superintendent was influenced by concerns that he would lose a legal battle, if he recommended termination of the teacher's contract:

So during that period of time, there were various incidents of discipline problems and these were identified, and documented. But again, nothing severe so it's going to be uphill to win at a Board of Reference.

A principal wanted his supervisory practices to be impeccable, as he was concerned about the possibility of facing a Board of Reference:

Because of the delicateness of the situation, the AP and I decided that, if in fact there were to be any repercussions, that we would not converse with each other about the findings until we were going to write up the final report.... So we did [these visits] 16 times. We then went to the associate or area superintendent and asked for some time, because we knew at that time we were dealing with a very delicate matter that could end up at a Board of Reference. We didn't want to make any mistakes.

The principal later said:

> *You don't fabricate anything, but you are trying to make this into a situation that it will stand, if you, as a principal, are called to a Board of Reference.*

Another superintendent realized there was inadequate documentation, and so arranged a financial settlement:

> *It turned out that we did pay a year's salary to have the teacher quit. But we didn't feel that we wanted to go through the whole hassle of verifying whether there was incompetence, because we knew we were weak.*

Some supervisors were concerned about the effect the documentation process had on the teacher. There was concern the intense pressure would be injurious to the teacher:

> *Basically, I think the way you prepare for a Board of Reference... you virtually have to destroy the teacher before you can ensure that your case will be satisfactory.*

In some cases, the supervisor provided the teacher with sufficient information and the teacher reached the decision to resign at about the same time the supervisor concluded that a resignation or termination was the only solution:

> *Here was the case where someone put a lot of hours into a job and he wasn't getting the results. He was saying "It's not worth it to me to go through this." And we were convinced, in this case, that we would have to terminate.... [However,] she said "I'd like to take a year and I don't know if I want to go back. If I ask for a leave of absence for now, would you give it to me?" I said "Yes, we would." In the second year she decided that she wouldn't come back.*

This approach was favored by some supervisors who believed that teachers wanted to do the best job possible, and that their responsibility in the supervisory process was to provide teachers with accurate and honest information on their performance, and to then allow the teacher to make the appropriate decision.

Trying to wear two hats. A number of supervisors commented that it was difficult for one person to conduct both summative and formative evaluations. A supervisor, when asked if he thought he, as a principal, could play both roles, replied:

> *I tried. I honestly tried. But , my experience tells me that at some point you must be one or the other. And someone has to be the evaluator. I think the principal has to play that role of evaluator. You try to assist, and then, if that isn't working, then I think someone else has to take over the role of "assistor", and the principal becomes the evaluator.... I don't think you can do the dual role. Not in a problem case.*

> *I can play a dual role in a growth situation. I don't have any difficulty there. You are basically dealing with the positive and suggestions on how to do even better. But in a problem case, no. My experience is that with a problem teacher, you've got to sit down and say these are the people who are going to help you, and these are the people who are going to be evaluating you. This is what [the evaluation] is going to be based on. This is what has to improve. This is what we are going to evaluate. So that it is very, very clear. It's tough to mix the two.*

Although this supervisor was the one who stated his concerns about the dual roles in evaluation most clearly, it was a theme woven through a number of the transcripts. In fact, many supervisors appeared to make a decision to conduct the summative evaluation and to leave the formative evaluation to others.

The Stages of the Supervisory Process

The supervisory process tended to move through a series of overlapping and interrelated stages. These stages included:

- Identification of the teacher whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory.
- Conformation of the concerns.
- Identification of specific problems.
- Attempts to remediate.
- The decision making process.

The supervisory process tended to follow a similar pattern in each of the cases. However, the process was not linear, as in many cases, the teaching performance would improve, and then regress, causing the process to begin again, but at one of the earlier stages. Furthermore, the teachers being supervised often caused some disturbance in the course of events.

DISRUPTIVE ACTIONS BY THE TEACHER

One of the themes which appeared repeatedly throughout the transcripts was that the supervisory practice never went as smoothly as the supervisor had expected. The teacher always seemed to engage in some type of action to disrupt the evaluation process. Some examples of these include:

- going on sick leave, or a leave of absence;

- appealing for the sympathy and support from the staff against the actions of the supervisor;
- documenting any perceived short-coming of the administrator, or of occasions in which the teacher perceived the administrator treated him or her differently than other teachers;
- threatening legal action against the supervisor;
- refusing to sign evaluation reports;
- engaging in stalling tactics, such as postponing meetings;
- backing out of agreements which had been reached;
- taking a very combative stance with the supervisor; or
- playing the role of the victim in order to manipulate the supervisor.

In many cases, the teacher used more than one of these tactics to disrupt the supervisory process. At times, it appeared that the teacher was consciously trying to disrupt the evaluation cycle, while at other times, the action appeared to result from the stress the teacher was experiencing. Regardless of the cause, one outcome was that the process frequently dragged on for a long time.

Following are some examples of the disruptive actions reported by the supervisors. The principal who was evaluating the performance of a teacher with a long history of poor performance cited a number of actions taken by the teacher:

> *But she continued to keep the evaluation document, and not sign it nor return it to me. This type of situation lasted until spring break, and I told her that when she got back, I wanted the document signed, with her comments, so that I could complete my evaluation. It was right after Easter Monday, so on the Tuesday I talked to her and she said she had not had time to do it because her mother was ill.*
>
> *I said "Okay, I understand the situation. I'm giving you until Wednesday afternoon to finish your part of the process". On Wednesday she came to me and said that she was very ill, that she had to leave, she would have to postpone the meeting. Again, because of sickness, the process goes into limbo. Nothing can occur.... She went back to her psychiatrist and obtained a long term medical leave, again. She had taught only as long as it would take her to receive her medical leave again.*

Another principal found that the teacher knew a variety of ways to disrupt the supervisory process. This teacher had a record of poor performance in the jurisdiction in which he had worked previously, and apparently left just prior to formal dismissal. Following are a number of excerpts from the conversation with the principal.

> *Whenever things got tough at school, it seemed that he had a migraine headache.... At these times, he became very, very irrational. He would come into the school when he was supposed to be off sick, and he would go up and down the hallways, yelling, hollering, screaming threats at people, and what not....*
>
> *I had requested a Professional Relations Committee come out. They had done so.... I don't know, of course, what findings they presented to this other gentleman. But at the end of the time that they presented the finding to the staff, he had a complete blow-out, he took [the PRC chairman] out into the hall, and swore, yelled, and raved at him for a good 3/4 of an hour -- telling him that they were in cahoots with the staff in trying to get rid of him and what not....*
>
> *Whenever there was an argument or a flare-up or anything that went on in the school at all, this fellow would take copious notes.... You see, during that Board of Reference, other teachers were called also. And they found their past coming up to them in minute-by-minute intervals -- "On February 22, at 9:04, I heard you yelling at this student. Did the principal back you on this disciplinary matter? On another date at 3:14 in the afternoon, this student was in the hallway in front of your room and I heard him say, 'Fuck that teacher.' Why didn't you do anything about it?" We found out that he had been documenting, documenting, documenting all along. Good Lord. The staff was really wounded over that.*

These two stories illustrate the most drastic actions taken by the teacher during the supervisory process. However, there were less provocative instances in each of the cases. For example, an assistant superintendent encouraged a principal to resign his designation -- which he did. However, the principal later changed his mind, and wanted his appointment back.

> *After the fact, he really changed his colors. I guess this was because of other people impacting upon his decision. I think he felt comfortable with his decision until he shared it with others, and then these people convinced him that he shouldn't have stepped down so readily. I think they felt that, because he had made the decision he did, it had implications for them in their own positions elsewhere in the school system. I did feel that there was some manipulation going on, because he came back and said that I had hoodwinked him into making this decision.*

One superintendent felt that the principal she was working with attempted to manipulate her psychologically by adopting the role of a victim who needed to be rescued by the supervisor. However, on other occasions, this principal also chose to castigate the

supervisor publicly. When asked if reacting as a victim became a common pattern, the superintendent responded:

> *It was, except for the few times when he just erupted in anger. And one of these was in an administrators' meeting, where we were talking about some of the school activities. I said "We will do such and such." And he just erupted and what he said then was "You just keep adding all these things onto me. etc. etc." So I guess you would say he moved from the victim role to an accusatory role. It's my fault. "How could you possibly do this to me? How could you keep laying all these extra duties on me?"*

A number of the supervisors commented that the teacher attempted to obtain sympathy and support from other staff members. A principal commented:

> *She was very amicable to the staff. She was a very shrewd woman, and was able to get two letters stating that she was a good teacher, from other teachers on staff. At no time did those teachers ever make a classroom visit, yet she was able to obtain these two letters as character references for her.*

As these comments illustrate, in almost every case history there was one or more examples of where the teacher engaged in some form of action to disrupt the supervisory process. In most cases, the teacher spent some time on sick leave, and this often included long term disability. Other actions seemed to vary with the personality of the teacher. Some would become very confrontational, while others would seek out support and attempt to create a rift between the supervisor and the staff. In each case history, the process had some unexpected occurrence which disrupted and delayed the outcome. These disturbances seemed to make the evaluation even more stressful for the administrators.

EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON THE SUPERVISORS

The administrators were asked to comment on the emotional impact the supervisory process had on them. Most indicated there was a significant emotional cost. In fact, during the interviews, some became quite agitated during the recounting of their story.

Emotional Responses

The emotions expressed included frustration, remorse and concern for the teacher, anxiety, self-doubt, and finally, relief. Following are some examples of the various responses of supervisors.

When a principal was asked what sort of emotional experiences he went through during this period, he replied:

> *Stress, anxiety, frustration. Frustration from the perspective that I couldn't get rid of her — I knew she was bad for the kids. I couldn't get rid of her and I had to go through this process that has a lot of loop holes. Initially, before the principal goes through the process of evaluation, it seems very straightforward. But once you get into it and have a teacher at risk who takes you to task, there are a lot of loop holes. So you end up trying to plug the loop holes.... I was frustrated with the process, knowing full well that to terminate a teacher is at least a year and a half in length, probably closer to two....*
>
> *You know, you're trying to be a professional and trying to facilitate her growth, and yet the response is a paranoid one, a questioning one, a mistrusting one. Those sorts of things. You find that sort of thing very frustrating. It creates a lot of anxiety. It's emotionally draining to the point that you go home and you don't have much left for your family.*
>
> *Fatiguing would be a very good word, too, because I found myself in a situation where I was becoming preoccupied with the evaluation of one teacher, and because of the time it took, it ended up being a situation where it took away from my ability to be an instructional leader in the school.*

A superintendent recalled the emotional impact the experiences had on him. He had been a principal at the time.

> *It was probably the most stressful time in my life. The only thing that got me through was the support the staff and my family gave me. During that time, leading up to the Board of Reference and during the Board of Reference, I lost 15 pounds. At that time, I couldn't afford it. I could afford to lose 15 pounds now, although I wouldn't want to lose it that way. It was just too stressful. I didn't have a chance to look after any professional or personal growth. The whole of my time was spent figuring how to keep a lid on things, to keep things from blowing up.*

A superintendent, who had been appointed less than a year before he recommended the removal of designation of a principal, felt that the short time he had been in the position was a factor in the amount of stress he experienced:

> *One of the things that is most difficult is I could have done that job much better, more easily in a jurisdiction where I'd been for five years, where you've built some trust, some credibility, a track record, where people say "Well look, this guy has behaved himself, he's done things that were good for kids, he's supported staff, he's supported people, he's got a good record. We don't really understand why he's doing this, but there's five years of good stuff, so I guess maybe we'll give him the benefit of the doubt on this one." I didn't have anything in the cup... there was no reserve there. So "this is the hatchet man who has come in to build his reputation on the backs of our poor people" is the perception. And that creates a lot of conflict, both personally and organizationally.*

Second-guessing the decision. This superintendent later indicated that other members of the central office team were only peripherally involved in the series of events which led to the decision to recommend the termination of the principal's designation. Because of this, he did not have another person to deliberate over the findings of the various investigations, or to discuss various alternatives at key decision points. He felt he was under a great deal of stress.

> *I think back to some of the literature on stress that I've being looking at recently, and level and duration are particularly important. And I'd lived with that issue literally 7 days a week for 16 months. And it is very, very wearing, and very, very telling — to the point where it affects your personal life, your family life. You second and third guess your decisions. You replay the scenarios. You think "Is there a better way? Is this testimony to my incompetence, rather than somebody else's." You think, "Am I at fault?" You spend a lot of time wondering if you are the person who screwed up. And that maybe if you had handled it better, maybe if you had said something different. So you go back and you relive the thing innumerable times trying to find a kinder, fairer, more appropriate, more ethical way of dealing with it. And inevitably, I guess, because in the course of anything as difficult as complicated as that, you make mistakes. And I guess, like most people, we're our own harshest critics, so those mistakes tend to be magnified in your memory. The word, the comment, the missed opportunity. And you go back "What if I had ..." and you can add in innumerable things....*
>
> *There was a great personal cost to everybody. I guess the adversarial nature of it is one of the most unfortunate things. Because while it certainly hurt me a great deal, it hurt the principal, it hurt his family, it hurt a lot of people, and there has got to be a better way to do this.*

Concern about the legal process. An assistant superintendent felt the legal process was destructive to the teacher, and so he felt a strong sense of guilt at exposing the teacher to the anguish:

> *When we got down to the point of whether we would terminate her contract, it was more like picking on a defenseless kid. That's the way it feels. Because at that point in time you have stacks of back-up data saying here's what was said by parents, here's what was said by kids, here's what you did in this situation, you admitted you did this in this situation. All of this stuff is sitting there, and you know you are going to have to say rotten things about this person — deservedly so, in my opinion, but still you feel bad about it.*

A sense of relief. An assistant superintendent who tried to assist a teacher whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory for nearly four years before the decision was made to pressure the teacher to resign felt remorse and relief.

Certainly a lot of remorse for the person... some empathy for him. That was tough for me personally. But not on a long term basis. I think it was kind of over balanced by almost a sense of relief that we were going to be able to get someone into the school now that's going to be able to handle the job.

Concern for the teacher. Another superintendent had to confront a principal whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory. She was concerned about the impact the confrontation would have on the principal:

There were emotional concerns about going into this with another person anyway, because I knew this was going to hit him like a ton of bricks. His reaction, for me personally , made it worse.... When I confronted him with it he just sort of got into "Well, I don't understand budgeting and no one has ever helped me with this before," and "Could your give me a hand on how to budget?" And took a tack that made it even harder for me.... I suppose through a lot of this, there were attempts on his part to manipulate me emotionally.

Differences in expectations. An assistant superintendent felt that the difference in expectations between those of the board and the fundamental beliefs of the supervisor increased the emotional costs. Following are some statements which this person made near the middle and at the end of the interview:

Well, the superintendency is a lonely job. One of the best ways you can overcome that.... so that it doesn't happen, so you don't feel closed in, is really some type of network. And the networking can be on the telephone. People you feel comfortable talking with about what you are going through. What we all tend to do, if you don't have someone to talk to, we sort of close in, resolve it, and don't sort things through clearly in your own mind. You don't talk openly about it and that's where the 'thick skin' comes in. You really don't want to open yourself up.

I think the people that become assistant superintendents and superintendents, by their very nature, one of their strengths is human relations. That's why they get their job. And because it becomes a very lonely job, they lose some of their skills. I think that's probably true. I think of myself. I find that there are things that I don't talk to anyone about anymore, which really bothers me. I'm one of those people who like to bounce things off others, to fill out my own thoughts, and this has always helped me. But there are things you don't talk to anyone about in this job. And so you don't become as open. You become harder.

Later he speculated that outside expectations increase the sense of dissonance that some superintendents feel:

This is just a perception on my part – that many of the boards in this province would have that expectation of the superintendent to be – they want their superintendent to be a "hard-nosed bastard", to be strong, to be hard-nosed, to get rid of a few of these teachers, to kick ass. And some superintendents would do that to establish their credibility.

