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THE MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

A VIEW FROM THE ORCHESTRA

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THE MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

A VIEW FROM THE ORCHESTRA

by

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Dedication

The present study is dedicated to the people who have believed in me the most for the past 50 years. First, my parents, Dick and Eloise Bentley, who instilled the values of creativity and perseverance, both qualities, have contributed to the completion of this project. I miss them both terribly. Second, this work is dedicated to my father and mother-in-law, George and Sue Gideon, who were patient and understood why I was absent at so many family functions the past six years. Third, my sons, Hunter and Thomas, who I treasure and adore, and who kept telling me, "You can do this, Dad" particularly when I was wavering. Finally, the most important dedicatee is my spouse, Debbie Bentley, who read my work, pushed me to greater heights, held my hand when I was down and believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. In the words of Melvin Udall, "You make me want to be a better man."

Acknowledgments

The Grateful Dead popularized the phrase, "What a long, strange trip it's been" in a song written during the decade of the 60's and this is a fitting characterization for the work you are about to read. The most important aspect of producing this work is strictly personal and the people I have met coupled with the literature have provided a foundation for future scholarship and personal growth.

Certainly there are many people to thank before going forward. First and foremost the members of my committee: Dr. Michael Thomas who supervised me during this venture; Dr. Estes who provided inspiration; Dr. Scribner who introduced me to deeper levels of thought in the political realm; Dr. Edwards who allowed to explore qualitative methods and Dr. Lewis who familiarized me with the constructs of communication. To this group I am indebted and appreciate their support and guidance during the production of the study.   Others that must be mentioned include Stephen Shands a friend and colleague who read the texts and provided insight into each of the characters. The discussions we had really added value to the project. The members of the ELP Cycle II cohort, a spectacular assembly of women and men with brilliant minds who provided inspiration and helped turn my life in a more positive direction as well as the women that make the Educational Administration office click; Sarah Cale, Hortensia Palomares, Naomi Alford, and Linda Overton. My colleagues at Eanes ISD including Joani Miles, Sharon Millsap, Jo Carol Kastner, Paula Murray and many others. My colleagues at Ysleta ISD should also be mentioned including Bonnie Ortega, Jerry Molinoski, Anna Perez, Jimmy Loredo and numerous others.

The contribution of the school board members and superintendent of Suburbia ISD must be recognized as they are the central characters in the work and without their willingness to share, there would be no story. They opened their hearts and minds and provided an unbelievable goldmine of information. Their stories are real and they taught me valuable lessons I know will be useful as my life in education unfolds.

In every society since the early days of humans there have been people or institutions designed to convey the knowledge, skills and expectations for the next generation. This group is the "Keepers of the Flame" and today consists of teachers and administrators in the public and private school systems in our communities. The link between the educational professionals and the community is the elected and appointed school board members who serve a key role in the governance of these institutions and while their work often goes unnoticed except during times of crisis, clearly influence the results of tomorrow through their efforts.

THE MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

A VIEW FROM THE ORCHESTRA

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This study examined the motives leading to a school board seat for five sitting board members. The researcher employed a qualitative methodology and the context for text analysis used by directors in the theatre. The primary theoretical framework was constructed from Cavalier's Triarchic Theory of Motivation. The participants and researcher co-constructed the scripts utilized in the analysis. The district superintendent served to provide and enhance the trustworthiness of the texts and the examination. The methods and participants provided a rich contextual data for analysis.

The interview protocol for the five school board members was modeled after a technique introduced during a graduate course with Dr. Nolan Estes. The method was then used during a graduate course taught by Dr. Richard Schott at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and then expanded upon using Seidman's phenomenological structure. A Critical Incident Technique model was used to structure the interview protocol for the superintendent.

The findings from the study revealed the primary source of motivation for board membership is external as prospective board members are recruited by current board members, the superintendent, or influential community members and groups. Certainly the people and events contributing to the board member's Unbroken Line of Motivation must be understood by the superintendent to know where the board member is coming from as they go about their work however; the behaviors associated with recruitment must be understood in the context of board membership. The findings contributed to the development of two theories, Stock Character Theory and Inner/Outer Circle Theory.

Recommendations for superintendents and individuals serving in similar roles in local governmental organizations are presented. The findings and recommendations should add to the current literature on school boards.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

x

LIST OF TABLES

ACT I

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

- **A school board is asked to be responsive to its constituencies in governance; sensitive to the special needs of all learners in the district; an active advocate for students and learning before the people of the community as well as before the local, state, and federal government bodies; and a vigorous ambassador explaining the role of public education and its programs to all citizens. (AASA, 1994, p. 12)**
- **"In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards." - Mark Twain**
- **"Seek first to understand, then to be understood." - Stephen Covey**

Overture

The first two quotes introducing this report characterize bipolar positions on a single continuum that speaks to the perception of the public about the responsibility and character of those Americans that serve on elected school boards. Located at one end of the continuum is the school board member acting as the consummate idealist, attempting to meet the needs of the children first. Situated at the other end is the political hack with a focus on future opportunities while serving only one person, or possibly a narrow segment of the community during a brief stint on the local school board. Scattered elsewhere on the scale, are the members of the approximately 15,000 locally elected or appointed boards of education that currently operate in the United States of America. A locally elected body charged with the responsibility of providing oversight for the education of the next generation is a unique political organization that has existed on the

1

landscape of the system of American governance before the formal establishment of our country. The third passage represents an axiom regarding the workings of human relations and serves as a central theme of this report.

