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WHERE ARE THE WOMEN SUPERINTENDENTS?
Jacqueline P. Clement

Women in elementary and secondary education have watched with envy these past few years as their sisters in higher education formed caucuses and affirmative action committees; consulted with and documented for HEW officials their institutions' hiring practices; and generally moved ahead to seek new opportunities in employment and training for women. Women were in demand in university presidents' offices, as assistants to deans, and as members of advisory committees to prestigious councils. Colleges and universities holding government contracts were responding to Presidential Executive Order 11246 which required them to demonstrate that their hiring practices were non-discriminatory with regard to sex as well as race.

Much has been written about this complicated, multi-faceted, delicate, and painful process which is now evolving under the rubric of affirmative action; but while initial activity raised expectations to new heights, closer examination of the current scene suggests that despite all the rhetoric no area will be so resistant to change as the persistent, pervasive discrimination against women in all aspects of employment. The impact of Executive Order 11246 has nowhere near matched the hopes that it engendered.

KALAMAZOO: A MODEL FOR CHANGE
Carol Ahlum

The Superintendent of Schools in Kalamazoo, Michigan has made one of his performance objectives the elimination of sexism in schools. This action came at the suggestion of his administrative staff, and since September all school personnel have been directed to take this goal as one of their objectives. As the Superintendent informed me, these objectives are not rhetorical. All administrators and teachers are required to keep descriptive records about how they are eliminating sexism.

This fall, Kalamazoo's elementary school teachers are countering sex-stereotyping in a newly-purchased Houghton Mifflin reading program by using a supplementary book-length collection of revisions to their teachers' guides entitled Recommendations for Eliminating Sex Discrimination in the Reading Program. This collection was devised by a School Board committee of teachers, administrators and parents.

Since last spring, all books and audio-visual materials bought by the Kalamazoo Schools Instructional Media Department are evaluated before purchase to ensure the acquisition of nonsexist and nonracist materials. The guidelines used in this evaluation were developed under the direction of the Media Director, Lee Jameson, who is in charge of the system's libraries and the audio-visual department.

These developments in the city of Kalamazoo are unique in public education. In no other community are administrators initiating such far-reaching changes in their own practices and formulating programs to influence the development of nonsexist attitudes and behavior in their colleagues. How has this happened and why? I spent a week in Kalamazoo talking with both educators and citizens to find out.

A group called the Committee to Study Sex Discrimination in the Kalamazoo Schools (CSSD), created by the School Board in December 1971, has been the impetus behind this change. After eighteen months studying major aspects of the school system (personnel, physical education, elementary textbooks, selected high school courses, student-oriented issues), this committee produced five well-documented reports that include comprehensive short and long-range recommendations to the school system. Two additional reports are forthcoming.

NEW OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSES
Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt

What follows is part of the Introduction to a new anthology of syllabi, bibliographies, descriptions of courses and programs called Female Studies VII: Going Strong, available from the Clearinghouse for $4.00 plus .50 for postage and handling.

The growth of women's studies in the past two years has been phenomenal. In 1971, when Female Studies III (the last volume in this series with similar content) was published, there were about 600 courses, about twenty programs. There are now well over 2000 courses and over eighty programs. Geographically they range in the United States from Orono, Maine to Honolulu, Hawaii, and there is a small but growing number of courses in the United Kingdom and Canada. In editing this volume I examined descriptions of some thirty programs and syllabi for over 200 courses.

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SUPERINTENDENTS (continued)

With this awareness, I recently undertook a study of sexual discrimination in the leadership roles of elementary and secondary education ("The Dimensions of Sexual Discrimination in the Leadership of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Potential for Legal Redress," a qualifying paper, Harvard Graduate School of Education, May 1973. Available from the author). What was significant in doing this research was what was not there. The New York Times had almost no articles on the topic; it was not even worthy of note in its Annual Education Review (January 8, 1973). The same was true of other publications. The most dramatic conclusion of the paper was a single small statistic depicting the very tiny number of women who have achieved the position of chief administrator of local education agencies. It is a very tentative statistic based on fitting together many conflicting bits of information and talking with literally scores of people around the country. The more startling revelation was why this material was not more readily available and sought after. Why could I not look at statistical tables, research documents, scholarly articles, and find out all I wanted to know? Surely, people have been collecting statistics about schools for a long time, and writing about schools for even longer. I finally—painfully—had to accept the fact that the role of women in public school administration is really not an issue for very many people.