Relationship to the Person Being Supervised

A number of central office supervisors felt that the more closely the supervisor was involved with the teacher, or principal, the greater the stress. Generally principals, and central office supervisors who acted alone, tended to find the experience much more emotionally draining than did those who were able to guide the process from a position where there was little daily contact with the teacher. The central office supervisors who recognized this tried to provide support for the front line administrator. Following are a number of examples related to this theme:

> *In looking back on it, it was very emotional. I can remember talking to the principal, on numerous occasions, late at night, when she was writing letters and documenting.... And helping the principal work on that, and dealing very much with the emotional strain that she was feeling from staff, the emotional strain that she was placing on herself "I feel like what I'm doing is 'mean'. I don't want to be mean, but what's happening with the kids is wrong and something has to happen...."*

> *The principal who was in that situation, who was doing the documentation, was also feeling bad about it, because she has staff members around her who are saying , "But Alana is such a nice person" and [meanwhile, she] is working all of these people saying, "You know what she is doing to me. You know how bad [the principal is treating me]".... So that pressure is coming onto the principal. The principal is saying, "I feel bad, I feel like I'm being the bad person in this case."*

In a similar vein, a superintendent commented on the need for the principal to talk with him about the decision they had jointly made regarding the termination of a teacher from his school:

> *That was very hard on the principal. But the principal agreed that was what needed to happen, but it still wasn't easy. It wasn't easy on us, but it was more difficult, especially from [the time the teacher was aware that her contract had been terminated], close to the beginning of May. For that principal to be working with a teacher, and the teacher going through all the different reactions that you go through, was tough. There were certainly times when the principal would stop in here at the end of the day and re-think it all, and say "Yes I know this is the right thing we are doing".*

The Emotional Costs Experienced by Supervisors

Most supervisors experienced very heavy emotional costs throughout the period of time they worked with teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory. They indicated:

- They experienced frustration, remorse and concern for the teacher, fatigue, anxiety, self-doubt, and finally relief.
- The strength of the emotional response was greater for supervisors who worked closely with the person. Thus, principals and superintendents of small jurisdictions tended to feel more stress than did central office supervisors whose role involved less direct contact.
- A part of the stress seemed to result from the expectations and comments of persons who were not directly involved in the supervisory process. The people included other teachers on staff and some board members.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS — THE SUPERVISORS' PERSPECTIVE

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews with administrators. The themes were related to the nature of the supervisory process, the actions taken by the teachers to disrupt the supervisory process and the emotional costs to the supervisor.

The supervisory process. The sub-themes related to the nature of the supervisory process included:

- Most supervisors identified the poor performance through parental complaints, and informal monitoring, rather than through formal classroom supervision.
- Summative evaluations were conducted to confirm or deny the opinions formed through the informal process. The supervisors recognized a need to have a broad perspective of what constitutes acceptable performance and so often went through an acclimatization process which consisted of observations of other teachers at similar grade levels or subject areas. They often judged the performance of the teacher by both the teacher's actions and behaviors and by the conduct and performance of the students.
- While conducting classroom observations, the supervisors attempted to identify the specific problems which were contributors to the teacher's unsatisfactory performance.

- Once specific problems had been identified, normally attempts were made to rectify the concerns. A number of supervisors recognized they were not able to provide assistance, and so made arrangements for resource people to work with the teacher.
- The supervisors tended to try to force a resignation or move to termination when they became convinced that there was very little hope that the teacher's performance would improve, and when they felt they had developed sufficient documentation that they could win at a Board of Reference hearing.

Disruptive actions. The second theme was related to the actions taken by the teachers which disrupted the supervisory process. In some of the cases, the supervisors felt the responses were calculated by the teacher to delay the process, while in other cases, they were legitimate. The actions included:

- Taking extended sick leave or long term disability leave.
- Appealing for sympathy of the staff, including playing the role of the "victim" who was being harassed by the supervisor.
- Threatening or taking legal action against the supervisor or the Board.
- Refusing to sign evaluation reports.
- Engaging in stalling tactics such as postponing meetings.
- Backing out of an agreement which had been reached.

Emotional costs. The supervisors all indicated that they experienced considerable emotional costs during the supervisory process. Part of the emotional cost seemed to be related to the length of time which lapsed between the time the teacher was identified as providing unsatisfactory performance and time the teacher resigned or was dismissed, as in some cases this extended for more than two years. Those feelings included:

- Frustration at the time and energy required to work through the supervisory process. This was heightened by the seemingly inevitable delays caused by teacher absences due to illness, and by the adverse impact of the teacher on students.
- Remorse and concern for the teacher.

- Self doubt over the adequacy of the supervisor's decisions.
- Fatigue. Many supervisors commented that the process left them exhausted.
- Anxiety caused by the uncertain response of the teacher to the suggestions or recommendations made by the supervisor.
- Relief that the decisions had been made and the process was over.

The supervisors acknowledged that the supervisory process was a very difficult one for both the teacher and the administrator. Perhaps this is part of the reason why so few forced resignations occur.

DISCUSSION

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE SUPERVISORS' PERSPECTIVE

The discussion related to the supervisor's perspective has been organized around the same three headings used to present the findings: (a) the supervisory process, (b) the disruptive actions of teachers, and (c) the emotional impact on the supervisors. The three themes are interrelated, as the summative evaluation seems to entice some form of disruptive actions by the teachers, and these tactics, in turn, seemed to affect emotional costs experienced by the supervisors.

THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

In almost every case, the supervisors indicated that they began the formal supervision of the teacher or principal whose performance was deemed to be unsatisfactory following the receipt of complaints about the teacher's performance. This means of identifying teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory differs from that found by the survey reported in chapter four. The superintendents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that "Supervisory ratings through teacher evaluations" were the most common means of identifying these teachers, while the cases indicate that teacher evaluations were used to confirm or deny concerns raised through the parental or trustee complaints.

In most cases, it seemed that the supervisor was aware of concerns, but did not take decisive action until complaints were received. Once the complaints were received, formal evaluations were conducted to determine the validity of the complaints. This approach was consistent with the finding of the Teacher evaluation policy impact study (TEPI Study) which found that the "administrators felt that they had sufficient sources of information to identify teachers who were weak and needed direct support" (Alberta Education, in press, p. 308), that "administrators identified weak teachers through informal channels rather than through formal evaluations" (p. 310), and that a major purpose of teacher evaluations was to "gather the appropriate information necessary to document teacher performance in case of challenges from parents or of litigation" (p. 303).

Bridges (1992) also reported that parental complaints play an important role in stimulating the administrator to confront the teacher who is providing unsatisfactory performance. He stated that where "parents choose to voice their complaints, the administrator is apt to take these complaints seriously. How seriously depends upon the manner in which they are voiced, the officials to whom the complaints are expressed, and the characteristics of the complaints..." (p. 37).

Observation of student behavior and student performance during the formal evaluation process occurred consistently, and was a major factor considered by the administrators in arriving at a conclusion about the quality of the teacher's performance. In other words, the supervisors observed both the teacher performance and the students' reactions to the teacher, and used this information to formulate judgments about the teacher. The TEPI Study (Alberta Education, in press) reported similar findings, as "approximately 63% of respondents thought that student behavior, and all-round student development were used from a moderate to a great extent in assessing teacher performance" (p. 301).

A number of supervisors commented that they felt it was very difficult to perform both a formative and a summative role while evaluating teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory. Most of these supervisors made arrangements for someone else to perform the helping role, while they concentrated on the summative role. Again, this finding was consistent with what was found in the TEPI Study.

Attempts by some supervisors to play the two roles of 'helper' and 'judge' created a greater possibility of role ambiguity, which may have heightened the level of stress they experienced. Sarros (1986), following a review of the literature, suggested that people feel threatened when their role and the situational characteristics create demands they feel they are unable to satisfy. Furthermore, he felt that supervisors may experience role ambiguity when there is lack of clarity in the job description or when the supervisor holds different expectations of the role than do colleagues. The conflicting demands inherent in providing help and support while judging teacher competency make it very difficult to fulfill these two roles simultaneously.

In some cases, the school or the jurisdiction was large enough that a team of administrators was involved and so different people were able to assume different roles. However, as principals, and superintendents in smaller jurisdictions were often expected to perform both roles, the level of stress appeared to be greater for these supervisors. It should be noted that more experienced administrators seemed to create role clarity by adopting the position that their responsibility was to conduct the summative evaluation. In most cases, these administrators remained supportive and caring, yet ensured that there was a clear understanding of their role.

At least one administrator concluded that her responsibilities demanded that she accept the need to provide adequate documentation to verify the judgments she had formulated. Therefore, she adopted the following stance with a principal whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory:

> ***One of the things I mandated was that he take a more equitable share of the classroom load, knowing that he would probably do a pretty awful job. And so***

> *this is the other part of the ethical dilemma, knowing that I subjected students — well I put students into a situation that probably wasn't going to work out very well. And part of that, in fact, when you come down to performance evaluation and it comes to things like the Board of Reference, it is a whole lot easier to get somebody on the teaching role than in the administrative role.*

By clarifying her role as that of the summative evaluator, this superintendent was able to develop a strategy to fulfill her responsibilities to students and board.

Thus, it seems that the role ambiguity experienced by some supervisors with respect to their perceived responsibilities for formative and summative evaluation lead to increased amounts of stress. Other supervisors seemed to be able to reduce this conflict by assuming only summative responsibilities.

DISRUPTIVE ACTIONS BY THE TEACHER

In each of the cases, the supervisor described one or more actions taken by the teacher which served to disrupt or delay the supervisory process. Some supervisors seemed to anticipate these actions and accept them as a part of the process. These administrators then took steps to ensure that the disruptions had as little effect on the students as possible. For example, one supervisor delayed the teacher's return from long term disability until the beginning of the new term to ensure that the students would maintain continuity in their programs. Another supervisor met with the principal and discussed the various possible consequences of intensive supervision, including such possibilities as the teacher committing suicide, and to formulate possible responses to those actions. However, frequently one of the outcomes of the disruptive action was increased stress on the administrators, regardless of whether the administrator had anticipated the actions.

The most common response of teachers was to take sick leave. In many cases, the supervisor felt this was justified and, in some instances, actually encouraged the teacher to take the leave. However, the sick leave also tended to increase concerns about disruptions to students. It also raised the issues of whether the teacher would be well enough to teach to a satisfactory standard and, in those cases where the teacher did not teach to an acceptable standard, of whether the problems were related to medical

problems, or to other factors. Thus, the level of stress frequently increased when the teacher came back. It was often necessary, for both contractual and supervisory reasons, to put the teacher back into the situation which had contributed to the teacher's illness. In addition, the completion of the supervisory process often required that the teacher be placed in a position where he or she was compelled to demonstrate competence. This often raised ethical concerns about the need to protect the welfare of the students and of returning a teacher to a position in which he or she is likely to fail.

The supervisors who seemed to be the most effective at reducing the impact on students and who successfully resolved the issues of competency were those who anticipated tactics the teacher might employ, and who responded to those tactics with assertive actions of their own. For example, one supervisor demanded a second medical opinion before the teacher was allowed to return from long term disability. He felt this removed any questions about the teacher's health, and so he felt comfortable in directing the teacher to meet standards of minimum competency. The supervisor clearly stated to the teacher that failure to do so would result in dismissal. Those who seemed to handle the disruptive actions of teachers most effectively anticipated that some response would occur, planned for various responses, and replied with assertive actions of their own.

EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON THE SUPERVISORS

It is not surprising that the administrators often found the supervisory process emotionally draining. The series of events occur over an extended period of time and often involve highly charged meetings. In these cases, the supervisory process lasted from eight months to four years. In addition, in many of the cases, there were examples of interpersonal conflict, ethical conflict, and of intense, highly emotional confrontations between the supervisor and the teacher. A number of supervisors were torn between concern for the teacher, and concern for the educational well-being of the students, and many experienced frustration with the process, the legal requirements and the lack of effort by the teacher to improve. Some experienced doubts about their own abilities and

most felt concern over the impact of the evaluation on the students and on other teachers. These factors combined to elevate the level of stress the supervisors were experiencing.

In a study of occupational stress of educational personnel in Edmonton Public School District, Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) found that principals rated working with staff competency problems as their most stressful activity. They also found

> The more stressful situations were not necessarily those occurring frequently....For example, the item "dealing with a teacher whose attitudes or behaviors are considered unprofessional" ranked first among the ninety-three potential stress sources for intensity but seventy-sixth for frequency of occurrence. (p. 161)

Perhaps the most telling finding of this study was that principals rated "recommending the dismissal of a tenured teacher" as a relatively stressful situation — 37th on a list of 93 items, even though they indicated that it never or rarely happened and ranked it last in terms of frequency. In other words, there is a strong perception that the events which surround the dismissal of a tenured teacher are stressful, and this perception tended to be borne out by the experiences of the administrators who described the events related to the forced resignation or termination of a teacher.

The results were similar to those found by Jankovic (1983) who also studied a sample of school principals from the Edmonton Public School District. He found the principals rated work situations related to interacting with personnel whose performance was unsatisfactory as the most stressful of the three groups of situations ranked. The Jankovic study also found the frequency of such situations rated much lower than that of the other two groups. In addition, he interviewed 35 principals and 14 "spontaneously identified as very stressful the process of recommending the termination of the employment or transfer of a teacher who they perceive as either unsuitable, ineffectual, or incompetent" (p. 140). He summarized his findings as follows:

> Even though principals rarely have to recommend the termination of employment or transfer of a teacher it is clear that this source of stress is foremost in the minds of a significant proportion of the principals interviewed. The very stressful aspects of the process of recommending the termination of employment or transfer of a teacher occur when (1) the teacher refuses to accept that something is wrong with his/her teaching, (2) the teacher considers the principal a personal enemy, and (3)

> the teacher solicits support against the principal from such individuals and groups as teachers, parents, students, the Alberta Teachers' Association, Alberta Education, and trustees of the School Board. Several principals explained that even though it is very stressful going through the process of recommending the termination of employment of a teacher it would be more stressful in the long term tolerating the continued employment of that teacher. (pp. 146, 147)

The findings related to the supervisory process suggested that administrators may experience role ambiguity and role conflict due to policy requirements that teacher evaluation have both a summative and a formative component. An undesirable outcome of this requirement, then, may be to increase the level of stress experienced by the supervisor in an already demanding and stressful situation. As indicated earlier, it seemed that the supervisors who were best able to handle the stress resulting from the ambiguity were those who were able to clearly delineate their roles. However, it seemed the separation of responsibilities was easier for central office administrators than for principals, and easier for central office administrators in larger jurisdictions than for those who worked in smaller jurisdictions and in relative isolation.

Concern about the legal process, and of building a case which would win at a Board of Reference raised the anxiety of some administrators. Many expressed the belief that they must develop an airtight case which not only demonstrated that the teacher had failed to meet minimum competency requirements, but also that the supervisory process strictly followed the procedures laid out in school board policy. This belief often extended the length of the process, and inhibited some administrators from making a strong response to the delaying tactics employed by the teacher.

Furthermore, the findings related to the disruptive actions of the teacher suggest that these responses also elevated the tensions between the supervisor and the teacher or principal. Certainly, the effect of documenting virtually all actions of the staff following any perceived irregularity would tend to increase tensions, as would threatening a lawsuit against the principal because the principal challenged the acceptability of the level of the teacher's performance. In a similar way, the relationship between the teacher and the principal would be affected by actions designed to gain support from staff by criticizing

the manner in which the principal was conducting the evaluation. These experiences often raised the level of stress experienced by the supervisor.

The findings indicate that the emotional stress experienced by these supervisors was high. In chapter four, it was reported that superintendents indicated that 217 teachers of the total of 19,600 teachers employed by the boards were providing service that was perceived to be unsatisfactory. The number of such teachers identified represents about 1.1% of the teaching force. Perhaps the emotional costs associated with the forced resignation of teachers is a part of the reason why so few supervisors are willing to engage in the summative evaluation of teachers whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory. In order to help alleviate these high emotional costs, processes should be put in place to help deal with the stress. Some approaches will be considered in the last chapter.

The Quality of Decision Making

One finding which emerged from the interviews was that in each case history, the decision to conduct an evaluation of the teacher in question occurred after formal complaints were received. However, it seems likely that in smaller school jurisdictions such as those represented in this study, the supervisor would be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of various staff members through the informal monitoring process. This would suggest that the teachers were not identified on the basis of complaints; rather, the supervisor was prompted to take action as a result of the complaints. It may be worthwhile speculating why supervisors would be hesitant to take action until the complaints come forward.

One consideration is that the administrators tend to believe that the supervisory process will be long, stressful, and often unsuccessful. This suggests that an administrator may ignore the informal information gained through the monitoring in order to avoid engaging in the summative evaluation of the teacher.

The decision making model developed by Janis and Mann (1977) offers additional insight. They claimed that the level of stress affects the nature and quality of decision making. A low level of stress often results in "unconflicted inertia", where the person ignores the information and continues in his or her normal mode of operation; moderate stress which results in a state of vigilance where the decision maker searches out various options and reflects upon each of these before making a decision. A high levels of stress may result in "hypervigilance" (p. 52), a situation in which the person panics and searches frantically for the solution, vacillates between alternatives, and finally selects the alternative which appears to best meet his or her needs.

Before applying this theory, it is necessary to recall one of the findings noted in chapter four. While reviewing the files of teachers who contacted the A.T.A. for assistance, it was noted that in six of the 39 cases reviewed, the superintendent lost his job within a year of when the summative evaluation of the teacher was initiated. This raises a question of whether there was a causal link between the superintendent's decision to move to terminate the teacher's contract and the superintendent's subsequent dismissal from his job.

It was indicated previously that the review of the files raised questions about the manner in which some superintendents conducted the teacher's evaluation. It appeared that in each of the six cases, there was poor documentation, and that the supervisory process had been rushed. There was also reason to believe that each superintendent was under considerable pressure from his board prior to beginning the supervision.