Scene i: Statement of the problem

The American model of public educational governance, the school board, is under attack from a number of directions. (Danzberger, Kirst, & Usdan, 1992; Twentieth Century Fund, 1992; Danzberger, Kirst, & Usdan, 1993; Danzberger, 1994; Danzberger & Usdan, 1994; Kirst, 1994; Sarason, 1995; Wong, 1995; Danzberger & Friedman, 1997; Carver, 2000; Caruso, 2001; Opfer & Denmark, 2001) Advocates call for increased training for board members. (Murray, 1996; Grady & Krumm, 1998) While adversaries suggest we abandon the model as it is outdated and no longer serves the purpose of the designed intent. (Chalker & Haynes, 1997; Lindle, 1998; Silver, 1998) Studies on voting patterns in local elections indicate board elections are of little interest to the general population. (McCarty, 1959; McGehee, 1990; Marlowe, 1997) Meanwhile, the search for knowledge in this area of study has decreased significantly since the publication of *A Nation At Risk* (1983) as attention shifted toward national or state educational issues. Empirical research examining school boards in the state of Texas has been sparse during the past 30 years. A search of the Dissertation Abstract International (DAI) index resulted in the discovery of 33 dissertations that used the terms "school board" and "Texas" in the title. This represents a paucity of knowledge production in the arena of public educational governance.

During the 2002 Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) Mid-Winter Conference, the Commissioner of Education, Jim Nelson, while commenting on the condition of public education in Texas, identified three areas of great concern. The first was student performance, the second was school finance, and the third was local governance. Although the dimensions of student performance and school finance are critical to the continued existence of public education, governance is the arena where decisions made at the local level ultimately affects the performance of students and the financial operations of each of the 1,044 independent school districts in Texas. (Burrup, Brimley, & Garfield, 1999, p. 146). When state legislators began to define the landscape of local control of education in Texas through the establishment of community managed independent school districts, a substantial quantity of the power and authority was placed in the hands of each community.

Local control of education emerged to address the standards of individualism and decentralization, deeply held values in the constructs of American society. (Tye, 2000) As Jacobson suggests, "The school board is an American invention which is necessary because of the decentralized educational system" (in Goldhammer, 1964, p. v). Thus, the local school board provides a means to address the diversity of a population residing within the boundaries of a large state, creates a system of control over resources within a community, and provides the opportunity for the populace of a community to perform civic duty and in turn enhance their environment.

A factor that may influence the functioning of a school board are the motives that propel a member of the community onto the stage of public involvement and provides

the impetus for an attempt to win a seat on the board of a local independent school district. While a school board may vary in size from one community to the next, the members in almost all cases are elected from a group of eligible citizens and following the election, charged with the task of overseeing the operations of an independent school district. Since the members of the school board emerge from the general populace and individuals actively seek membership through a process of election, or in some cases appointment, the personal motivation that affects a decision to pursue this public office is a problem that merits attention. Further, it is relevant to recognize that the type of community where individuals seek membership on a board of education may affect motivation.

<center>Scene ii: Purpose of the research</center>

In this research, I seek to understand why citizens actively seek and work to retain membership on local boards of education in suburban communities and how the motives of the elected or appointed board members affect the work performed by the group. The research questions that follow are designed to direct the proposed inquiry.

Research questions

1. What motivates individuals to seek membership on a local board of education?

2. Do patterns of behavior or roles exhibited by school board members as described by superintendents, reveal the motives contributing to the desire to seek election and remain on the school board?

<center>4</center>

Scene iii: Methodology

The researcher will use a qualitative methodology based on a constructivist paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln suggest, "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (2000, p. 3). The richness of the data that emanates from interviews of school board members and superintendents will permit the researcher to be immersed in the world of school governance to a far greater extent than a simple survey that might be used in a quantitative study. Previous investigations have offered a view of the subject from a variety of perspectives. Quantitative studies explored the subject on a superficial level, while qualitative studies have exposed the depths of the questions to a greater extent, but the focus has been narrow.

Scene iv: Definition of terms

For the purposes of the present study, the following terms will apply.

1. **School board** – A school board shall be defined as a body of citizens, elected from the ranks of the qualified voters of a formally defined independent school district, a political sub-unit, and charged with the task of providing oversight of the operation of the independent school district. Section 11.151 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) states, "(a) The trustees of an independent school district constitute a body corporate and in the name of the district may acquire and hold real and personal property, sue and be sued, and receive bequests and donations or other moneys or funds coming legally into their hands." The TEC also states that the members of a school board are elected from the ranks of "qualified voters" (TEC Section 11.061, b).