Commissioner Marland's "Task Force on the Impact of Office of Education Programs on Women" aptly describes the situation:

With respect to collecting information on women, OE [U.S. Office of Education] has not fulfilled its oldest mandate. Despite growing concern about sex discrimination, information concerning the status of men and women in education is still limited. Few national statistics have been collected to supplement piecemeal information on sex discrimination that has come to light in recent years. (p. 58)

So I was only able to identify eighty-four to ninety women who were superintendents of local school districts out of the estimated 12,986 superintendents in the United States. I could add very little to this statistic. Size of district, salary, region or state distribution, age, years of experience, highest degree held—all of the crucial variables which might tell us something about why these eighty-four or ninety women are where they are and, hence, allow us to make inferences about professional women educators who have achieved such positions—are not reported by sex. From incomplete data, I can speculate only that women superintendents are older, more thoroughly trained or experienced, and paid less than their male counterparts. Yet, no adequate statistical picture of women superintendents can be drawn from reviewing the data; nothing significant can be said about variables which might reveal why so few women are in these positions at all.

Specifically, we need information about the number of women who have aspired to administrative roles and failed; the conditions under which more women are likely to aspire; situations in which women are more likely to succeed; the dimensions and range of success (to be a deputy superintendent in New York City or an assistant superintendent in Chicago differs qualitatively from being a superintendent of a school system of 400). We need to know the incentives and rewards for not aspiring; the attributes of "male-ness" that are perceived as essential to competence in administrators; the actual performance of women administrators and men administrators; the specific job description which detracts from its desirability for women and from its feasibility for married women; how single women fare vis-a-vis married women, single men, and married men? What are the specific social mores that discriminate against women public school administrators? What characteristics of women—age, race, training, marital status—are relevant to "success"? We need to evaluate the social and geographic factors, if any, that lead to failure. What are the professional aspirations of women entering as teachers and how do their aspirations differ across such variables as type of institution offering professional and post-secondary training, academic achievement, socio-economic status, geographic region, ethnic background? In short, we need to know what it is in the decision-making functions of the educative process that makes the superintendency seem to both educators and citizens a male job.

Additional information, however, may do little to disturb the public apathy which surrounds the problem or to implement existing legislation aimed at altering the status quo. Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 (The Higher Education Act) applies to all institutions receiving any form of federal aid. Few educators seem aware of this legislation which became effective July 1, 1972—or of its potential for changing behavior toward women. Yet its provisions explicitly prohibit virtually every educational facility in the United States from engaging in sex discrimination. A February 1973, memorandum to Chief State School Officers and School Superintendents from the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, attached to a copy of the law, alerted school officials to the fact that sex discrimination practices were illegal.

Since the passage of Title IX nearly eighteen months ago, school administrators have not yet received specific guidelines for implementing this legislation. Compliance criteria and affirmative action programs from higher education are, however, available as models to those local agencies who wish to plan for action in this area. But I could find no evidence that any had begun to do so in a systematic way.

School administration is now a very secure, male monoply protected by custom, professional organizations, and governmental agencies at all levels. The institutional structure of the public schools, combined with the experiences of women in business and higher education, suggests that women will have to work very hard indeed to attain occupational mobility in elementary and secondary education. The larger society in which the schools exist apparently feels no compulsion to extend career options for women. Men and women who believe that schools, like other organizations, should offer students a variety of role models and recruit talent from a diversified pool of qualified applicants will have to press this minority point of view. Changes are needed—in the socialization process which defines woman's place and limits her aspirations; in the training programs that prepare teachers and administrators; in professional organizations; and in a society which prevents over half of its population from acting on its cherished values of achievement and equality of opportunity. Women, themselves, must take a leadership role in effecting these changes through legislation, through supporting other women, and through demanding adequate public information about given situations in their schools.

The author is Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Hanover, New Hampshire. She is writing an article for a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter about her own story of becoming a school administrator.

MILLS COLLEGE CONFERENCE (continued)

One final observation on the conference as a whole. I heard participants refer to each other as "girls," "gals," and "ladies," with an apparent lack of consciousness about language as a prime shaper of ideas and attitudes.

My chief concern in reviewing this conference is the failure to fulfill the tremendous potential for change which women in education are building both individually and collectively. Self-criticism may help to organize future conferences more optimally. This is not to lose sight of the fact that the gathering was important. At the very least it established a network of communications and contacts that begin to parallel the male-dominated channels of higher education.

Kathy Salisbury, Graduate Student
School of Education, University of Massachusetts/Amherst