The Janis-Mann model would suggest a possible, partial explanation to these questions. Consider the case where, through informal monitoring, the supervisor becomes aware of unsatisfactory performance by a teacher. However, because, no one has complained about the teacher's performance, there is no pressure on the supervisor to act. In other words, the lack of stress results in a decision characterized by unconflicted

inertia. It is easier and there is less personal threat to do nothing rather than venture into a process which is widely believed to stressful and frustrating.

When complaints do come in from parents, students, or board members, the level of stress increases. Moderate stress results in a state of vigilance — demonstrated by the formal evaluation of the teacher. This course of action allows the supervisor to confirm or deny the complaints which have been laid against the teacher, to develop alternative courses of action, evaluate the various alternatives, and finally to implement those which seem most appropriate.

If the pressure from the board or parents becomes too great, or if the supervisor is under considerable stress due to the performance of other aspects of his job, the decision making process is characterized by hypervigilance, or near panic as the supervisor searches for a solution which will relieve the stress. This solution will often not be a good one — in this scenario, it is to proceed with the termination of the teacher's contract without adequate documentation. The failure of this initiative compounds the supervisor's problems. The end result is the supervisor, not the teacher ends up losing his job.

Thus, the Janis-Mann model of decision making may offer a partial interpretation of some of the events revealed in this study. The stress experienced by the supervisors tended to increase their anxiety and frustration. This, in turn, seemed to affect the quality of the decision making process. In most cases, the superintendents interviewed appeared to handle the increased stress well, and so the stress may have actually improved the quality of the decision making. However, in some instances, such as those found in the A.T.A. files, the supervisor may have become hypervigilant, with the result that decisions of poor quality were made.

A variety of factors seemed to affect the emotional impact on the administrator. These included ethical conflicts arising form concern for the teacher and concern for the educational welfare of the students, the interpersonal conflict between the teacher and the

supervisor, concern about how the supervisory process was affecting the rest of the staff and frustration with the legal process.

The series of events which lead up to the forced resignation or dismissal of a teacher generally occurred over a long period, and provided considerable conflict and tension. It is not surprising that most supervisors found the process emotionally draining.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The interviews with supervisors suggested they believe the way they choose to work with teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory has considerable effect on the entire organization, as their actions can re-enforce or erode some of the beliefs and assumptions which under-gird the school and district cultures.

Three major themes related to the organizational perspective emerged from these interviews. These were: (a) superintendents, assistant superintendents and principals believed their actions affected the organizational culture; (b) the supervisors demonstrated a strong, and conscious commitment to the ethic of justice; and (c) there was a commitment to the ethic of care, and concern for the teacher's welfare.

LEADERS SHAPE THE CULTURE

Principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents realized that their actions and behaviors should re-enforce core values of the school or school jurisdiction. The supervisors, especially those who served in the same position for a number of years, felt their actions, attitudes, and their comments or questions provide teachers, students, parents and board members with an understanding of what is valued by the school or school system. In particular, the supervisors felt that the manner in which they worked with teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory sent persuasive messages to other teachers about the supervisor's fundamental beliefs. The comments of an assistant superintendent are indicative of the thoughts of many of those interviewed:

> *Teachers who are not involved in the situation watch what is happening — and they do watch, no matter how confidential you are in what you do and what is going on. In a district of our size, people across the district know when something is bubbling over — and they watch to see how the administrators are going to deal with this.*

> *Number one, are they going to back down, and just leave the person to do damage to kids.... They don't like that. Number two, are they going to be fair and reasonable, and empathetic to what is happening with that teacher? Because if they are not going to be fair with that teacher, even though the teacher may deserve to be treated that way, the administrators could do the same thing to me.*

All of us, at one time on another, have questioned our own competence... and if we were in that situation, how would we want to be treated?

I think you have to be very careful. I think that if I wanted people to know something about the way I deal with teachers and terminations – would I bite the bullet if I have to? Yes. Will it be hard on me? Very. Will I be careful with what I am doing and how I am doing it, and how I try to treat people fairly? Yes. I want everybody out there to know that.

Another supervisor, who moved to terminate the contract of a marginal teacher who had been on staff for an extended time, expressed similar sentiments:

Of course, when the decision was made – everybody on staff knows there has been problems for years, but when it reaches that point – the compassion for the individual comes out. And of course, the teachers react – has he been treated unfairly? What happens a lot of the time is that teachers talk to each other that something has to be done about this guy, but when something is done, then – it's an understandable reaction – the compassion for the individual comes out. Their concern is that he has been treated fairly.... Teachers are very compassionate to their colleagues, and that's understandable. But when someone isn't doing his job, they're pleased to see that something is done. Because they, the competent ones, see themselves as doing a great job. And they don't like someone that isn't doing a good job – because they get painted with the same brush.

Organizational values. The issues which surround the forced resignation of a teacher deal directly with core values of the school system. The manner in which the principal and central office staff choose to deal with teachers who performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory provides concrete information on these values. The actions of the supervisors inform teachers whether the values are ostensible values, or their actual fundamental beliefs — their values in action. The series of events which lead to the forced resignation of a teacher also indicates the extent to which the supervisors are prepared to go to uphold basic values, and provide valuable insights into acceptable means of achieving those ends.

Commitment to Public Education

Throughout the interviews, the superintendents and principals referred to their commitment to public education. This commitment fostered the desire to contribute to the provision of the best possible education for students and it guided many of their actions. This goal seemed to encapsulate the 'raison d'être' for principals and members of the central office staff.

However, the interpretation of this goal varied greatly among those interviewed. Some superintendents internalized this statement as a commitment to the educational well-being of each student, while other seemed to have a more collective view of student welfare. One supervisor expressed his commitment to the students in the school jurisdiction this way:

> *I have a feeling of responsibility to individual kids, to the fact that I think I'm almost overly consumed with the notion that it is possible to make a difference in the lives of kids in the classroom.... I believe that it is possible to make a significant difference in the classroom.*

Another used his belief that the fundamental purpose of schooling was to provide a sound education for students as the basis for the many difficult decisions he had to make:

> *Many years ago, when I first started, I chose that when those conflicts come, to go with the students. On any issue and every issue. Even in conflicts with the board, I have opted to go with what I thought was in the best interests of the students*

The supervisors were consistent in their commitment to meeting the needs of students through the public education system.

The Importance of Modeling

Superintendents, assistant superintendents and principals were conscious of the organizational culture, and recognized that their actions had a greater impact on the teachers' perceptions of the core organizational values than did the words they spoke, or the mission statements they wrote. This was most clearly evident in the interviews with two supervisors, who talked explicitly about the manner in which they attempted to model some of the central values of the organization. One superintendent, who has worked with the same board for a number of years, made frequent reference to his belief that the manner in which supervisors and trustees interact with teachers will affect the manner in which teachers interact with students. He believes that if teachers are expected to treat all students with respect, if teachers are expected to care for all students — including those whose performance is unsatisfactory, then he must treat all teachers in a similar manner:

> *Whatever we are doing in education as educational leaders, in our role, we need to look at the model of what happens in the classroom. There are some fundamental principles regarding what a good teacher does in working with students [that are relevant to administration]....*

*So what is it that we do then? Well, I guess the one thing that a good teacher really can't afford to do is to give up on any students.... **I would take that analogy and apply it to what we are doing with teachers.**... So the basic assumption is those who are on the team were good enough to make it. And if they're not playing as well as you want them to be, or they're affecting the performance of the team, then you've got to do all you can to help them.*

There is a basic belief that people want to do a good job, and that would be the same basic belief – getting back to the classroom analogy – that everyone wants to learn....

When I say that we spend time helping individuals – we also indicate what we expect them to be doing, too. That's part of helping....

***When we're working with trustees, we're modeling as well, what approach we should take when working with all people.** So, if you have that type of culture, you have to make sure it's not just something you're saying. You really do have to work at creating it....*

*It seems that when we spend some time with the teacher, things get going and it might be six months, or a year, and things are really going, and then slips back again. So other people might say, "Well, how many chances do you give a person?" That's a difficult one, because I would say that the teacher is not incompetent, but just is not doing as well as we want him to do. So it may mean that we are going to have to be in that pattern of **working with that person on an on-going basis,** and we may have to accept that. **Just like a teacher may have a certain student that always going to take that extra time.** So this is a "high needs" teacher.*

This superintendent saw working with a teacher whose performance was unsatisfactory as an opportunity to re-enforce basic organizational beliefs in the need to establish and maintain relationships which emphasize the desire of people to learn and grow together.

An assistant superintendent who had served the same jurisdiction for nearly 20 years, indicated that the central office administrators saw fairness as a fundamental belief of their organization and so were determined to model this while working with marginal teachers.

We've spent a lot of time, among central office administrators, in discussing the rules of fairness. We spend a lot of time in principals' meetings discussing the rules of fairness and how to treat people fairly, at least in the legal sense, and also the moral sense....

We talked a lot about the "unwritten contract" that we have with staff. We've got the ATA agreement, but the unwritten contract, the least that we've got with them, is that we're going to treat them fairly. They have the unwritten expectation that they are going to do the best possible job they can for kids, the Board, the image of the profession – all that. Very much a conscious decision....

This supervisor was aware that the manner in which he and other supervisors work with marginal teachers provided a clear signal about his commitment to 'acting fairly.' He recognized that treating teachers fairly had a greater impact on reinforcing this organizational belief than did anything he might say or write.

THE ETHIC OF JUSTICE

Concern for the ethic of justice was apparent in each of the interviews conducted. Some supervisors interpreted the ethic of justice as acting fairly; some saw it as ensuring natural justice; others saw it as a need to provide teachers with candid, honest, and timely assessments of their performance.

Fair and Just Treatment

While their commitment to meeting the educational needs of students was a core value of the supervisors, most also believed that people must be treated in a just manner. Although their concepts of justice varied, their understanding of it served to guide many of their actions. Some supervisors equated justice with fairness and went to great lengths to ensure that the teachers were treated fairly. As discussed previously, some administrators took a broad view to "acting fairly". However, other took a narrower perspective and defined "acting fairly" as judging a teacher on the basis of his or her teaching performance, not on the basis of rumor.

One principal, for example, spoke of the steps taken to avoid prejudging a teacher who was assigned to his staff:

> *Administrative placements tend to follow the formula that the last ones to be placed are the ones with difficulties in some areas... so I knew I was not getting the cream of the crop. I did not pursue this at all. I felt that if I had, I would have jaded my own relationship with this individual.... I did not want to prejudice myself in any way. Consequently, I did not look at the rationale.*

Another felt that in order to be fair, he must ensure that the process was rational and that emotions were kept out of the entire process. Thus, to him, a condition of fairness was impartiality. This supervisor spoke of the steps he took to ensure the decisions were made on facts, rather than emotions:

Once I personally came to terms with a procedure that seemed to be fair and just in terms of how you deal with the individual, and I felt confident that this procedure was the way to go in order to be sensitive to people, and yet also help them face up to reality; once I felt that it was a good system to use, it was fairly straightforward. And I didn't find myself really getting all tensed up or stressed in terms of how I was going to approach this. I saw it as a process which you work through in a systematic way. This process should facilitate you not getting emotionally involved. It was a straightforward procedure and I found myself explaining the process to the people I was working with so they could see where I was going with all of this. Everything was on the table.

Later, this supervisor suggested that the use of an "outside critic" ensured that the process was fair and just:

But he was also the guy who was coming to me and asking some key, pointed questions as to how I was dealing with that individual. In that way, I think, he provided a good role — an outside, loyal opposition point of view. It helped me to think through what I was doing, and address it in a manner that was fair and just.

Another emphasized the need to adhere to all facets of the supervisory process:

The principal in the school had been pushing us previous to this time..."Listen, we've got to get this guy out of here." And we kept saying "That's not fair to him. We have to give him enough time." "How much longer do we need to work with him?" If we had done it two years earlier, I would have felt really bad, and I would have had trouble looking the guy in his face.

However, not all administrators felt committed to the concept of natural justice. One person recalled events which occurred a number years ago. The administrator was able to get the teacher to resign by subjecting him to community pressure and ridicule:

I remember a case I had where the teacher had been here for years and years and I wanted to get rid of him. The press attends our Board Meetings, so I raised it at the Board level — we didn't go into camera, and I just simply said that "This teacher has reached the point of incompetence.... to the point that I think we should relieve him of his classroom duties and we will give him some job in the County. He can work in the maintenance shop, or he can be a library clerk, or whatever....." And it went public in the press.

Well, this man virtually collapsed. He came in here and said I was destroying him — it was affecting his heart. "Well, if it's a resignation you want, I'll sign it."

I already had it set up. I just walked out, brought the resignation in — I already had it written . It said, "Due to my heart condition, and my concerns about my health, I feel I must resign at this time." He signed it. The next day he wanted it back. Too late.

The administrator indicated this had occurred a long time ago, and that he would not use such methods now. However, the administrator kept the story alive, though, because it contributed to his reputation as a very tough supervisor:

> *My view was that one of the ways to do that [clean up the system] was to show that I would in fact do whatever had to be done and I didn't need to hide behind anybody else's skirts to get it done. And there were certain things that had to be done and I was going to do them. And I did them. Short on diplomacy, perhaps. Somewhat ruthless, I guess. It was a warranted reputation at the time, I think, for those situations. But what nobody knew was that for those that didn't warrant it, it didn't happen. I never got any pleasure out of tuning people out...still don't, never did. And I'm reluctant to fire anybody, always was. But if you think it through, and it had to be done, then you have to do it. All I have done is to change the methodology, but the reputation serves me well in that respect.*

This supervisor believed he acted fairly as his first commitment was to students, rather than to teachers. He felt that if a teacher was not providing satisfactory service, the teacher should be removed as the ends justify the means.

This supervisor raised another aspect of the effects of terminations. He believed that the termination process was a very destructive process, and so it was in the best interest of the teacher, and the system to speed up the process as much as possible. For these reasons, he felt the end of terminating the teaching contract justified the means used to achieve that end.

The administrators had a variety of interpretations of the concept of justice. These included the need to form judgments on the basis of observation, to maintain impartiality, and commitment to the entire supervisory process in order to ensure the teacher receives natural justice.

Honest and Candid Assessments of Performance

While the concept of fairness and impartiality influenced the actions of many of the supervisors interviewed, others related the concept of justice to honesty.

One aspect of creating a just situation with teachers is to ensure that teachers receive honest and timely feedback on the quality of their performance. Some supervisors found it difficult to confront teachers about poor performance when that level of performance had been accepted for a long time by other supervisors. In fact, some administrators complained that their predecessors had protected teachers who did not provide adequate

service. For example, a principal, new to the school, found the marginal teacher had been on staff for twenty years, yet no action had been taken. This raised a number of questions for the supervisor:

> *They had, in fact, protected this teacher over the years -- the school and the school district -- in not giving this particular teacher 30 level courses so that there wasn't the check on achievement and that kind of thing....Why was this not addressed in the first 20 years of this man's career? It's just sad that he was allowed to carry on. Because I think that if he -- if it was early on -- he would have developed some of that self-confidence necessary....*
>
> *Here's a man who taught for this district for 20 years. And if he wasn't provided with assistance to do the job that we wanted to be done -- there's some responsibility on our part -- over 20 years. There is something wrong with what we have been doing as a district.... Nobody had told him that he wasn't doing a very good job. Nobody had told him what he had to address. In one of these situations, the way I assess it -- he kind of knew it in the back of his mind that things weren't going very well. Kids were dropping out of his classes, no one ever told him why... they never told him why they didn't want him to teach them. The parents did the same. They would phone the principal. Things were changed quietly. Yeah. I think no one was ever up-front with the guy. It's not fair.*

There are a number of issues raised in this passage. They include: (a) What responsibilities do supervisors have to help young teachers improve their craft? (b) Can improvement occur without candid feedback from the supervisor? (c) Should administrators protect experienced teachers who are not providing adequate service? (d) What impact does it have on the teacher's self-confidence when things are changed quietly and never discussed with the teacher? This principal obviously believes the way one answers these questions influences his or her administrative practice, and furthermore, that the type of practice which shirks these implied responsibilities is a disservice to both students and teachers.