2. **Superintendent** – The superintendent of a public school district is the chief executive (or educational) officer. The superintendent is employed by the board and is the individual employed by the school district that works most closely and best understands the members of the board of trustees.

3. **Major Suburban School District** - Other school districts in and around the major urban areas. Major suburban districts are contiguous to major urban districts. If the suburban district is not contiguous, it must have a student population that is at least 15 percent of the size of the district designated as major urban. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply. (TEA Snapshot, Community Type, 2001)

4. **Personal motivation** – The elements that initiate, direct, and sustain human behavior over time.

5. **Formative motivational system** – "…consists of all developmental experience bearing upon the present state of the organism" (Cavalier, 2000, p. 41). Formative motivation is driven by emotion, habits, and attitudes. It is based on feelings not intentions.

6. **Operational motivational system** – "…includes all current awareness, evaluation, judgments and decisions…" (Cavalier, 2000, p. 41). Operational motives constitute decisions and choices situated in the conscious and cognitive activities of the individual.

7. **Thematic motivational system** – "…includes the directional activity of the person in terms of life's purpose, goals, and ultimate values in living" (Cavalier,

6

2000, p. 41). Thematic motives are enduring and inflexible, and constitute the core of the individual, while providing purpose and direction. The thematic motivational system contains three sub-themes, ego gratification, self actuation, and altruism.

8. **Governance** – "Governance is the function of directing and controlling social life. It is the process of deciding which social goals are to be maximized, which optimized, which merely to be satisfied, and which simply ignored" (Thomas, 1967, p. 6).

9. **Unbroken line of motivation** – Stanislavski (1936) describes the process of understanding that emerges when an actor or director develops a deep understanding of the emotional links extant within the text of a script. The unbroken line is a metaphor for the intentional connection of actual and emotional events that occur during a play.

10. **Play analysis** – Play analysis is a tool used by enlightened directors, actors, and designers to understand the unbroken line of motivation that drives the play forward to the final outcome.

11. **Character analysis** – Character analysis is the process used by actors and directors to dissect the text created by playwright so that the motives driving the character may be better understood. Hodge (2000) suggests, "A character is made up of all the dramatic actions taken by an individual in the course of a play. Therefore, character is a summary statement of specific actions" (p. 37).

Scene v: Significance of the study

The literature directed toward the improvement of board functioning is replete with tales of dysfunctional organizations riddled with conflict. Much of this literature illustrates the aspects of the archetypical good board member in the hopes that some individuals will embrace the specific recommendations and improve the conditions and functioning of the board.

The present study has significance primarily for practioners. Few studies have applied the triarchic theory of personal motivation to understanding the motives of school board members. The second contribution from this study will aide educational practioners such as superintendents, and other school board members to better understand each other as they collaborate to provide leadership for their districts and go about their business. A second group of practioners that might find this study helpful is the membership of locally elected bodies of governance such as city councils or county boards, as well as the scholars that study these comparable legislative bodies.

Scene vi: Summary of the Act

Quality schools benefit a multitude of factions within the boundaries of a school district. As a community becomes more attractive for the population of adults with school age children because the schools produce a high quality product, then more people move to the community. A community with high quality schools is more appealing and contributes to the increase of local real estate values. Businesses flourish with a larger more affluent population and the tax base increases which bring additional funds to the school district and increase the amount of available money under the current

tax structure. A large interdependent loop of community improvement begins with the quality of the education. However, this circle of interdependence can spin out of control if care is not taken in the selection of school board members.

Therefore, if quality schools contribute to positive outcomes in a community, and the function school boards perform is important in contributing to this model, then it seems we should have the very best available people serve as school board members. However, it would appear that board membership frequently attracts individuals with questionable motives such as single agenda members or candidates that seek advancement in the political arena and view membership as a spring board to more powerful political office (Gross, 1958; Cartisano, 1987).

Act I has presented an introduction, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, a set of research questions, a brief description of the methodology, the definition of terms used in the proposed study, and a discussion on the significance of the proposed study. The literature discussed in Act II should provide a comprehensive view of the extant research that precedes the present study. Act III will discuss the proposed methodology and research design for the study. Act IV will discuss the findings that emanate from the analysis of the data, and Act V will provide conclusions, recommendations, and suggested directions for additional research.

ACT II

THE REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Scene i: Introduction

The American school board has existed as an institution in United States of America since 1647. (Callahan, 1975) Early American colonists sought to participate in the development of organizational structures that would shape their future. Historical evidence suggests as towns and villages formed, an initial organizational arrangement was a school committee, the earliest model of American school governance. Good (1998), in his advocacy piece on the merits of serving on a school board states, "…school boards evolved out of special school committees set up by the New England town meetings after school matters become too complex and demanding to be handled by the town meetings themselves" (p. 50). The members of these early school committees were typically white males that were prominent in the community. They were elected or appointed to ensure the values of the community were transmitted to the next generation through the educational activities planned and delivered by teachers. This model has not changed significantly over time. However, there are concerns that must be examined and solutions developed if the prevalent model of school district governance is to continue to exist in an environment of rapid change.