Confronting perceptual problems. Many supervisors felt teachers need to receive meaningful and candid feedback as some teachers were unable to gauge the effectiveness of their own teaching. A few superintendents spoke of the 'perceptual problem' of some teachers who were not aware of their short-comings and so did not feel any pressure to change their teaching methods. The administrators emphasized the need for performance

assessment information to be honest, valid, and timely. As an example, one administrator described his interaction with a teacher who finally was forced to resign:

> *I sat down with the teacher and went through, in quite some detail, exactly what was expected in each of the three areas, when the specific deadlines were to be met, and how they were to followed up. And then I backed off....*
>
> *Subsequently, I met with the teacher again. That was, I think, one of the most difficult sessions because, in his mind, things had improved when, in fact, they [the students] just ignored him. They didn't have to challenge him anymore. They knew that they could ignore him and there was nothing happening in class at all. It came to the point where I finally had to say "Look, regardless of what you think of how things have been going, it's just not happening. We're going to move toward dismissal."*

Another superintendent acknowledged the difficulty of being open and candid with a teacher who to fails to recognize those instructional areas which are in need of improvement. This created a tension between the need to be supportive and the need to be critical:

> *We can't say "You're doing a fine job. Just keep working on this and this and it'll be better." If it's not good, you have to tell them — and that's a real dilemma because you have to be somewhat positive, as positive as you can be. But on the other hand, you need to point out areas that have to be worked on.*

Thus, these supervisors felt that they had a responsibility to teachers to provide them with information on the quality of their performance. An aspect of 'being fair' meant the supervisors had to provide this feedback in a timely, and frank manner.

Summary — Administrators' Interpretation of Justice

A commitment to the ethic of justice seemed to be a fundamental belief of the supervisors interviewed. Most administrators saw justice or fairness as:

- The need to judge teachers on the basis of fact and observation, rather than on the basis of rumor.
- The need to be impartial, to have a rational, rather than an emotional basis for the decision-making process and to engage in a systematic approach to evaluation.
- Natural justice, or the right for the teacher to be evaluated against clearly defined standards of competency; for the teacher to have adequate time and assistance to improve; and to be evaluated again against the same standards.

Moreover, in addition to attempting to act in a just manner, most of the supervisors were also committed to maintaining a personal relationship with the teacher.

THE ETHIC OF CARE

A caring relationship is one which focuses both on the people and on the interaction between people in the relationship. Furthermore, people committed to an ethic of care generally attempt to make all relationships into caring relationships, where the primary concern is how people feel and respond to each other and to the actions under consideration. The interviews provided many examples of attempts to create and maintain such associations between supervisors and the teachers.

Maintaining Caring Relationships

Most supervisors believed that it was possible and desirable to maintain a caring relationship with the teacher whose performance was unsatisfactory. Many found this difficult, as they knew that a part of the process of working with teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory was to confront the teacher with evidence of his or her shortcomings. This was often a painful experience for both the administrator and the teacher.

Most supervisors recognized it would be less stressful if personal relationships could be severed — but most refused to do this. The affiliation created an element of concern for the teacher and affected the impartiality of the decision. For example, one assistant superintendent claimed:

> *Yes. I guess I have found it's easier to deal with someone who calls me an "S.O.B." At least it's out on the table! It's easier to deal with than with someone who you like.... What are they going to do with their lives afterwards?*

> *I really encouraged this man to make contact with the Alberta Correspondence School. I saw some possibilities there, because I saw no problem with subject knowledge. The man could work at a desk, be OK on the telephone, talking to kids, and that kind of thing.*

In this case, a board hearing to consider the possible termination of the teacher's contract occurred before the teacher decided to resign. The hearing had a profound effect on the supervisor:

> *My feelings at that time — at the Board hearing he had — he didn't do any talking — it was all done by the Alberta Teachers' Association. I really felt sorry for the teacher — bowed head, the way he walked. It was really sad, really sad. He would have accepted anything. I don't recall exactly, but he got really very little out of it as far as a settlement — he didn't get a year's salary, or that kind of thing — for 20 years of service.*

The supervisor was concerned both about the welfare of the teacher, and that the teacher was not treated justly. He felt the school board could have demonstrated more compassion and fairness by providing a more adequate settlement.

Many supervisors realized that when things were not going well for a teacher, teaching became a very difficult occupation. In those situations, the best alternative may be for the teacher to leave the profession, to change careers:

> *We just think they should get out of the business, because I believe that teaching, when it goes well, is a great profession. I also believe that when it's bad, it's the worst in the world. There is no job worse in the world than having twenty five 14 year old kids in your classroom who are out of control. There is no worse job anywhere. Airport controllers, medical doctors, and all the other jobs there are — none are worse than that. Community members who say teachers are overpaid and underworked, wouldn't dream of putting themselves in that position. So I think they are better off getting out, especially when they are young enough.*

Another superintendent expressed similar thoughts:

> *I think it's a terrible existence to be doing something you don't enjoy doing, or to be doing something — to be in a role that you're not doing very well.*

A superintendent, while describing the events related to the resignation of a close friend, recalled a difficult conversation in which the teacher realized that it was in his best interests to leave the teaching profession:

> *In the second instance, I felt deeply hurt — in a way it was the toughest thing to do — to sit down with a friend — we attend the same congregation and a number of things. We had visited in our homes, and so on. To have this person openly acknowledge that he had not chosen, at least at this time, the right profession. "I've made a mistake. And I'm not doing you any good. I'm not doing my kids any good." That still hurt.*

An assistant superintendent who had maintained a constructive relationship with a teacher during the period of intense supervision was able to confront the teacher about his unsatisfactory performance and its effect on the teacher and on the school system:

> *So I called [him] after that last evaluation, and said, "How are things going?" And he said, "Well, I'm having a bad time." And I've known him now for*

almost 15 years. We basically started teaching here at the same time.... We had built up a bit of a rapport, just because of our prior association and then we talked, and had a beer every now and again. I believe he trusted me to be honest because this is not the first time I've talked to him about these kinds of things. So he explained to me that he was having one hell of a time. And I told him that we shared that because were are having one hell of a time, too, in justifying to the community and to the teaching profession why he should remain in our employ.

So then we go to talking about "How did you feel during the time you were off on your medical leave?" And he said, "The best I've ever felt – the most relaxed." And I said, "How long do you want to keep kicking yourself in the head?"

In each example described above, the administrator and the teacher maintained a caring relationship, one in which the administrator demonstrated respect for the person by providing the teacher with the perceptions, information and support necessary to make the difficult decision to leave the teaching profession. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the teacher would have accepted the candor of the supervisor if the personal relationship and trust between the teacher and the supervisor had not been maintained.

Health and poor performance. Often health problems and poor performance seem to be related. One supervisor recalled a conversation he had with an administrator whose performance had been under review for a long time. The supervisor asked questions which forced the principal to consider the effect his poor health was having on his performance, and the impact his poor performance was having on his health:

He was having some health problems at the same time – perhaps they were stress related. Knowing that as well, and working through these processes, we came to the point where we were simply asking him if he felt comfortable coming to work in the morning? Is this how he wanted to spend his time? Did he feel that he was going to get on top of the situation? How far did he expect us to support and help him? Maybe he'd feel more comfortable just stepping out of the principalship and taking an assistant principalship?

In one discussion – the two of us – outside of the school, he agreed that there would be a benefit to him to step down and allow himself some time to get removed from the situation and in doing so, perhaps develop more objectivity about being a principal.

These examples have illustrated that where supervisors were able to establish and maintain a caring relationship with a teacher whose performance was unsatisfactory, the teacher was more likely to engage in an open and forthright discussion with the supervisor. The relationship allowed the supervisor to be open, and supportive of the teacher while

helping the teacher to realize teaching was not a viable occupation for him or her at that time. However, it is not always possible or desirable to establish such a relationship. The following section provides some examples of the difficulties which occurred when relationships were characterized by conflict and acrimony.

Conflict Between the Supervisor and the Teacher

In most of the case histories described by the supervisors, the teacher was, or became aware of his or her unsatisfactory performance, and eventually accepted the need to leave the teaching profession. Most supervisors indicated that both parties made efforts to maintain a caring relationship, and that this relationship enabled the two parties to deal with the ensuing difficult situations in a constructive manner. However, other supervisors found it was not always possible to create or maintain such conditions.

Supervising a teacher who did not like students. Some supervisors recounted experiences with teachers who did not accept their advice or counsel. In this first example, the administrator experienced considerable personal conflict between his commitment to provide the best possible education for all students, and the need to fulfill the requirements of natural justice, prior to attempting to dismiss a teacher. The principal's frustration and tension was increased because the teacher, by his consistent failure to treat the students with respect or dignity, acted in a manner which was inappropriate.

> *To this day, I maintain that the reason we are there is for the kids. The teacher wasn't there for them. And I got caught an awful lot trying to run interference for [the students] — or between the teacher and the students. We had ... no discipline problems whatsoever in the rest of the school. We had maybe 2 kids a year that I had to look after. On the other hand, with this man, I had 2 or 3 kids a day.*

The major concerns stemmed from the way he treated students:

> *He was very, very rough on the kids.... The kids had to almost be automatons in order for them to survive in his classes. He didn't treat people very nicely at all.*

The inability of the teacher to establish meaningful relationships were not just restricted to teachers and students. The teacher also could not cooperate with parents.

> *I was left trying to run as an intermediary between the parents and kids. It was tough because bringing in the parents and the students to meet with the teacher and*

sitting down with the different parties to try to resolve something — it didn't work. He would blow up.

The principal initially responded to this conflict by attempting to ignore the teacher as much as possible — he attempted to sever any personal relationships with the teacher.

I tried to work with him. It got to the point where I guess I pretty well locked him out. By that I mean I locked him out of decision-making, I locked him out of staff decisions, and we, as a staff, pretty much ignored him as much as we could.

Over the two year period, the principal responded to the conflict in a variety of ways:

- He attempted to ignore the teacher as much as possible.
- The administrator attempted to protect students from the teacher.
- Over the course of the second year in which the teacher was in the school, the principal documented instances where the teacher acted inappropriately.
- Because any meetings between the two inevitability ended in conflict, the principal chose not to confront the teacher with all the information collected.

This last action later proved disastrous at the Board of Reference hearing as the teacher was re-instated on the technicality that the principal had not provided the teacher with all the evidence used to determine his competence.

Since this series of events occurred, the supervisor has given considerable thought to this case. When asked what he would do differently, he responded:

I think that I would be on it a lot sooner. I wouldn't piddle around and try to fix things.... The whole of my time was spent figuring out how to keep a lid on things — to keep things from blowing up. And, in retrospect, maybe they should have blown up right off the bat. As I say, perhaps the best thing that could have happened was that right at the beginning of the second year when it became obvious that there were going to be problems — somebody didn't stand up to the man and say, "Listen, that's not the way we do things."

Supervising a teacher who just wanted the paycheque. In another example, the administrator's concerns stemmed more from what the teacher did not do than what she did do. The teacher was an experienced teacher who had taught in a number of schools in the jurisdiction. The teacher was assigned to the school by central office staff which suggested that she had a history of unsatisfactory performance. This trend continued as she did not provide adequate instruction in her latest placement.

Concerns about the quality of instruction were first raised by parents who came to the principal during the first set of parent-teacher interviews.

> *But, just at the first report card, I was inundated with about 5 parents who came to me and voiced a very strong concern about what was being done in that classroom, and quite frankly, what was not being done.*

The principal became aware of the teacher's shortcomings through the formal evaluation process and attempted to assist by providing suggestions for remediation.

> *I was frustrated that the AP and I were offering her sound advice, and she was not accepting it. We knew that she was getting on and it was only a matter of time before she decided to retire, and we wanted to help her until that time.*

The students were also affected by the frequent absence of the teacher. The following indicate the principal's worry over the effects of the disruptions on the students.

> *By this time, the teacher had already received sick leave from her psychiatrist stipulating that she was only able to teach half days. Through the latter part of September and all of October, she was only teaching half days. I voiced my concern downtown... and we forced her to take 2 or 3 weeks off....*

> *The kids obviously were not in a good educational situation. She actually did the kids a favor by going out on stress leave. But there was this constant "I don't know if I'm going to be in to school tomorrow or...." From that perspective, it was an unstable situation in the classroom. They weren't getting the right "bill of goods." The kids weren't learning what they should have been learning.*

The administrator found it very difficult to establish a relationship with the teacher. Her response to the every step of the evaluation procedure was to dispute the fairness of the process or the validity of the findings. In many instances this was done by requesting the presence of a third party. The following examples are indicative of the principal's response to the teacher's approach.

> *I would hold a pre-evaluative meeting with the teacher [where] we would go through the evaluation process, step-by-step, so that there was absolutely no portion of the evaluation which was going to be a surprise to anyone evaluated. She requested that an ATA representative from the Local be present at the initial meeting....*

> *As is our practice, the evaluation is given to the teacher to be read and signed..... At that time, she became rather aggressive and very litigious. She went to the ATA for advice as soon as she received it. She went on sick leave, and as was stated – the document was not signed nor returned to me.... She [later] came back with the representative to talk about these things....*

The response to us was very aggressive, in an antagonistic sort of way. All of a sudden, one time she said, "Before I sign this, I want to receive counsel from my lawyer."

The principal's perceptions of her acts as those of avoidance and her practice of having a third party present at all meetings destroyed any semblance of trust between the teacher and the principal which, in turn, made it impossible to create a caring relationship between the teacher and the principal.

Possible basis for the conflict. The supervisors who became caught up in conflict with the teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory talked about possible reasons why the conflict escalated. The theme which emerged was that the supervisors perceived that the teachers had different core values than did the principals and, thus, the teacher's values clashed with those being promoted in the school.

The following excerpts are from two interviews where the conflict between the teacher and the supervisor was most apparent. While the two situations were very different, there were striking similarities. Neither supervisor was able to establish a caring relationship as the teacher seemed unwilling to make any commitment to such a relationship. Both teachers had similar histories, in that they had each experienced severe difficulties in their previous schools, and so the supervisors felt they harbored a strong sense of mistrust of administrators. Furthermore, the teachers appeared to reject some of the school's fundamental beliefs, as neither teacher seemed concerned about the welfare or education of the students entrusted to them.

One of the biggest problems with this person is that he didn't trust kids. He had no use for them....

The kids — he treated kids like he treated people — he treated them like dirt, except they couldn't fight back. The man certainly had talents as far as his subject went, but he was not a good teacher because teaching is a 'people' profession and he didn't have the people skills required.

In the second example, the principal was not concerned about the manner in which the teacher treated the students. However, the teacher was not committed to the children's

educational well-being, and refused to make the necessary commitment to improve her teaching skills:

> *I asked her why she was teaching — at one of the meetings — because I saw there were so many difficulties in her class. Her response to me was that she needed the money, and had indicated to me at that particular time that she was not in that situation to teach or to be with children, but only for the financial aspect of teaching....*

Stories such as these raise questions about the ethic of care. Is it possible to establish and maintain a caring relationship when there is an apparent clash between the supervisor's fundamental beliefs and those of the teacher? Did the two principals who found themselves embroiled in conflict accept caring as a fundamental belief? Is it possible to create a caring relationship when one person chooses not to enter into such a relationship? What effect does the relationship between the principal and the teacher have on the organizational culture? These questions will be considered in the "Discussion" section.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS — THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Three main themes and a number of sub-themes related to the organizational perspective emerged from the interviews with supervisors. Those themes were:

- The leaders shape the culture of the organization through their actions and by the activities to which they pay attention.
    - Most administrators attempted to act in a manner which would improve the education students receive.
    - Modeling behavior consistent with the core organizational values is seen to be an important means of transmitting those values.
- Superintendents, assistant superintendents, and principals talked of the need to act in a fair and just manner.
    - "Acting justly" had a number of interpretations including being impartial, ensuring the teachers receive honest and timely assessments of their performance, and providing adequate time and assistance for improvement.

- Most supervisors were committed to maintaining a caring relationship with the teacher.
    - Where this occurred, the teacher and supervisor tended to engage in open and forthright discussions.
    - Where a caring relationship was not maintained, the supervisors and teachers seemed to act from different core values.

DISCUSSION

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

It appears that the manner in which supervisors work with teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory affects the organizational culture of both the school and the school jurisdiction. Furthermore, the impact may be greater in those instances where the events led to the forced resignation of the teacher, as the tension inherent in the supervisory process and the nature of the relationships between the teacher and the administrators provides insights into the supervisors' fundamental beliefs.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

As a result of his extensive study into the phenomenon of organizational culture, Schein (1985) concluded that organizational leaders play an important role in shaping the culture. He indicated that three primary mechanisms by which leaders impact organizational culture were (a) what leaders pay attention to, or do not pay attention to; (b) the reactions of leaders to critical incidents and organizational crises; and (c) the deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching by those in leadership positions.

Throughout the interviews, supervisors referred to the need to pay attention to the quality of instruction provided to students, to fairness and justice and to concern for both the students and the teacher. The supervisors hoped to influence teachers by making their commitment to these fundamental beliefs explicit, and tended to use modeling as a means of transmitting their beliefs.

The forced resignation of a teacher often takes on a symbolic meaning which is greater than the importance of the event itself. It re-enforces commitment to quality instruction by signaling that poor teaching will not be accepted. In addition, it can re-enforce the perception that the supervisors are concerned about the welfare of teachers and students and the concept of fairness and justice. It is a relatively rare phenomenon, and as such is often viewed as a critical series of events in a school or school jurisdiction. Because of this, it provides the supervisor with an opportunity to affect the organizational culture.

This finding is consistent with a conclusion reached by Owens (1991) that the organizational culture is influenced by the interactions between the various members of the organization. He stated that "the interaction processes...include communication, motivation, leadership, goal setting, decision making, coordination, control, and evaluations" (p. 180). As supervisors and teachers engage in each of these types of interaction at some point in evaluation, the supervisory process can become an important series of events to influence the organizational culture.

The effects of the interaction between members of the organization was also recognized by Bolman and Deal (1991) who asserted that:

> Culture is both product and process. As product, it embodies the accumulated wisdom of those who were members before we came. As process, it is continually renewed and re-created as new members are taught the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves. (p. 250)

Thus, the process is as important as the outcome. Applying this assertion to the events related to the evaluation of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory suggests that the means used during the supervisory process are as important as the end result. The act of pressuring a teacher to resign clearly indicates that poor performance is unacceptable, and that there is a consequence for poor performance. It can also indicate that caring and justice are important organizational beliefs.

Through their actions, the supervisors indicated that they recognized the poor performance; that they wanted to help the teacher to improve his or her unsatisfactory

performance, but that if the performance did not improve, the consequence was the teacher could no longer work for the school jurisdiction.

Many supervisors acknowledged that other members of the teaching staff wanted actions taken against those people who were seen to be doing their jobs poorly. While they wanted the supervisor to be fair and they sought compassion for the individual, they expected supervisors to act, as teachers who perform poorly discredit the entire profession.

The events which surround the forced resignation of a teacher may have a significant influence on how members of the organization view the supervisor. Bolman and Deal (1991) noted that "individuals have power if others believe that they do. Such beliefs are encouraged by events or outcomes that become linked to particular individuals" (p. 286). Some administrators openly acknowledged that the way they interacted with teachers who were providing unsatisfactory performance affected their power and influence with other teachers.

The effects of forced resignations on organizational culture can best be illustrated by contrasting the reactions of two long serving superintendents. One, the same administrator who commented that he forced a teacher to resign by criticizing him in the local press put a Machiavellian twist to his actions by acknowledging the myth *"many people believe teachers can not be fired"*, and used the fact that he could dismiss a teacher as proof of his power over people.

His story has been told, and re-told. It has become one of the myths which surround him. This supervisor has recognized that stories such as these influence the culture of the organization and he uses this to create a set of expectations for the teaching staff:

> *We have a meeting with all our new teachers every fall. One of the things we tell them is that it's not lip-service, we mean it [we hire only the best teachers]. We also tell them that we expect more from them than they would have to do anywhere else in the province — that our standards are higher, we expect more of them than they would be expected to produce in any other system. Whether that's true or not, doesn't matter.*

This supervisor used stories about the forced resignation of teachers to help create a particular type of organizational culture — a culture built on evaluation, control and top-down management.

Another administrator, who had worked in a different jurisdiction for a number of years spoke openly about an organizational culture committed to *"people learning and growing together."* He has attempted to foster a culture that focuses on the strengths of the teachers and encourages assistance for those not performing as well as expected. He did not speak of incompetent teachers, nor of firing teachers. In fact, when asked about teachers who had been released from the school system, his reply was short:

> *If someone is really harming students, then there is a responsibility. The same way as if there is a student in the class that is so deviant, or creating problems to the extent that it's having a serious impact on the climate of the school or classroom — a serious impact on the other students — then there is a responsibility to do something. But I haven't run into... well, I shouldn't say that. Over the years, there have been about four cases like that where we felt we had to do something.*

The supervisor was asked if the teachers in question were not challenging students or if their actions were psychological or physically harmful to students. The reply was that *"it would be more psychologically or physically harmful."*

Beyond that, this administrator did not talk about those teachers who had been forced to resign. Repeated readings of the transcript revealed that stories of modeling desirable traits and of coaching teachers to help acquire appropriate teaching behavior were more important to the culture of that jurisdiction than were stories which would instill fear and concern related to the power of the supervisor. The transcript also suggested that this administrator felt these teachers were anomalies, and that talking about marginal teachers only served to discredit the teaching profession. The image he constantly portrayed was one of teachers and students *"learning and growing together."*

These examples indicate how cultures of two jurisdictions were influenced by the reaction to the particular series of events which surrounded the forced resignation of teachers. In almost every interview, there was reference to the way in which the process of working with a teacher whose performance was unsatisfactory influenced the perceptions

of how things are done around here. In most instances, the references were to the effects on the ethic of justice and the ethic of care.

The Ethic of Justice

The supervisors felt they not only had to treat the teachers justly, but they had to be perceived as treating the teachers justly. At times, their concern with being fair meant that teachers were provided with considerable assistance and time to improve their performance. Because of this, long periods of time often elapsed between the initial perceptions of unsatisfactory performance and the resolution of the concerns. The supervisor frequently experienced conflict between his or her commitment to the ethic of justice and concern for the educational well-being of the students. In each of the cases where moral conflict became apparent, the supervisors chose to resolve it by acting in a fair and just manner toward the teacher. The supervisors indicated that they felt that it was essential that they behave in this manner because their own belief system demanded they act fairly. In addition, the supervisors were conscious of the impact their actions would have on the organizational culture.

The consistency of the supervisors' commitment to the fair and just treatment of teachers appears to be in marked contrast to the response found by Brieschke (1988) during her study of the ethical basis of decisions made by central office administrators in a department of a large U.S. school jurisdiction. Brieschke stated

> It was found that most administrators in central office did not agonize over alternative competing values and frequently did not stop to consider consequences.... Few of the recognized dilemmas presented difficulty in resolving a moral choice. Frequently, administrators would acknowledge the presence of competing values but would not consider the situation to pose an ethical problem for them because "the way it's done" in central office provided a guideline, or a tacit set of expectations....
>
> The data suggest that a gatekeeping mechanism may be in operation in central office, for, with rare exceptions, administrators appeared to experience fewer ethical dilemmas as they moved through the organizational hierarchy of central office. My own bias predicted that commitment at higher administrative levels would be to the organization. Surprisingly, social values were named as the justification for resolving dilemmas an overwhelming majority of the time. (pp. 30, 31)

Overall, Brieschke considered the justification of over four hundred ethical dilemmas by various levels of administrators. She found that "self-interest" was the most predominant basis for resolving those dilemmas. She went on to suggest that justification used for resolving ethical dilemmas may be influenced by the amount of direct contact with the schools and with students. Staff with more direct contact tended to use professional considerations as the basis for decisions, while those administrators who were more removed from involvement with students tended to make decisions based on social values or self-interest.

The supervisors interviewed in this study were either principals or central office administrators from small jurisdictions. As such, each supervisor had considerable contact with the students and with the teaching staff. It seems likely that either this close contact helped administrators retain an awareness of their purpose and to act in a manner which fulfilled that purpose or the administrators had a strong personal commitment to individual students and so choose to work in an environment which maintained the close contact.

The Ethic of Care

It seemed that the majority of supervisors who were involved with the forced resignation of a teacher were able to maintain a caring relationship with the teacher. This relationship allowed the supervisor to engage in frank and candid discussions about various options open to the teacher and the supervisor, and the consequences of each option. It is doubtful that this sort of discussion could have occured if the relationship had been severed.

However, a few supervisors found it impossible to either establish or maintain any form of caring relationship with the marginal teachers with whom they worked. In these situations, the conflict escalated to the point where there was very little communication between the teacher and the administrator. In both cases, the supervisors believed the relationship faltered due to the actions and behavior of the teacher. This raises the following questions: "Should the administrator attempt to have a caring relationship with a teacher

who behaves in a manner which is inconsistent with the fundamental beliefs of the school or school system?" "Is it possible to have a caring relationship with a person who rejects attempts to establish such a relationship?" To provide insight into these questions, it is helpful to recall the thoughts of Starratt (1991):

> Such an ethic does not demand relationships of intimacy; rather, it postulates a level of caring that honors the dignity of each person and desires to see that person enjoy a fully human life. Furthermore, it recognizes that it is in the relationship that the specifically human is grounded; isolated individuals functioning only for themselves are but half persons. One becomes whole when one is in relationship with another and with many others. (p. 195)

Starratt continued by saying that in a caring relationship, each person is regarded as having absolute value and so that person cannot be used as a means to an end. One must respect the intrinsic dignity and worth of the individual, and convey this respect through one's actions. Similarly, Strike, Haller and Soltis (1988) wrote of the need for equal respect of persons:

> The principle of equal respect requires that we act in ways that respect the equal worth of moral agents. It requires that we regard human beings as having intrinsic worth and treat them accordingly. The essence of this idea is expressed in the Golden Rule. We have a duty to accord others the same kind of treatment we expect them to accord us. The principle of equal respect can be seen as involving three subsidiary ideas. (p. 17)

They continued to say that this requires that one person cannot consider another as a means of achieving personal ends. Furthermore, we must recognize that all people have the right to make choices, and finally, that all people must be viewed as being of equal value.

The words of Starratt and of Strike *et al.* should not be interpreted as meaning that the administrator should shy away from difficult decisions, nor should these comments be interpreted to mean that a caring relationship is one in which inappropriate behavior on the part of one person in the relationship must be condoned. In fact, I believe that it is more of an act of caring if the supervisor confronts the person whose behavior is unacceptable, rather than isolating, or ignoring the individual. However, this confrontation should be done in a manner which respects the dignity of the person involved by confronting the inappropriateness of the actions, rather than the individual.

The superintendent or principal must make the teacher aware that behavior which violates the core values of the organization will not be tolerated. I agree with Sergiovanni (1992a), who argued that

> It is the leader's responsibility to be outraged...when purposes are ignored. Moreover, all members of the community are obliged to show outrage when the standard falls.
>
> Leadership by outrage, and the practice of kindling outrage in others, challenges the conventional wisdom that leaders should be poker-faced, play their cards close to the chest, avoid emotion, and otherwise hide what they believe and feel. When the source of leadership authority is moral, and when covenants of shared values become the driving force for the school's norm system, it seems natural to react with outrage to shortcomings in what we do and impediments to what we want to do. (p. 130)

The cases which involved teachers who seemed to have no commitment to the core values of the school illustrate the need to ensure that where there is a conflict between the concern for the welfare of students and that of the teacher, concern for the welfare of students must take priority. However, if the supervisor truly is committed to the ethic of care, he or she must act in a manner which respects the dignity and integrity of the teacher. The series of events provides examples of where the means by which the teacher is forced to resign is as important as is the end result — the teacher does resign. Administrators must keep in mind that the goal of schooling — providing the best possible education for all students — does not justify the use of any means to achieve that result. The methods and approaches used must be consistent with the fundamental beliefs on which the organizational culture is built.

Supervisors must be prepared to take strong actions when teachers behave in a manner which is contrary to the fundamental values and beliefs of the school or school system. However, in doing so, they must ensure that their actions reflect their commitment to those beliefs. Administrators must retain their commitment to maintaining a caring relationship with the teacher — a relationship which recognizes the teacher has dignity and worth as a person; a relationship which recognizes that the teacher deserves assistance. At the same, other considerations may demand that the supervisor takes steps to end the teacher's

employment if the teacher is unwilling or unable to provide appropriate and meaningful instruction to students. In fact, this may be the best solution for both the teacher and the school system.

The manner in which those in leadership positions work with teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory models acceptable approaches for teachers who interact with students whose performance is unsatisfactory. When supervisors fail to treat the marginal teacher with honesty and respect, a message is conveyed to teachers that it is all right to treat students in a similar, disrespectful manner. If a supervisor forces a teacher to resign before the teacher has adequate opportunity to improve, a message is conveyed that it is all right for teachers to force a student to drop out of school without providing the student with the opportunity to improve and grow.

Furthermore, if a supervisor ignores poor performance by a teacher, or if a supervisor allows a teacher to act in a manner which violates the fundamental beliefs of the school or school system, the message is conveyed that it is all right for teachers to allow students to perform poorly or to act inappropriately. Therefore, it is imperative that the leaders of the school or school system — the principals, assistant superintendents or the superintendents — act in a manner which is consistent with the core values of the organization. It is only through consistent action to re-enforce these values that the organizational culture can be shaped and molded to one which allows the school to more fully meet the needs of the students it serves.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FORCED RESIGNATIONS — REFLECTIONS ON THE PHENOMENA

In this chapter, three themes which emerged from the findings related to the various perspectives will be drawn together. Those themes are (a) the supervisory process, (b) the issues of caring and justice and (c) the emotional impact of the supervisory process on the teachers and the supervisors. The conclusions drawn from these multiple perspectives will be compared to those found in pertinent literature, and where possible, extensions to existing literature will be noted. The chapter will conclude with implications for further research, and implications for action for supervisors and school systems. In addition, a brief review of the major findings and the subsequent discussion outlined in chapters five through seven is provided in tables 6 and 7.

THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

There were repeated references to the supervisory process throughout the entire study — hardly a surprising development in a study on the forced resignation of teachers! However, it is necessary to keep in mind that the evaluation and supervision considered in this study was for the sole purpose of accountability. Thus, the metaphor "teaching as technical expertise" (Alberta Education, in press, p. 3) appropriately describes the theoretical basis for the process.

It quickly became apparent that there was a wide variation in the quality of the supervisory process, as well as in the relationships between the teacher and the supervisors. In some instances, the supervisory process was thorough and fair, while in others, the process appeared hurried and results of teacher evaluations were of little value for either formative or summative purposes. Furthermore, there were indications in some cases that the observers were biased, and decisions appeared to be unrelated to the observed quality of the teaching performance. This suggests a need to look further at the supervisory process.

Table 6
Summary of Findings

The Provincial Perspective	The Teachers' Perspective	The Supervisors' Perspective	The Organizational Perspective

• Supervisors estimated 217 tenured teachers provided unsatisfactory service.
 	
• 111 tenured teachers who were providing unsatisfactory service were encouraged to take early retirement, go on long term disability, resign or were dismissed during the '91/'92 school year.
 	
• Supervisors tended to be successful in inducing teachers to leave their teaching positions when they followed a comprehensive supervisory process.
 	
• Settlements tended to be higher, and consequences for supervisors tended to be greater where a comprehensive supervisor process was not completed before the superintendent moved to dismiss the teacher.
 	
• The Board of Reference hearings seemed to define a set of minimum competency standards.
	• The teachers perceived the supervisory process as following a vague, haphazard series of steps.
	
	• The supervisor's decision to move to dismiss the teacher seemed to be affected as much by events external to the teaching situation as by the teacher's classroom performance.
	
	• The teachers felt they had been more successful when:
	  • there was a supportive environment, and
	  • there was a personal relationship with the supervisor.
	
	• The effects on the teacher included:
	  • a sense of loss of control of personal and professional choices,
	  • the loss of self-confidence and increased doubts about his or her teaching ability,
	  • physical problems such as weight loss, headaches, and difficulty sleeping, and
	  • a feeling of isolation from colleagues, and supervisors.
		• The supervisors tended to view the supervisory process as moving through a relatively well defined series of steps. These included:
		  • identification of the marginal teacher,
		  • confirmation through classroom observations,
		  • identification of specific problems,
		  • provision of time and assistance to improve,
		  • further classroom observations, and
		  • the decision to move to dismissal.
		
		• All supervisors experienced some form of disruptive action by the teacher. These included:
		  • extended sick leave,
		  • appeals for sympathy from the staff,
		  • threats of legal action and
		  • refusal to participate in parts of the mandated process.
		
		• The emotional costs experienced by the supervisors included:
		  • frustration,
		  • remorse and concern for the teacher,
		  • fatigue,
		  • anxiety and self-doubt, and
		  • relief that the decision had been made.
			• The supervisors felt that the manner in which they worked with teachers whose performance was unsatisfactory helped shape the organizational culture.
			
			• Each of the supervisors expressed a concern for the ethic of justice. Their interpretations included:
			  • acting fairly,
			  • following the rules of natural justice, and/or
			  • providing honest and candid feedback to the teacher.
			
			• Some supervisors provided examples of how they had maintained a caring relationship with the teacher throughout the supervisory process.
			
			• A few supervisors found that the conflict which developed between the supervisor and the teacher made it impossible to maintain a caring relationship.
			  • The relationship between the teacher and the administrator tended to deteriorate when the supervisor perceived that the teacher had different core values than did the administrators.

Table 7
Summary of Discussion

The Provincial Perspective	The Teachers' Perspective	The Supervisor's Perspective	The Organizational Perspective

• Less than 1% of tenured teachers had their contracts terminated or were forced to resign.
 	
• There were approximately nine times as many induced exits as formal terminations; a finding which was consistent with Bridges (1992) who reported 12 times as many induced exits as formal terminations.
 	
• There was relatively little involvement of the A.T.A. staff officers with teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory.
 	
• It was speculated that there may be a tendency for teachers who are faced with the stresses associated with the supervisory process to withdraw and isolate themselves from others, including those like the staff officers of the A.T.A. who could provide support.
 	