While scholars conduct research that can suggest and point to needed reforms, the individuals contributing to the evolution of the school board are the elected and appointed members that come from the communities across America, as well as the superintendents hired by the boards. These individuals make collective decisions that

affect a wide expanse of areas such as, the allocation of resources, the hiring of staff, and the approval of curriculum as well as the creation and interpretation of policy intended to reflect the values of the community. However, today we find ourselves in communities that are undergoing transition and becoming more diverse. The members of locally elected boards have a responsibility to function effectively in a climate that is less than collaborative in many cases. Thus, an understanding of the motives for board membership is critical information for superintendents, other board members, and educational scholars. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to examine findings from three literatures, theories of motivation, recruitment, and motives for school board membership, which will contribute to the development of a theoretical framework for the present study.

Scene ii: Theories of motivation

Kurt Lewin is credited as stating, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." This section of the review of relevant literature will present a discussion on major theories of motivation. The discussion will begin with general introduction to the literature of motivation, present various theories that have claimed to accurately describe human behavior, and conclude with an argument on the merits of Cavalier's (2000) Triarchic Theory of personal motivation.

The motivation literature, a broad and deep river of knowledge, offers a multitude of theories, which have attempted to explain human behavior. The theories seem to fall into three categories: psychological, behavioral, and cognitive. In the cognitive sphere, there are content and process theories.

11

Freud (1957) and his colleagues provided a framework to explain motivation from the psychological perspective. Freud perceived motivation emerging from the psyche, which was constructed from known and unknown past experiences. He posited that motives could be predicted through a complete understanding of the landscape of the ego, id and superego. While this theory was originally touted as an accurate explanation to the concept of motivation, it has been discounted through research performed by the scholarly community. (Kanfer, 1990)

Skinner (1938) advanced the notion that motives could be explained through various behavior schemas. Motives could be predicted through programs that were designed to push individuals in a specific direction. Skinner and other behaviorists theorized that certain key phrases or sounds would lead to predetermined behaviors. While this was shown to be accurate for animals in a large body of research, it is inadequate to explain the wide panorama of human motivation.

Cognitive theories are currently seen as providing the framework for a more plausible theory of human motivation. (Miskel, 1982; Kanfer, 1990; Hoy & Miskel, 1996) This literature has typically been divided into two groups, content and process theories. Content theories attempt to specify what sorts of events or outcomes motivate behavior, while process theories attempt to specify how different kinds of events or outcomes motivate behavior.

Maslow (1943) introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs to the discourse on motivation. Maslow posited that humans have five essential needs, biological and physiological needs; security and safety needs; social needs; ego or esteem needs; and

self-actualization or fulfillment needs. He suggested the needs are hierarchical in nature

and before a human can move from one to the other, certain circumstances must be

satisfied. For example, a person deprived of nourishment for a lengthy period will spend

their energy searching for food, forsaking other aspects of existence. When sufficient

food is found and the biological need is met, the individual will attempt to locate a safe

and secure environment. Maslow argued individuals move through the defined stages in

a sequential manner and are motivated to move from one level to the other as soon as the

conditions of the stage are satisfied.

Another content theory of motivation was advanced by Herzberg, Mausner &

Snydermann (1959), which suggested work satisfaction emanated from two defined

factors labeled motivators and hygienes.   Motivators included intrinsic factors such as

recognition, achievement, and responsibility. Hygienes included extrinsic factors such as

safety, pay, location, quality of supervision and relationships. Herzberg et. al. argued

that job dissatisfaction was caused primarily by a lack of hygiene factors, while job

satisfaction was caused by the presence of motivators.

Content theories are contrasted by process theories, which examine how different

events or outcomes motivate behavior. Vroom (1964) argued that three distinct factors

stated in the form of questions would influence motivation. Vroom labeled the first

factor expectancy in which the individual considers the possibility of doing the task by

asking if I tried could I do a defined task. Instrumentality, the second factor, finds the

individual asking if I do the task will I attain the needed outcome. The third factor in

this model is labeled valence. Valence is a qualitative and subjective decision of the

value of the outcome for the individual. Expectancy theory suggests when an individual is presented with a course of action; the motivation to precede a specific direction will be influenced by the sum of expectancy multiplied by instrumentality and valence.

Another process model of motivation that exists in the cognitive domain is self-efficacy theory. Bandura (1977) suggested, "Motivation, which is primarily concerned with activation and persistence of behavior, is also partly rooted in cognitive activities" (p. 193). Bandura posited when people overcome a threatening situation they develop more confidence and are motivated to achieve at a higher level, and adversely, when people shrink from the perceived challenge they will fail to enhance their coping skills and maintain their self-induced fears.

The principles of systems theory and personality trait theory provide the underpinnings for an emerging model of personal motivation proposed by Cavalier (2000). Organizational theorists have utilized systems theory to explain why an organization can appear to be unchanging on one level, but rapidly adapting to a variety of internal and external environment effects. (Morgan, 1988; Robbins, 1998, 2000) They hypothesized that a system consists of a series of autonomous parts that are interdependent and interactive and contribute to the functioning of the organization. Open system organizations maintain a continuous interaction with the environment, which allows them to adapt to changing conditions, while closed system organizations ignore the internal and external influences, which leads to deterioration. Morgan (1998) suggested organizations seek a homeostatic status by fulfilling the needs of the organization and adapting to the environment. The congruity and alignment of the

organizational subsystems is crucial if the organization is to function properly.