• The size of inducements to resign appears to be affected by:
  • the philosophy of the supervisor or the board,
  • the manner in which the supervisor developed the case. Larger settlements tended to occur where there was administrative error.
	• The strengths of the supervisory process outlined by the teachers included:
	  • increased formal observation and monitoring,
	  • provision of assistance to teachers, and
	  • attempts to help the teachers find their appropriate niche in teaching.
	
	• The weaknesses associated with the supervisory process included:
	  • biased observers,
	  • unethical practices,
	  • hurried evaluations, and
	  • provision of mixed messages to teachers following a classroom evaluation.
	
	• The teachers felt that an ethic which combined caring and justice, rather than an ethic of justice was essential to the supervisory process.
	
	• The actions of supervisors and their unwillingness to engage in a meaningful conversation with the teachers convinced them that they were a 'disposable commodity', rather than a person with hopes, dreams, fears, and aspirations.
		• In most cases, the supervisors were aware of the unsatisfactory performance before the formal complaints. The complaints seemed to motivate the supervisors to take some action.
		
		• The supervisors tended to form judgments based on the actions of students as much as the actions of the teachers.
		
		• The administrators had difficulty trying to fulfill both the summative and formative roles. Role ambiguity and the subsequent lack of role clarity may have increased the stress felt by the administrators.
		
		• The disruptive actions of the teachers tended to increase the time required to complete the supervisory process, and to increase the frustration experienced by the supervisor.
		
		• A variety of factors seemed to affect the emotional impact on the supervisors. These included:
		  • ethical conflicts,
		  • interpersonal conflict between the teacher and the supervisor,
		  • concern for the effect of the supervisory process on the rest of the staff, and
		  • frustration with the legal process.
			• The forced resignation of a teacher seemed to provide district teachers with messages about
			  • commitment to quality education,
			  • commitment to helping teachers improve, and
			  • the informal rules and practices of the school jurisdiction
			
			• It appeared that supervisors felt that in addition to treating teachers fairly, they had to be perceived as treating teachers fairly.
			
			• It seemed that those administrators who maintained a caring relationship with the teacher throughout the supervisory process were able to use the following principles to guide their actions:
			  • absolute value. Each person must be regarded as having absolute value and therefore, no person can be used as a means to an end.
			  • equal respect. All persons must be treated in a manner which recognizes that they are of equal worth, and are capable of making their own choices.
			  • commitment to providing the best quality education. The need to maintain a caring relationship cannot become a reason to tolerate unsatisfactory performance.

"Teaching as Technical Expertise"

The review of files of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the review of the Board of Reference judicial summaries, and the interviews with supervisors suggest that the evaluation of teachers involved comparison of the teachers' performance to standards of minimum competency defined in board policy. The sole purpose of the evaluation was to determine whether teachers met the standards of minimum competency. Where it was demonstrated that teachers failed to achieve a satisfactory standard, they were given both opportunity and assistance to improve, and were then re-evaluated against the same standards. Furthermore, although teachers saw the supervisory process as proceeding through a vague and haphazard series of events, they also recognized that the purpose of the evaluation was accountability — to ensure they provided quality service to students.

This approach is consistent with that outlined by Sergiovanni (1991) who argued that quality control — attempts to ensure teachers consistently meet acceptable standards of performance — is "an important outcome and a highly significant responsibility for principals and other supervisors" (p. 285). He suggested that the following aspects were a part of such an evaluative process:

- The process is formal and documented.
- Criteria are explicit, standard and uniform for all teachers.
- Criteria are legally defensible as being central to the basic teaching competence.
- Emphasis is on meeting minimum requirements of acceptability.
- Evaluation by administrators...counts the most. (p. 286)

Thus, the findings described in this study are consistent with the approach advocated by Sergiovanni for the evaluation of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. However, the supervisory process did not follow the sequential pattern outlined by Sergiovanni. Furthermore, the supervisory process was more complex than suggested. This deficiency is important, as the complexity and the unknown aspects of the supervisory process seemed to intimidate some supervisors and so increased the level of stress they experienced.

The Need for a Fair and Comprehensive Process

While it is possible to short-circuit parts of the supervisory process, it is apparent that there are long term benefits to the teacher, the supervisor and to the school jurisdiction to provide thorough, comprehensive and fair supervision.

Benefits to the teacher. Most of the teachers interviewed were subjected to hurried and biased evaluations, and so suggestions about possible benefits are based on the converse of their experiences. However, a comprehensive supervisory process appears to enable teachers to gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and to use this information to improve their teaching performance. Furthermore, the spectre of possible termination could provide the motivation to examine one's teaching practices, as most of the teachers interviewed recognized they were experiencing some difficulties, and so accepted the need to improve. This benefit is similar to one noted by the TEPI Study (Alberta Education, in press) which found that teacher evaluation could lead to reflection and self-evaluation. However, it is doubtful that this would occur where the supervisory process was conducted in a haphazard manner.

Furthermore, most of teachers interviewed did not feel they had been treated fairly. They viewed themselves as conscientious and committed teachers who had been forced to leave the teaching profession on the whim of the supervisor. Although they acknowledged they were having difficulties in the classroom, they tended to pass this off to conditions endemic to teaching, not to their own performance. The supervision which they experienced did nothing to dispel this notion. Had the supervisors conducted more rigorous and comprehensive evaluations, and provided more meaningful assistance, the teachers may have felt they had received fair treatment. This may have reduced the bitterness some experienced.

Benefits to the supervisor. The supervisors felt that a comprehensive process was necessary as it helped to remove any doubts associated with the difficult decision to terminate the teacher's contract of employment. The fact that efforts had been made to assist

the teacher, and the teacher had chosen not to accept the assistance, also seemed to help convince the supervisor that the teacher, not the supervisor nor the situation, was responsible for the unsatisfactory performance. This appeared to help many supervisors resolve the dilemma between concern for the teacher and concern for the educational welfare of the students.

Benefits to the school jurisdiction. A major finding of this study is that supervisors believe the forced resignation of a teacher is viewed by other teachers as a significant series of events which affects the organizational culture. By ensuring that teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory were evaluated and supervised through a fair and just process, the senior officials in the school jurisdictions were able to demonstrate their commitment both to the provision of quality education and to the ethic of justice, and thus re-enforce their importance. This, in turn, appears to increase the level of trust and to improve communications between teachers and administrators.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) appears to support this supposition as it argued that sound evaluation practices should promote desirable educational principles and the effective performance of the teaching function. Furthermore, "evaluations should help assure that the institution's goals are understood and pursued, educators' responsibilities specified, students' needs addressed, promised services delivered, professional capabilities advanced, and incompetent or harmful personnel removed" (p. 22). However, for this to happen, the joint committee advocated that evaluations be fair and just, and conducted in a manner which maintains the dignity and worth of the teacher.

This belief was also reported by McLaughlin and Pfiefer (1988):

> The evaluation programs we observed all tried to develop a system of checks and balances to promote reliability and validity of the evaluation process as well as its perceived fairness. In each district, the multiple procedures functioned to give teachers a sense of safety — that a bad day or a less-than-perfect performance would not be the sum of an evaluation or result in unreasonable consequences. Without a sense of professional safety, teachers may divert attention away from the experimentation that might improve their performance, focusing instead on

> maintaining low-risk teaching strategies that meet minimum requirements for success. (p. 42)

Conflict and organizational health. There also seemed to be a benefit to the school system to handle the inherent conflict associated with the supervisory process in a constructive manner. Many of the supervisors interviewed stressed that they took steps to lower the hostile responses to the conflict situations, and so were able to manage the conflict constructively. This approach is consistent with that advocated by Owens (1991) who argued that conflict could either have a positive or a negative effect on the organization. He stated that there was often an emotional response which accompanied each conflict episode. The manner in which the emotional responses associated with conflict are handled tend to have on-going consequences for organizational effectiveness. He suggested that negative reactions to conflict led to a competitive, threatening culture, which in turn led to destructive conflict and declining organizational health. However, where conflict was managed constructively, a supportive, collaborative culture which promoted a productive approach to conflict developed. This, in turn, led to an improvement in organizational health.

Legal considerations. A thorough supervisory process stands the school board in good stead at the point where the teacher must face the decision to resign or have his or her contract of employment terminated. The A.T.A. files suggested that settlements tended to be much smaller where the unsatisfactory performance was carefully documented and where the teacher had been given a chance to improve, but failed to do so. Furthermore, in those instances where the board terminated the contract of employment, and where the teacher appealed the decision to a Board of Reference, the board decision was upheld if the entire supervisory process had been completed thoroughly and fairly.

Failure to engage in sound supervisory practices. If there are benefits to teachers, supervisors and to the school jurisdiction when comprehensive supervisory practices are implemented, why do inadequate practices occur so often? The study suggested a number of reasons. First, it seemed that in many instances where poor

practices occurred, the supervisor was under considerable pressure. This pressure could have been from multiple demands placed on the supervisor and, as a consequence, the supervisor did not expend the time or effort necessary to complete the process properly. The findings suggest, in some cases, the pressure could have originated from trustee concerns about the performance of the supervisor, and subsequent demands to demonstrate more assertive leadership. Regardless of the source of the pressure, it seemed to effect the quality of the supervisory practices.

As well, some of the files revealed that the performance of the teacher was so unsatisfactory that the educational welfare of the students was at risk, and so the decision was made to proceed, even though the process was not complete. Another factor may have been the inexperience and lack of training of the supervisors. Many of the supervisors had only been in their administrative positions for a short period of time, and furthermore, as Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) found, many administrators had never taken part in the evaluation and supervision of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory, and so had no opportunity to gain experience. As well, the frequent turnover of supervisory personnel in some jurisdictions may have contributed to a discontinuity in the supervisory process. In at least one instance, this seemed to cause mixed messages and threats of dismissal without commitment to that decision. Finally, the story told by one teacher suggests that some supervisors believe that they, by virtue of their position, have power over teachers and choose to exercise this power without regard for the adverse consequences of their actions on teachers, and ultimately on the school jurisdiction.

The remainder of this section provides some suggestions on improvements to the supervisory process. These center around improved diagnosis of the problems encountered by the teacher, the development of a model to suggest alternative approaches to the supervisory process, and considerations about the development of supervisory teams.

Diagnosis of Factors of Unsatisfactory Performance

A comparison of the cases in which the supervisory process appeared to be conducted in a just and caring manner and those in which the supervisory process seemed to be poorly done suggests the ability to diagnose reasons why the teacher was performing in an unsatisfactory manner is critical to the success of the process. The manner in which successful supervisors approached the supervisory process suggests a model which may be useful in diagnosing possible reasons for unsatisfactory performance and in suggesting possible approaches to use when working with the teacher.

Use of diagnostic tools. Prior to presenting this model, it is important that some assertions of Foster (1986) be considered, as these will help to keep the potential value of the model in perspective. Foster believed that organizations are social constructs — organizations do not have a reality of their own; rather organizations are mental constructs formed by the perceptions of the individuals who comprise the organization. He argued that "theory in a positivistic sense provides an 'image' of organization, one that may be far removed from its complex reality. Theory provides metaphors and images of schools and, in so doing, helps to structure schools along these lines" (p. 68). Thus, a danger inherent in the use of a theoretical models is that the model may create a simplistic interpretation of the realities of the process and the underlying issues.

Foster (1986) also argued that in making decisions, the educational administrator is advancing a particular set of values, as the manner in which facts are selected and interpreted is influenced by one's values. Because of this, it is necessary to look beyond "What is happening?" to ask more demanding and insightful questions. Thus, Foster would argue that questions such as "Why is this happening?", "What values are guiding my actions?" and "What values are guiding the actions of the teacher?" must be asked.

This suggests that the diagnostic tool is useful only if it helps the administrator gain insights into why the teacher is providing unsatisfactory service, or helps the administrator clarify values which may possibly be in conflict. The danger is that administrators will

attempt to use it as means to predict and control the events which make up the supervisory process.

The model is based on a number of assumptions — assumptions which the reader should not accept without critically examining their trustworthiness. These assumptions include:

1. Teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory can be identified.
2. It is possible to determine if the cause of the unsatisfactory performance can be attributed mainly to the teacher.
3. Three factors, the effectiveness of the teacher, the degree of caring for students demonstrated by the teacher, and degree of culpability for his or her professional performance strongly influence the perceptions and responses of supervisors.
4. Planning and deliberation can help change the supervisory process from a highly charged, emotional process to one which is more reasoned and fair.

Foster (1986) also cautioned that theory is context based, and so themes and tendencies which emerged from this study and led to the development of this model may not be relevant in a different situation. Thus, the model may be useful only if the events occur in a similar context.

Improved diagnosis. It would appear that the supervisor should vary his or her approach to the supervisory process according to the situation. As was mentioned earlier, the problems encountered by the teacher could be a result of the inappropriate actions by the teacher, a mismatch between the talents of the teacher and the particular assignment given to the teacher, or poor working conditions such as inadequate equipment and facilities, unrealistic expectations or unsuitable administrative and management practices.

In a number of the cases in which the supervisory process seemed to be particularly well done, the supervisors took steps to ensure the problems originated with the teacher and not with the teaching assignment or with the supervisor. Some teachers were transferred to different grade levels or subject areas in an attempt to determine if the teacher

could be more successful in a different environment. Other supervisors suggested part-time placements, which would allow more time for the teacher to deal with outside pressures which may have impinged on the teacher's time and energy.

In some situations where there were apparent conflicts between the teacher and the evaluator, the teacher was transferred in order to determine if the teacher could be more successful in a different environment. Other supervisors evaluated their own practices to ensure that their actions were not the source of the problems experienced by the teacher. Thus, an early step in the diagnosis is to determine the cause of problems. The administrator should determine if the problems originate with the teacher, with the situation, or with the supervisor.

Where problems originate with the teacher. If the failures associated with unsatisfactory performance appear to rest with the teacher, the supervisor should attempt to identify the specific problems, and to determine some of the root causes of those problems. The judicial summaries from the Board of Reference hearings indicate a number of competencies teachers are expected to exhibit. These competencies were presented in Chapter 4, and so will not be repeated here. However, the examples of sound supervisory practice described in the interviews would suggest that the supervisor must go further than to simply identify the failure of the teacher to fulfill one or more of those competencies. The supervisors in the study tended to look for the reasons why the teachers failed to provide satisfactory service.

What emerged from the interviews were three factors which the supervisors used to guide their approach in working with the teachers. These were: (a) the overall effectiveness of the teacher, (b) the degree of culpability, and (c) the degree of caring and concern for students demonstrated by the teacher.

Marginal Teacher Descriptors

I believe the three dimensions which emerged from the findings of this study can be combined to form a diagnostic model which may guide administrators in working with teachers who performance is unsatisfactory. This model supportsand extends suggestions put forth by Anderson (1991) and Steinmetz (1985) who urged that supervisors attempt to diagnose the reasons for unsatisfactory performance in order to determine an appropriate approach to use when working with such employees. A description of that model follows.

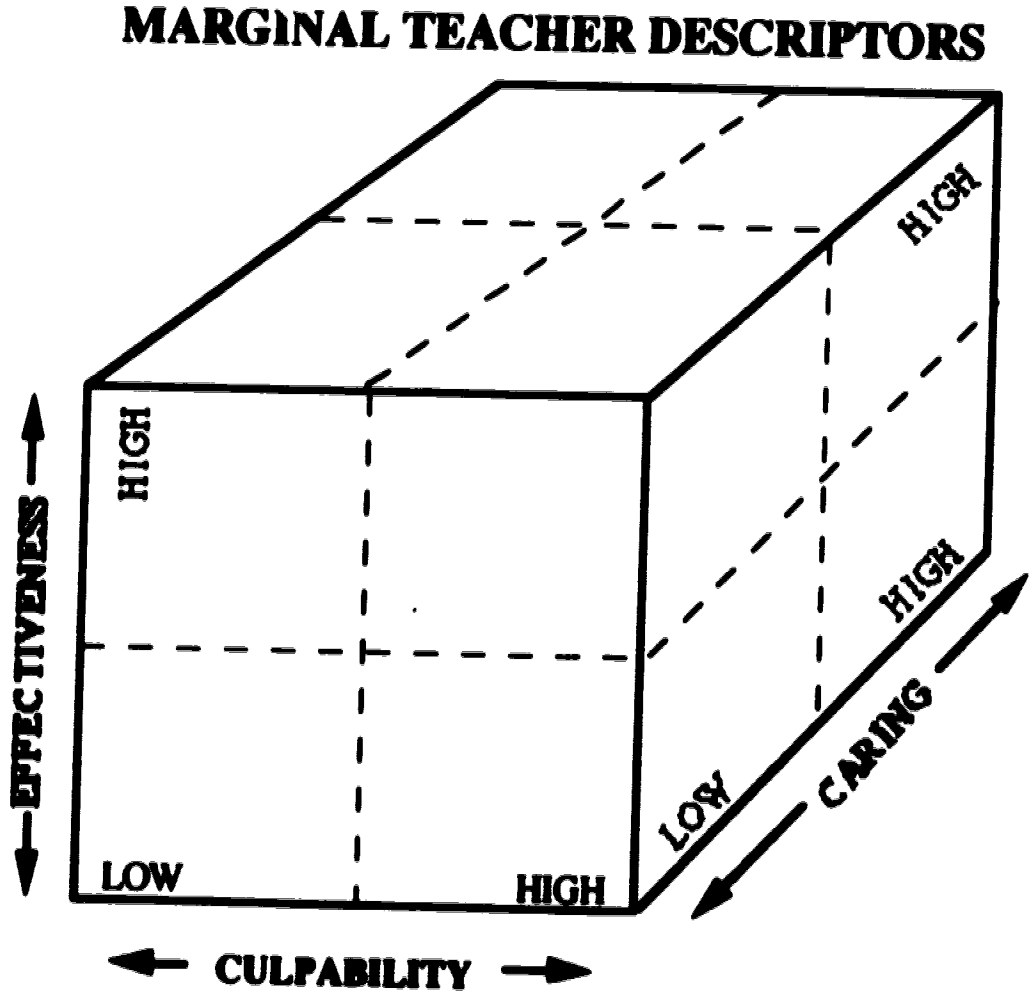
The effectiveness dimension. This dimension represents an overall assessment of the teacher's effectiveness in achieving desired student results. In some instances, the effectiveness can be measured directly. However, in most instances, the effectiveness seemed to be assessed indirectly. Supervisors tended to consider factors which could be observed directly and which have been linked, by research, to teacher effectiveness. Some such factors are time on task, progress in the course compared to other teachers in the same area, student behavior and informal assessments of student work. From this information, the supervisors tended to make judgments about the teachers' effectiveness.