Therefore, a key role of management in an open system organization is to focus on

establishing and maintaining the necessary alignment. Failure to do so leads to

dysfunction and reduced effectiveness. The theory of motivation developed by Cavalier

used personality trait theory as the second pillar.

Allport (1937) suggested there are traits of major and minor significance, which

he labeled cardinal, central, and secondary. Cardinal traits are those characteristics that

are pervasive and outstanding throughout the life of the person. These traits are so

dominant they influence practically every task the individual undertakes, and serve to

define the individual to the rest of the world. Central traits are a handful of

distinguishable features that are recognizable and integrated into the personality of the

individual. Allport suggested that central traits are typically discussed in letters of

recommendation. Secondary traits are those features in the personality that emerge after

exposure to specific stimuli. These traits are not readily observable under most

conditions, but surface when the environment exerts a specific demand on the

individual. Thus, the Triarchic Theory of motivation Cavalier advances is the result of a

blending of systems theory and personality trait theory and combines three motivational

subsystems that are powerfully interrelated. "This Triarich Theory of human

functioning calls for a modified open systems approach in which three motivational

subsystems are seen as autonomous, interactive, and highly interdependent" (Cavalier,

2000, p. 40). The three parts of the system include formative motivation, operational

motivation, and thematic motivation. Cavalier suggests the formative motivational

system, "…consists of all developmental experience bearing upon the present state of the organism," the operational motivation system, "…includes all current awareness, evaluation, judgments and decisions," and the thematic motivational system, "…includes the directional activity of the person in terms of life's purpose, goals, and ultimate values in living" (Cavalier, 2000, p. 41).

Motivation in this model is not a function of psychoanalytical or behavioral controls. It is a function of decision-making and choice. Cavalier rejected psychoanalytical and behavioral theories by arguing that humans have free will and the ability to make decisions.

> The danger in the Freudian ethic is that it undermines individual freedom and human responsibility…To the Freudian or to the behaviorist, free will is both a myth and an unnecessary postulate for life. Their view is that we can have an adequate psychology built on scientific principals without the need for free will. (Cavalier, 2000, 18-19)

Psychoanalytical theories are characterized as being deterministic in nature, and behavioral motivation is strictly a function of operant conditioning. Cavalier suggests psychoanalytical and behavioral theories of motivation fail to consider the human ability to reason and make choices, and should be rejected for these reasons, and he posits the basis of motivation exists in the autonomous, interactive, and interdependent aspects of the model. Thus, intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation merge as the individual reaches a decision and plots a course of action.

16

This section of the review of relevant literature has presented a brief discussion on some of the extant psychological, behavioral, and cognitive theories of motivation. A few of the prevalent cognitive content and process theories were included to illustrate the range of the discourse in this field. Finally, a discussion on the Triarchic Theory of motivation offered a plausible alternative to the multitude of competing theories of motivation. Decision-making, a key component and outcome of the Triarchic Theory of motivation, is also an element that seemingly influences the recruitment process in our governance systems.

<center>Scene iii: Recruitment</center>

The recruitment literature resembles a major river system not unlike the Amazon in South America. Like the river system, the literature possesses great width and depth, and combined with numerous twists and turns, encompasses a divergent corpus of theory that attempts to explain and predict the phenomenon addressing the selection of candidates in the various political divisions situated in American governance systems. The theory of recruitment is enduring as it emerged early on in Western culture. Plato and Aristotle discussed the concept of special individuals that were elevated above the plain of humanity serving as rulers. Recruited, nurtured, educated, and placed in positions of leadership by virtue of their birth, or other mechanisms, these elite individuals were destined to head the governments of their day. Foreign observers of the American experiment in democratic rule such as de Tocqueville, Bryce, Myrdal, and Brogan commented on the recruitment dimension of the political processes they chronicled. (Dahl, 1961) American scholars discussed the political landscape including

<center>17</center>

the role of recruitment as it unfolded. (e.g. Lynd & Lynd, 1929; Hunter, 1953) Thus, it is clear that recruitment of individuals into the political system has a long history and is deeply embedded in the culture of the American political system, and the literature attempting to explain and predict the recruitment process has mirrored the environment.

Defining how individuals ascend to positions of political power is in part, a role of scholarship. Several scholars have developed excellent definitions of recruitment. Prewitt (1970) linked the concepts of recruitment and ambition by suggesting, "…political recruitment is concerned with the way in which individuals focus and channel their political ambitions" (p. 11). Cistone (1974b) added to the discussion with a definition that viewed it as a part of the political process, "Recruitment is a systemic property, a part of the political matrix of the larger system" (p. 43). Recruitment is a subsystem of the political process that narrows the pool of available candidates for elected positions within a political organization, and it is part of a lengthy process that leads to a political decision and partially answers the question, Dahl (1961) posed, "Who governs?"

Theorists that study the political process have developed a myriad of hypotheses that claim to explain or predict the political phenomenon, and recruitment is a key element addressed in each theory. "Although political theories express divergent conceptions of the political system and of its structure and processes, all theories share a common emphasis on the critical importance of elite recruitment in the maintenance and viability of the political system" (Cistone, 1974a, p. 42). Therefore, political organizations, if they are to remain viable, must have a system that looks for new

18

members to replace those that leave. "If the system is to persist and maintain in an adaptive capacity, institutionalized means must exist for the continued renewal of elites and the constant flow of personnel into essential political roles to replace those who retire, die, or fail to retain office" (Cistone, 1974b, p. 428). Recruitment clearly fulfills this need through the systemization of a chaotic process.

The present study proposes to examine the motives of those individuals that have achieved election to a local board of education. Recruitment seemingly is part of the process that leads to election, and must be examined if the study is to have any viability in the scholarly community. While the literature that examines recruitment is broad and deep, it was important to temper that in the context of the focus of the study. Therefore, I have elected to include a few general and foundational studies that examine recruitment from a global position along with the few available studies that examine the subject in the context of educational governance. The analysis of the literature points to two broad themes; the individuals elected to political office do not match the demographics of the people that placed them in office and political organizations use choice mechanisms to limit the pool of available candidates. These themes will be explored in greater depth later in this section of the review of relevant literature. To facilitate the discussion, a truncated review of the relevant literature will be presented in chronological order, which will lead to an analysis of the themes.

A foundational study performed by Dahl (1961) examined the political environment of New Haven, Connecticut. Dahl presented a historical context, which led to an analysis of the political environment of what was then the recent past. The study

19

was multifaceted and presented a host of findings related to the political process. He

explored the concept of the few governing the many in great depth, along with the effect

of dissatisfaction upon the political process, and found that the governors are

accountable to the governed and there was a correlation with the level of dissatisfaction.

"If we ask, 'Who governs?' the answer is not the mass or its leaders but both together;

the leaders cater to mass tastes and in return use the strength provided by the loyalty and

obedience of the masses to weaken and perhaps even to annihilate all opposition to their

rule" (Dahl, 1961, p. 7). In effect, the process leads to a symbiotic relationship where

the governors and the governed need each other to survive and flourish. Dahl found that

political power was reflective of the community and the political structures transformed

as the community evolved, but the economic and social status of the politicians typically

did not mesh with the population. Dahl theorized that political participation increased

when citizens had increased resources, but most people failed to use their resources.

Voter participation, a political resource, in this study was light in most cases. Dahl

wrote, "A large proportion of the adult population of New Haven does not even vote" (p.

276). He found there was a relationship between voter apathy and stability within the

political environment, and incumbents that wished to remain in office should encourage

this relationship in their actions and political behavior. Finally, Dahl found that political

organizations needed to recruit members to perform tasks at all levels in the

organization. "In order to mobilize the support they need, leaders look for subleaders

well adapted to the characteristics of a particular set of constituents" (Dahl, 1961. p.

178). The leaders at the lower levels in the organization had the opportunity to rise

within the structure, but the recruitment of new members would need to occur to fill the void. The findings from this study have influenced a substantial portion of the literature that followed.

A second foundational study located for this review was conduced by Prewitt (1970), in which he examined the political landscape of 87 non-partisan communities in the Bay area of northern California by collecting data through interviews and other means from 435 councilmen. Prewitt characterized the research as an examination into leadership selection, and made a number of findings. He introduced the concept of the Chinese Box Puzzle, as a device to explain the levels of qualification a candidate must meet to develop a successful campaign for elected office. The puzzle has a series of boxes that nest within each other and progresses from large to small. Prewitt suggested the political environment mirrored the puzzle with the entirety of the population representing the largest box and the elected official the smallest. Candidates have to satisfy the requirements at each level if they hope to move toward the center of the puzzle. For example, the outer box represents all the individuals within the boundaries of a political subdivision. The next box might be the group of individuals, legally eligible to vote and hold office. According to Prewitt, the boxes from largest to smallest progressed from the population to the dominant social stratum, the politically active stratum, the recruits and apprentices, the candidates, and finally the governors. Prewitt use this construct to support his analysis and illustrate his findings. Two axioms frame the study. The first is in a political society the members possess unequal amounts of power, and the second is the few govern the many. (Prewitt, 1970, p. 1) Another

21

finding that emerged from the study was formal and informal norms imbedded within the structure of the community define the route to public office. Prewitt suggested that the norms include mechanisms such as apprenticeships, belonging to the correct club, or having favor with the local media, and the politically ambitious individual will work within the structure of the norms to realize the goal of elected office. Thus, recruitment serves to winnow those individuals that do not conform to the norms and restricts the path to public office. Other studies have examined different facets of the recruitment question.