Teacher culpability. Anderson (1991) argued that it is important to determine whether the teacher is culpable (blameworthy) or non-culpable, and to structure the supervisory activities on this determination. If the unsatisfactory performance stems from factors that are within the teacher's control, the teacher would generally be considered to be culpable. Such factors might include laziness, inattentativeness, allowing other responsibilities to take priority over teaching duties, lack of motivation due to stagnation, and emotional or psychological problems which the teacher is unwilling to address. On the other hand, a teacher would be non-culpable if the unsatisfactory performance occurred for reasons beyond the control of the teacher. Such factors might include stress or other forms of illness which has eroded the skills the teacher once had, perceptual problems which prevent the teacher from recognizing his or her weaknesses, or an inability to meet the changing demands of teaching.

Care and concern for the students. The nature of the supervisory process also seemed to be affected by the degree of care and concern for students demonstrated by the teacher. The supervisors tended to use a different approach with teachers who were perceived as caring and committed to the educational well-being of the students than for teachers who were physically, psychologically or emotionally abusive to students. Parental and student complaints, and informal monitoring tended to provide information on the degree of caring.

The marginal teacher descriptor model. This model suggests the three factors are independent, and so can be thought of as falling along three separate dimensions. By considering high or low culpability, effectiveness and caring, eight cells are defined.

Figure 2



By only considering the four cells which correspond to low teacher effectiveness, the model can be simplified. This is illustrated in figure 3.

The four remaining cells represent the following characteristics:

Cell 1. Low effectiveness, low culpability and low caring.

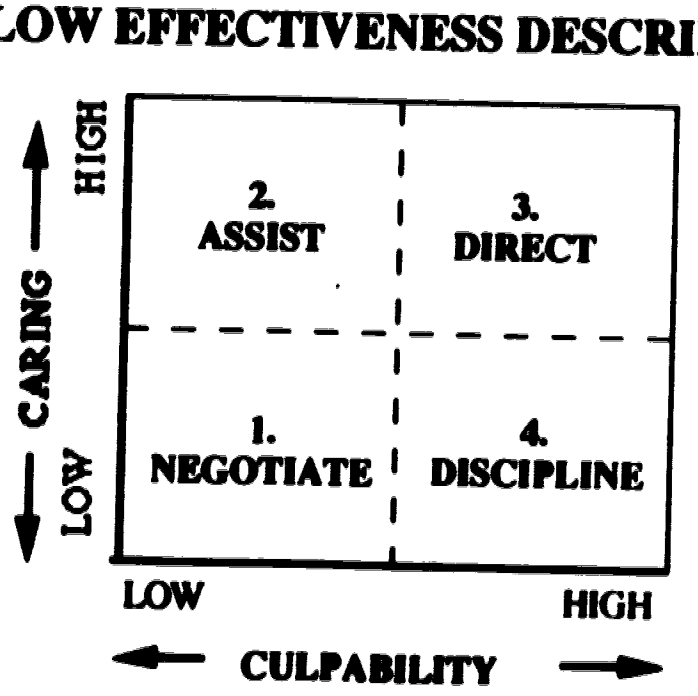
Cell 2. Low effectiveness, low culpability and high caring.

Cell 3. Low effectiveness, high culpability and high caring.

Cell 4. Low effectiveness, high culpability and low caring.

Application of this model is based on findings from this study and on the premise outlined by Anderson (1991). The supervisors who responded in this study suggested that more assistance and time to remedy problems was provided to those teachers who demonstrate caring and concern for students than those who were perceived as non-caring or unconcerned about students, as there seems to be a greater urgency to remove the latter from positions which involve direct contact with students. Anderson recommended the use of a disciplinary approach when working with marginal teachers who are culpable, and a remedial approach with those who are non-culpable. In the simplified model, one word

Figure 3



descriptors have been added to suggest an approach which may be workable with teachers with the characteristics found in the various cells. These descriptors are (a) negotiate, (b) assist, (c) direct, and (d) discipline.

Negotiate is the term used to suggest an approach for unsatisfactory performers who are uncaring, yet are non-culpable. There is a need to provide opportunities for growth and change, yet the underlying assumption is that students and the teacher may be better served if the teacher leaves the profession. In other words, the opportunities for growth and change may well be in a career other than teaching. The suggested approach would be to help the teacher realize that his or her performance is having an adverse affect on students and on the teacher, and to explore ways to assist the teacher to move to other types of work. The specific nature of this assistance will be explored further in a later section.

Assist is used to suggest significant time, energy, and resources should be invested in the teacher who is caring and concerned for the students, and non-culpable. The assistance could be in the form of helping the teacher develop specific skills in which he or she is deficient — an approach which would be consistent with the metaphor of *teaching as technical expertise* (Alberta Education, in press). Another form of assistance would involve finding ways to help the teacher deal with non-technical concerns such as loss of self-esteem, or self-confidence. This may involve the use of specialists such as counselors available through employee assistance programs.

Direct is the term chosen to indicate an approach used for teachers who are culpable, yet have a high degree of caring and concern for the students. A supervisor using this approach might attempt to diagnose specific failures to meet minimum competencies such as lack of planning, or inadequate evaluation of student work. The supervisor would direct the teacher to correct those difficulties, and would check to see that the necessary changes have been implemented. It is likely that such a supervisory cycle may need to be ongoing.

Discipline is appropriate for the teacher who is both uncaring and culpable. The goal of such a supervisory program would be to end the teacher's contract of employment as

expeditiously as possible. The approach may involve both formal evaluation against the standards of minimum competency and directives to implement necessary changes to rectify any shortcomings. The teacher would be given time to implement the changes and follow-up evaluations would occur. Failure to implement the directives would result in reprimands. In addition, the supervisor would likely engage in increased monitoring in an attempt to reduce abusive incidents. Any evidence of such incidents would also result in written reprimands.

Thus, the model suggests that the supervisory approaches should be tailored to the teacher's unique characteristics as these relate to their teaching performance. The low effectiveness descriptors model further suggests that two characteristics which are influential in determining the supervisory approach are the degree of caring and the degree of culpability. The intent is not to prescribe a supervisory program to use with a teacher with particular characteristics, but rather to show how better diagnosis of the problems, and a greater understanding of the aspirations of the teacher could affect the approach used in working with the teacher.

Conferencing and Report Writing

One of the weaknesses of the supervisory process which was apparent in some of the files from the Alberta Teachers' Association, from the interviews with the teachers, and from some interviews with supervisors was the poor quality of the conferencing and report writing which followed formal teacher evaluations. Thus, there is a need to consider ways to improve the quality of the teacher conferences and the quality of the written report. The supervisors and teachers suggested that the key to improving the conferencing and written reports lies with creating a system-wide commitment to honest, candid and timely feedback following the classroom visits. Furthermore, care must be taken to ensure that the messages given to the teacher have internal consistency and are somewhat compatible with recommendations given in previous reports.

This approach is similar to that advocated by McLaughlin and Pfiefer (1988) who found that effective feedback procedures require timeliness, and specificity. To meet the timeliness requirement, the feedback should occur as soon after the observation as possible. Specificity is important because it provides the data to engage the teacher in discussions about the interpretations the evaluator has made. The specificity also provides the teacher with a signal that the evaluator has taken seriously his or her responsibilities as observer .

Furthermore, administrators should be provided with opportunities for inservice on conferencing and report writing, practice and, finally, peer review of actual written reports.

The Use of Supervisory Teams

The interviews and files suggested that the more appropriate supervisory practices occurred when a number of administrators worked as members of a team. An amalgam of the ideas presented by the various supervisors would suggest that an ideal team would have at least five members, each with clearly defined responsibilities:

Summative evaluation. Three members would be responsible for the summative evaluation and ongoing monitoring. In most instances, two members would be from the school, while the third would be from the central office staff. It would be advantageous to have two persons from the school involved in the summative evaluation, as throughout the evaluation of a teacher, school based administrators tend to experience greater stress than do central office administrators. Having two school based administrators involved would allow them to support each other.

Providing assistance. One person would be asked to provide assistance to the teacher following the identification of specific problems, and would have the necessary expertise to help the teacher gain the skills and competencies he or she was lacking. This person would not have to be an administrator; in fact, there may be advantages to having a master teacher act in this capacity.

Process observer. The final member of the team would have the responsibility of the outside critic. This person would be responsible to ensure that the process remained fair and just, and to question decisions to ensure that the decisions were made on a rational, rather than emotional basis. This approach has been used by the Charlotte school system to ensure the "presence of a district-wide observer/evaluators who serve as a mechanism to insure quality control" (McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988, p. 35).

In addition to the individual responsibilities, the members of the team could be expected to provide support for other team members and to assist in the planning for any possible disruptive actions which may be undertaken by the teacher. While the process which leads to the forced resignation or dismissal of a teacher is very difficult on the teacher, it was found that there was also a strong emotional cost to the supervisor. Thus, by developing a support network, some of the stress and adverse emotional reactions experienced by supervisors may be reduced.

Themes related to the supervisory process dominated the interviews, files and judicial summaries of the Board of Reference hearings. However, two other prevalent themes also emerged. The theme related to caring and justice will be considered next.

ISSUES OF CARING AND JUSTICE

Both the teachers and the supervisors commented frequently, and in a variety of ways on various aspects of caring and justice. While many teachers and supervisors talked of the need to treat teachers fairly and to maintain a caring relationship with the teacher, there was a subtle difference between the two perspectives. The administrators tended to talk of two separate ethics — the ethic of justice and the ethic of care, while the teachers tended to speak of a single ethic, the ethic of caring and justice. The supervisors generally felt it was **necessary** to treat the teachers fairly, and it was **desirable** to maintain a caring relationship, while the teachers generally felt it was impossible to treat teachers fairly unless a caring relationship was maintained.

In chapter two, it was argued that there is a single ethic — that of caring and justice, rather than two separate ethics of justice and of care. The importance of this distinction is that if a caring relationship is an integral part of the ethic, then the supervisor must interact with each teacher as a person, not as a commodity, or a replaceable part. Under this ethic, the supervisor could not depersonalize the relationship, but rather the supervisor and the teacher would strive to maintain it through the difficult circumstances.

Conflict and the Ethic of Caring and Justice

It was apparent in many of the cases that the supervision of teachers whose performance was deemed unsatisfactory led to conflict and, in some instances, to hostility between the teacher and the administrator. Owens (1991) claimed that conflict between two parties results from commitment to mutually incompatible goals, while hostility is often an outgrowth caused by the emotional responses of the participants to the conflict. Furthermore, this hostility is often carried forward from one conflict episode to the next. As hostility appeared to occur in a number of the cases studied, the outcome of the latent hostility between teacher and supervisor needs to be explored.

Each of the teachers interviewed harbored feelings of hostility toward at least one supervisor with whom he or she worked. The cases suggest that some of the hostility may have been a response to the sense of being devalued as a person or the sense of diminished self-worth caused by the actions of the supervisor. For example, the only time Allan displayed anger and hostility toward his superintendent was when he recounted the incident in which the superintendent directed the substitute to allow the students to use their notebooks during the exam. The superintendent had accepted concerns from parents that Allan had failed to prepare the students for the exams as being valid, and so acted without discussing the matter with the teacher. While Allan acknowledged that the superintendent was attempting to be fair to the students, he interpreted this as an act of disrespect; as a questioning of his integrity, for it implied that Allan would treat the students unfairly. Allan's sense of self-worth appeared to be diminished by this action.

Betty described similar feelings while talking of the incident in which the principal informed her that a child would not be going on a field trip by putting a "sticky note" on the window, rather than coming out of his office and speaking to her. She felt degraded by this action, and this had an ongoing, adverse effect on the relationship with the principal.

Charles talked of being "snubbed" by both the principal and the vice-principal during social gatherings and in the school setting. He perceived this as an indication that the administrators felt that talking with Charles was beneath them, and this perception seemed to contribute to his decreased self-esteem and his growing sense of isolation.

These examples support the conjecture that the hostility between teacher and supervisor was affected more by the emotional response to the sense of being diminished or devalued than by the actual conflict over the attainment of incompatible goals. Furthermore, this interpretation seem to imply that hostility can be reduced if the supervisors make efforts to ensure that a relationship which does not devalue the teacher is maintained.

This belief is supported by the ideas of Maslow (1980) who developed a theory of human motivation. Maslow believed that people were motivated to act in a manner which led to the fulfillment of basic human needs. He claimed that people first strive to meet physiological needs such as requirements for food, water, and shelter. However, once these needs are fulfilled, "higher needs emerge and these...dominate" (p. 94). The physiological needs are followed in turn by safety, affection and a sense of belonging, esteem and finally self-actualization needs. As the teachers interviewed had their physiological and safety needs met, Maslow's theory suggests they would likely tend to be motivated to fulfill either needs of belonging and affection, or self-esteem needs.

Fris (personal communication, Oct. 1, 1993) argued that "personal diminishment is a common and potent factor in conflicts" and suggested that it may appear during the supervisory process if the administrator criticizes the teacher rather than his or her performance. Thus, those actions of the supervisor which tend to devalue the teacher's

sense of self-worth or which lead to feelings of personal diminishment may create a hostile response from the teacher, thereby increasing the level of conflict.

It is also necessary to consider some possible effects of conflict and hostility from the supervisor's perspective. Several supervisors described incidents in which the teacher they were evaluating responded to the criticisms by lashing out at the supervisor. In at least one instance, the supervisor chose to respond to the teacher's frequent outbursts by avoiding him as much as possible. The avoidance approach to conflict was one of four noted by Owen (1991), and one which Bridges (1992) identified as the most common administrative response to working with teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. However, it is a response which seems inappropriate in the series of events which comprise the forced resignation of the teacher, as an avoidance response may jeopardize the relationship between the supervisor and the teacher, rather than enhance it.

Fisher and Ury (1991) argued that the resolution of a dispute involves maintaining an interest in both the substance of the dispute and in the relationship which exists between the people who must solve the dispute. They claimed that "most negotiations take place in the context of an ongoing relationship where it is important to carry on each negotiation in a way that will help rather than hinder future relations and future negotiations" (p. 20). Furthermore, the authors identified five basic human needs — security, economic well-being, a sense of belonging, recognition and control over one's life, and maintained that each party in a dispute should consider how the other party will attempt to meet those basic needs as a result of the changing circumstance. They contended that attempts to resolve disputes "are not likely to make much progress as long as one side believes that the fulfillment of their basic human needs is being threatened by the other" (p. 49). Thus, the supervisor needs to be sensitive to the teacher's concerns about the economic impact of the forced resignation, about the effect of such an event on the teacher's sense of belonging, and to the need of the teacher to exert some degree of control over events which shape his or her life. As well, the supervisor should remain sympathetic to the teacher's need to be

recognized for whatever success [illegible]d. This suggests that the supervisor must continue to talk [illegible]acher throughout the supervisory process. In other words, it would [illegible]lution of the supervision of a teacher whose performance is unsatisfa[illegible]ntaining a caring relationship between the teacher and the supervisor.