Van Hightower (1977) examined the question of recruitment from the perspective of a feminist viewpoint. She used the model developed by Prewitt to examine the narratives of 46 female candidates who ran for state and national offices from New York State. "According to Prewitt, the recruitment of candidates for membership in the leadership stratum is the direct result of (a) socioeconomic background, (b) political socialization, and (c) existing political institutional arrangements" (Van Hightower, 1977, p. 302). Van Hightower sought to answer the questions associated with the relationship between political institutional arrangements and recruitment, the relationship between political socialization and mobilization experiences and the decision to run for office, and the relationship between the socioeconomic status of women and their eventual decision to seek public office. An analysis of the data performed by Van Hightower found that a political party recruited 54% of the participants and 46% were self-recruited. An interesting relationship was found between political party affiliation and method of recruitment with female

Democratic candidates self-recruited at a rate of 81%, and the Republican Party

recruiting female candidates at a rate of 85%. However, before they became candidates

participants in the study from both parties experienced a transition from the dominant

social stratum to the politically active stratum. The transition occurred through a

combination of socialization and mobilizations experiences, which included factors such

as civic organization activities, mass movement activities, direct political activities, and

occupational activities. The findings from the study suggested the process of political

recruitment is significantly different for women, political mobilization for women came

later in life, recruitment of women happened most often in "throwaway" districts with

strong male incumbents, and party affiliation was a factor in recruitment. The next

study examined the question of recruitment at a county level and found evidence to

support the conclusions drawn by other scholars.

Getter and Cigler (1980) conducted a study of 71 Wisconsin county political

subdivisions. The data for the study came from the *County and City Data Book*, state

publications and questionnaire responses from 1,177 board supervisors. The stated

purpose of the study was, "In this analysis, we present and test the thesis that local

decision-making bodies are linked to their socioeconomic and demographic environment

in theoretically critical ways by a local 'recruitment culture'" (Getter & Cigler, 1980, p.

62). The researchers theorized that recruitment culture played a significant role in the

political process. Partisanship was a factor in this study and the researchers developed a

hypothesis that counties with a greater occupational diversity would be more likely to

have a partisan recruitment culture. Their hypothesis also proposed that suburban

communities would foster holistic recruitment cultures, and counties with higher populations of low income or minority status would be associated with cultural partisanship. Getter and Cigler defined partisan recruitment culture as an overt political environment where politicians focus on achieving and maintaining an elected office, and they defined holistic recruitment culture as focused on enhancing the interests of the community. Features of partisan cultures include evidence of apprenticeship work in a political party, encouragement to candidacy by a partisan official, high initial interest in politics, and the circulation of nomination papers. While holistic culture factors include evidence of recruitment to candidacy by other nonpartisan officials, nomination at public meetings, high value placed on the knowledge of issues, and widespread belief that "…principle is more important than politics" (Getter & Cigler, 1980, p. 68).

The analysis of the data indicated that there was a strong relationship between cultural partisanship and occupational diversity and counties with a higher proportion of suburban population were more likely to have a holistic recruitment culture. The low income and minority hypothesis was not supported by the data, but a relationship between partisan cultures and minority status seemed to exist. Finally, the researchers found that population density was a factor. Getter and Cigler concluded boards elected in partisan cultures tended to be more responsive to the needs of their community than boards elected in holistic cultures, and heterogeneous environments were more likely to exhibit evidence of partisan recruitment culture while homogenous environments tended to support holistic recruitment cultures.

An impending decision to run for the United State House of Representatives

provided the context for an analysis conducted by Fowler and McClure (1989). The

decision to retire by a long-term member of Congress from the 30th Congressional

district in upstate New York led to an unpredictable political environment. The political

ambitions of a number of potential candidates emerged in this unstable setting. Fowler

and McClure used an interview protocol to uncover the motives and explain the behavior

of the candidates as well as their supporters and detractors. A candidate must have

sufficient ambition to take on the task of running for national office, and Fowler and

McClure suggest, "We commonly presume that one of the hallmarks of a professional

politician is progressive ambition: the desire to climb even higher up the ladder of

elected office" (p. 100). Political ambition and recruitment are interdependent factors in

their analysis. Politicians with a high degree of ambition will need little urging to

pursue political office. However, the study suggests reluctant candidates must be

recruited by an organization if they are placed in a position to be elected to office.

Fowler and McClure surmise there are many individuals that consider political office,

but few that actually mount a campaign, and candidates and parties must make decisions

well in advance of a campaign season if they hope to be successful. They also

concluded that contrary to what was perceived as a change from the past; party

mechanisms play a huge role in the success of the candidate.

  While systems of educational governance exhibit evidence of the features

explicated in the previous studies there are aspects of this governmental environment

that are unique. The following studies focus on this local political subdivision. Cistone

(1974a, 1974b) conducted a study examining the recruitment question in the context of school districts in and around Ontario, Canada. The first study applied the Chinese Box Puzzle paradigm developed by Prewitt to the environment. Cistone sought answers to the recruitment process in this context. Data was collected through structured interviews of school board members selected at random from 30 school districts. Other demographic data were collected from a variety of sources, which yielded information about the social, economic, and political characteristics of the school districts. The analysis of the data led to a number of findings, but one in particular was particularly relevant. Cistone suggested, "The essential finding, that the recruitment process propels into office school board members who are different in many respects from those whom they represent, has important implications for educational governance" (Cistone, 1974a, p. 53). The finding will be explored in more detail during the discussion of the themes that surfaced from analysis of the literature.