The effect of the teaching metaphor. Earlier, it was indicated that the dominant metaphor used in the evaluation of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory is one which views teaching as technical expertise. This metaphor tends to focus on skills and competencies, and so depersonalizes the role of the teacher. Furthermore, this metaphor is one which places much of the control for the supervisory process with the supervisor. For example, the TEPI study found:

> In the teaching as technical expertise metaphor the person conducting the evaluation plays a key role, regardless of the instrument used, and the teacher plays a relatively passive role. The teacher has little say about what data are collected and how they are interpreted. All the power lies in the hands of the evaluator. (Alberta Education, in press, p. 5)

The TEPI study concluded: "The studies in this report reinforce the notion that teacher evaluation involves the relationship of two people both of whom must share a willingness to participate in and an understanding of the process" (Alberta Education, in press, p. 306). Both the TEPI study and the comments from the teachers interviewed suggest that because the power and control rests mainly with the supervisor, he or she should assume the greater responsibility for maintaining a caring relationship.

In a profession which is as personal as is teaching, it often appears that supervisors must be as concerned about the teacher's emotional and psychological well-being as they are about the teachers' ability to achieve the standards of minimum competence. Adherence to the ethic of caring and justice provides a more powerful means to assist the teacher in this regard. Callan (1991) arrived at this conclusion and it seems to be appropriate here:

> If the sense of justice is aligned with unselfish caring, then it has a formidable ally in resisting any slide toward injustice; and even if one's only interest is the avoidance of the latter, it would be foolish to overlook the power of that alliance.

> Ironically, the voice of justice would seem liable to fall altogether silent unless it combines with a different voice. (p. 13)

EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS

The supervisory process which leads to involuntary job loss often has a profound emotional effect on both the person who has lost his or her job and on the supervisor. It was noted earlier that Jones (1979) found that "involuntary career loss is often a traumatic and devastating experience for an individual....It is also important to realize that grief over the loss of career may well be more acute than over the death of a loved one" (p. 197). Phillips and Older (1977) and Bruce (1990) both stated that employees who provide unsatisfactory service have the potential to create enormous stress for the supervisor. The findings of this study support these conclusions.

What follows are some suggestions on how the adverse emotional effects on the teacher and the supervisor can possibly be reduced. The ideas represent ways supervisors can build confidence in their decisions, and develop more alternative to use during negotiations.

Building Confidence in the One's Decision

Some supervisors seemed confident in the decisions which lead to the teacher's forced resignation, while others seemed to replay the decisions many times, and each time questioned whether the correct decision had been made. The supervisors who were confident of their decision tended to: (a) be more willing to discuss the organizational values and beliefs which undergird the school system, (b) talk openly about the emotional effects of the process, and (c) consider possible undesirable outcomes.

Organizational values and beliefs. Some supervisors, particularly those who had served the same jurisdiction for a long period of time, clearly understood the fundamental values and beliefs of their school system, and used these as the basis of their decision. They tended to recognize the inherent conflict between certain values, particularly those which resulted from concern for the welfare of the teacher and concern for the educational well-being of the students, but were able to use their value system to resolve the conflict.

Furthermore, these supervisors were willing to discuss organizational values, and often expressed their commitment to the values in such a way that it was apparent that the organizational values and their own personal values were congruent.

Discussion of emotional consequences. A number of supervisors commented on the importance of discussing the emotional effects of various events; for example, the nature of the supervisory process often leading to hostility, anxiety, frustration and feelings of guilt. Moreover, they suggested that it required a conscious effort to create an environment where such discussions were possible, as there is a tendency for supervisors to become closed and guarded about their emotions.

Some guidelines on creating an environment conductive to such discussions were offered by Peck (1987) where he talked of developing a sense of community:

> Community is a safe place precisely because no one is attempting to heal or convert you, to fix you, to change you. Instead, the members accept you as you are. You are free to be you. And being so free, you are free to discard defenses, masks, disguises; free to seek your own psychological and spiritual health; free to become your whole and holy self. (p. 68)

Peck goes on to suggest there is also a need to recognize that each day brings its own crisis, but that crisis brings both danger and hidden opportunity. The events which are apart of the supervisory process often create a crisis for both teacher and supervisor, and consequently, there is a need to talk openly of the danger and the opportunity inherent in these events.

Isolation of teachers. There also seems to be a tendency for teachers to become isolated from family, friends, and others who could provide assistance and support during an emotionally trying time. Each of the teachers interviewed mentioned that his or her self-esteem was affected and this made it difficult to associate with colleagues or friends. The review of the A.T.A. files showed that very few teachers whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory approached the staff officers for assistance. A possible reason for this might be that the teacher had withdrawn to the point where even requesting help was

difficult. Because of this, colleagues and supervisors should be encouraged to provide as much emotional support as possible.

The need to consider undesirable outcomes. An assistant superintendent met with members of the supervisory team to consider all the possible ramifications of the supervisory process, and to consider how each member would feel if an undesirable outcome occurred. For example, he raised the possibility that the teacher may suffer from a nervous breakdown due to the increased stress associated with the formal evaluation and then asked "What would their reactions be to such an occurrence? Were the concerns with the teaching performance great enough to warrant the risk?".

The common thread running through these suggestions is that members of the supervisory team must have an open and supportive climate in which discussion of soft topics such as one's feelings, or the ethical dilemmas found in certain situations become the norm, rather than the exception.

Developing Additional Alternatives

The survey of superintendents related to the forced resignation of teachers suggested that financial incentives are, by far, the greatest inducement used to encourage teachers to resign. Other inducements are used, but are used far less frequently. One alternative that is used extensively in other industries is outplacement counseling. Outplacement counseling is a multi-faceted counseling program which Brammer and Humberger (1984) described as "a process of helping terminated employees face the crisis of job loss with renewed self-esteem and to conduct a positive job placement or retraining campaign" (p. 1).

Components of Outplacement Counseling. The components of an outplacement counseling program should be tailored to meet the needs of the individuals involved and of the school board. However, most programs have some or all of the following components: (a) personal counseling, (b) career counseling, (c) job targeting, (d) job campaign, and (e) on-going support. Each component is designed to deal with different problems or obstacles created by involuntary job loss.

Drevets (1989) stressed the need to care for the employee immediately following involuntary job loss:

> Before one can begin to consider working with the idea of a new job, one must work with the loss of the old one. The necessity of identifying and beginning a new career, when the needs for security, self-direction, purpose and future are not being fulfilled, results in turmoil. . . . It is important here for the client to experience a healing process. An understanding of this by the counselor is critical in the effective assistance of individuals who are experiencing such a crisis. (p. 3)

However, at the same time that the need for support is the greatest, the employee may find it difficult to ask colleagues or friends to provide the help that is needed. Morin and Yorks (1982) and Kingsley (1984) found that many employees become isolated from their colleagues and so do not access support which may have been provided. Morin and Yorks also found that many colleagues do not know how to react to the discharged employee. While they may be sympathetic, they do not want to appear to side with the employee in a potential conflict with the employer. As a result, the employee often receives little support from other members of the work group.

This pattern seemed to be consistent with the experiences related by each of the teachers interviewed.

Possibilities in Alberta. Outplacement or career transition counseling would appear to be a viable program to assist teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. Many of these teachers realize their present level of effectiveness is inadequate, but feel trapped in the teaching profession. Jevne and Zingle (1991) found that "teachers tend to be 'one career track' thinkers....In other words, there is a need for teachers to be assisted in establishing themselves in an alternate career if appropriate" (p. 253). They recommended that the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan "encourage or jointly sponsor the establishment of regular opportunities for teachers to consider career transition" (p. 253). It would appear that the momentum is present for development of meaningful inducements for career changes for teachers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

The study on the forced resignations of teachers has implications for further research, for supervisors, and for school boards. The purpose of this final section is to consider some of these implications.

Implications for Further Research

Two aspects will be considered: (a) ways in which this study could have been improved, and (b) related areas of study.

Possible improvements to the study. The original intent was to interview only teachers who had experienced a decrease in competence due to health related reasons, and who subsequently had been released from his or her teaching position. This criteria proved to be too restrictive, and so teachers with a wider variety of backgrounds were selected. The initial identification came from the files of the A.T.A., and as has been mentioned, this provided a very small pool of possible respondents. It might prove beneficial for future researchers to consider other means of identifying teachers in order to develop a larger pool of potential respondents.

Another improvement is related to the feedback from supervisors. Originally, it was hoped that the administrators would meet to discuss the preliminary findings, and to provide further elaboration on some aspects of the study. Initially, all but one agreed to attend such a meeting. However, while the meeting was arranged and a summary of the findings was circulated, pressures from their job prevented all but one from attending. Therefore, the meeting was canceled. However, it would have been possible to get some feedback from individual supervisors through telephone interviews. This was not done.

Related areas of study. There has been extensive study of the effects of forced resignations or involuntary job loss on employees in various sections of private industry. This study provides some insight into the effects of forced resignations on teachers, but while supervisors described case histories which involved principals, and while the A.T.A. files provided histories of principals who were in difficulty, none were interviewed.

Furthermore, study related to the effects of involuntary job loss on school superintendents is also needed, as superintendents face a much greater risk of such an event occurring than do other members of the educational community.

Implications for Supervisors

There have been a number of suggestions for supervisors throughout the discussion sections and in this chapter. However, three need to be stated explicitly.

- **Supervision is a complex process.** Administrators should recognize and accept that the supervisory process is a long and complex process which does not follow the linear progression suggested in teacher evaluation policies. Supervisors who work with marginal or unsatisfactory teachers need to become familiar with the various stages, and with the possible problems associated with each stage.
- **School jurisdictions should develop supervisory teams.** Following the identification of a teacher whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory, the school jurisdiction should establish a team of school and central office administrators to conduct the supervisory process. The purpose of the supervisory teams would be (a) to ensure the use of multiple evaluators to increase the trustworthiness of the data and subsequent decisions, (b) to provide support to the other members of the supervisory team, especially to the members who have the most direct contact with the teacher whose performance is unsatisfactory, and (c) to assure an ongoing review that the process is fair and just and is conducted in a manner which respects the dignity of the teacher.
- **Greater emphasis should be placed on ongoing inservice.** The inservice program should focus on the development of supervisory skills, including better diagnostic skills, teacher evaluation, conferencing and report writing, and strategies for working with teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. The inservice should also acquaint the supervisors with a more realistic understanding of the nature of the supervisory process, as supervisors need to be aware that the supervisory process is

often very time consuming and continues for a long period. Furthermore, the supervisors need to be aware of the potential effects on the both the supervisor and the teacher in order to find ways to alleviate some of the adverse consequences.

Implications for School Systems

School boards need to consider the following policy implications:

- **Role clarity.** Policies on teacher evaluation and supervision need to be reviewed to ensure that supervisors have clearly defined roles with respect to summative and formative evaluation. The appropriate role for the principal when working with teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory is to participate in the summative evaluation. The principal's formative responsibilities should be limited to providing the teacher with the opportunity to receive assistance.
- **Develop means for the teacher to exit with dignity.** School boards should consider developing policies on employee assistance programs, outplacement counseling and early retirement packages in order to provide the teacher a greater number of options for leaving the teaching profession.

In addition, individual trustees and school boards need to consider ways to meet the following responsibilities:

- **Communicate concerns about the unsatisfactory performance of teachers.** In each case history considered in this study, the supervisors did not take action until there were complaints from parents, students or trustees. Thus, when trustees become aware of concerns about the professional performance of a teacher, they should communicate such concerns to the administrators, and apply pressure on administrators to ensure that the concerns are investigated.
- **Provide support for administrators.** The evaluation of teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory is often time-consuming, and emotionally draining. In addition, the administration, especially the school based administration, is at risk of becoming alienated from staff, and of being pressured to protect, rather than evaluate

the teacher. For these reasons, trustees need to recognize the personal costs to the administrator and to verbalize their support throughout the supervisory process.

- **Know and follow the rules of natural justice.** The school board must recognize that teachers have the right to be aware of all the grounds for dismissal and the right to be heard by an unbiased panel. Thus, while individual trustees have a responsibility to communicate concerns about unsatisfactory performance to the administration, they must leave the responsibility of working with and evaluating the teachers to the administration in order to remain unbiased. Furthermore, trustees must re-enforce the belief that the supervisory process must be fair and just, and conducted in a manner which respects the dignity of the teacher.

Implications for Researchers

Most of the literature related to the supervisory process suggests that it is a straight forward, rational process. (For example, see Sergiovanni (1991), McLaughlin and Pfeifer (1988) and The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988)). The findings of this study indicate that this is not a complete description of the supervisory process. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to:

- **Describe the complexities of the supervisory process.** Researchers should more fully investigate and describe the emotional and psychological costs of summative evaluations on supervisors and teachers. These descriptions should form a part of the mainstream literature on teacher supervision and evaluation.

Concluding Statement

The findings of this study have supported a personal belief that a number of teachers who provide unsatisfactory service continue to teach in the public schools of Alberta. Furthermore, the findings suggest that some of these teachers are aware that they are providing unsatisfactory service and would like to leave the teaching profession, but feel powerless to do so. As well, many supervisors tend to be aware of the teachers who provide unsatisfactory service, but often chose to ignore or protect rather than confront the

teacher about the unsatisfactory performance. As a result, teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory continue to teach.

I believe this will continue until school boards and senior administrators find ways to reduce the emotional and psychological costs to both the teachers and the administrators involved. Only then will more teachers and more administrators be willing to address the problem of unsatisfactory performance.

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Appendix A

Superintendent Questionnaire re:

TEACHERS WHOSE PERFORMANCE IS PERCEIVED TO BE UNSATISFACTORY

(Note: The intent of this questionnaire is to gain information on those teachers whose professional instructional competence is perceived to be unsatisfactory. Please do not consider other factors, such as professional relations with other staff members, or inappropriate activities outside of the school, when completing the questions.)

1. JURISDICTION SIZE

i) Please indicate the number of full time equivalent teachers employed at the school level during the 1991-92 school year. *(Include principals, guidance counsellors, and teacher-librarians).* _____

ii) Please indicate the number of students enrolled on Sept. 30, 1991 _____

iii) Please indicate the change in student enrollment from Sept. 30, 1990 _____

2. SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

a) Identification of incompetent teachers

i) If you did not identify any teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory during the 1991/92 school year, please indicate this and return the survey. _____

ii) Please indicate the relative use of each of the various **methods to identify** teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory:

- Supervisor ratings through teacher evaluations. High Moderate Low N/A
- Complaints from parents or students. High Moderate Low N/A
- Student test results. High Moderate Low N/A
- Student ratings. High Moderate Low N/A
- Complaints from other teachers. High Moderate Low N/A
- Informal observations by supervisor. High Moderate Low N/A
- Other (Please specify) High Moderate Low N/A

_____

_____

_____ _____

_____ _____

b) Number of teachers whose service is perceived to be unsatisfactory

Please estimate the number of teachers in your jurisdiction, during the 1991-92 school year, whose professional performance was perceived by supervisors to be unsatisfactory. _____

3. REMEDIATION AND REASSIGNMENT

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following approaches is used to assist those teachers in your jurisdiction whose professional performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory:

• Assistance from a master teacher.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Assistance from an administrator.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Opportunity to visit other teachers.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Professional development related to concerns.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Change of assignment to a different grade level.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Change of assignment to a different subject area.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Transfer to a different school.	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Other (please specify) (n = 9)	High	Moderate	Low	N/A

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. INDUCED EXITS

(The intent of this section is to gain an indication of the frequency with which each of the following means of encouraging a teacher to leave the employ of your jurisdiction has been used.)

a) Early retirement

Please indicate the number of teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory, who were counselled to take early retirement during the 1991/92 school year. _____

b) Forced resignation

Please indicate the number of teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory, who were counselled or pressured, to resign during the 1991/92 school year. _____

c) Long term disability

Please indicate the number of teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory, who went on long term disability during the 1991/92 school year, and have not returned to a teaching position. _____

5. AMOUNT OF PRESSURE APPLIED

Please comment on the amount and nature of pressure which was applied to those teachers noted in the previous question.

Discussion about the teacher's goals and aspirations	Discussions of complaints and concerns of parents and students	Increased summative evaluation	Threat of formal dismissal by the Board

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. FORMAL TERMINATION

Please indicate the number of teachers (in the 1991/92 school year) whose contract of employment was terminated by Board motion under Section 88 of the School Act due to unsatisfactory performance of his or her teaching duties 12

7. NATURE OF INDUCEMENTS

i) Some school jurisdictions provide a variety of inducements to teachers in exchange for their resignation or taking early retirement. Please indicate the extent to which any of the following have been used by your jurisdiction in the period from September 1, 1988 to June 30, 1992.

• Cash settlement	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Sabbatical, followed by 20 days of return service (to provide pension benefits for the teacher)	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Employment as a substitute teacher	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Continuation of benefits for fixed period of time	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Career transition counselling	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Letter of recommendation for a different type of position	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Removal of reports from personnel file	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Agreement to give no information about quality of teaching performance	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
• Other (please specify) (n=3)	High	Moderate	Low	N/A

_____

_____

_____

ii) If cash settlements were used, please the range of amounts for the settlements, or the method used to determine the amounts.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Your responses will remain confidential.

Please return in the enclosed envelope to:
Warren Phillips
Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5