The second presentation by Cistone (1974b) apparently used the same data collected from school boards in Ontario, but examined the question of recruitment from a different perspective. Cistone wrote, "In the present study, we attempted to assess the impact of ecological structure on patterns of school board member recruitment, a relationship that has not been previously explored" (Cistone, 1974, p. 431). The focus in this study was on the socio-political environment. Three stages were hypothesized as critical to the recruitment process: instigation, support, and selection. The findings from this study mirrored the conclusions reached by Getter and Cigler. Cistone found the, "Type of recruitment was significantly related to the ecological structure of the school

district. The data show that candidates in rural/homogenous districts tend to be recruited by others whereas their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous districts appear to be self-recruited" (p. 443). Cistone observed, "Patterns of school board recruitment are functionally related to the ecological structure of the school district" (P. 447). The conclusion from this study certainly has implications for educational governance. Cistone and the other scholars present an interesting argument for two findings, which will be explored in the next section of this review of relevant literature.

Two clear themes appear to emerge from this literature. The first is the concept of inequality between the governors (school board members) and the governed (the community), and the second is the application of choice mechanisms designed to maintain a stable political environment by controlling the entrance into the political system.

There are two major points supporting the contention that the elected population differs from the general population. The first is the application of elite recruitment in the political system and the second is the disproportionate representation of individuals from the upper social and economic strata among the elected officials. Much of the research focused on political systems in the past 30 years has contributed to the finding that the holders of political office have achieve their status due to elite recruitment. (Dahl, 1961; Seligman, 1961; Prewitt, 1970; Eulau, 1976) Elites exist in a higher social and/or economic stratum then the remainder of the population. Dahl suggested that New Haven progressed through a series of political leaders that emerged from the social or economic group that held power.

In order to mobilize the support they need, leaders look for subleaders
well adapted to the characteristics of a particular set of constituents. But
the supply of recruits in a given segment of the population is strongly
influenced by its peculiar social and economic environment, for this helps
to determine the sorts of things one is interested in and therefore the
extent one is willing or even eager to work as a subleader. (Dahl, 1961. p.
178)

Prewitt found that political candidates came from elite groups, but not the most elite in

the community. "City councilmen are selected not from the entire population by from a

social stratum with a clear lower limit and a less definite though real upper limit"

(Prewitt, 1970, p. 36). In any event, elite recruitment is a very real and concrete aspect

of the recruitment picture.

The second point in this argument is the disproportionate representation of the

members of the upper social and economic strata in the ranks of elected officials.

Prewitt suggested, "The political leaders of the country have never been and probably

never will be a random sample of the population. Instead, officeholders are

disproportionately selected from socially more favorably groups" (1970, p. 23). The

study he conducted focused on non-partisan office holders in northern California. The

effect of disproportionate representation should be less evident in a non-partisan office

due to the reduced economic requirement necessary for running a successful election. In

the domain of educational governance Cistone suggested, "For instance, there is a

preponderance of evidence that school board members come disproportionately from the

upper social-status strata of society and that this demographic malrepresentation is a

characteristic feature of educational governance systems throughout North America and

elsewhere" (1974b, p. 430). If Cistone is accurate and the representation provided by local boards of education emerges from the upper social and economic status strata, under-represented groups will have little or no voice in policy setting. Therefore, if our political organizations only recruit elites and the upper social and economic strata are over-represented the ability for under-represented segments of the electorate to achieve office is doubtful. The second theme, organizations apply choice mechanisms to influence the outcome further muddies the recruitment waters.

It is clear that political organizations must have the ability to recruit new members into the organization if they hope to remain viable. New "blood" infused into an organization creates positive effects for the group. However, it is also clear that the new "blood" must be the right "type" and political organizations have developed mechanisms to ensure that the right people ascend to political office. "Persons who control the pathways to public office tend to perpetuate their own kind" (Prewitt, 1970, p. 27). Political apprenticeship is a choice mechanism that Prewitt found in his study, Van Hightower found that party affiliation was a key element in the recruitment of women into the political process, and Fowler and McClure reasoned that party mechanisms played a major role in the successful election of a candidate for Congress. Finally, Getter and Cigler (1980) found that "Recruitment cultures function as screening mechanisms for persons seeking public office" (p. 62). The mechanisms in these cases keep the door closed for those that fail to meet the test. Just as in the Chinese Box Puzzle, few reach the center box, by design.

In summation, the literature associate with recruitment is expansive with a wide variety of perspectives. Two themes have emerged from the literature supported by the findings of the studies presented. The first portion of this review of relevant literature addressed the question of motivation, the second part has addressed the question of recruitment, and the third portion will examine the studies that have investigated the phenomena associated with motives for school board membership.

Scene iv: The literature specific to the topic

The literature examining motives that influence citizens to pursue membership on local school boards was plentiful during the middle of the past century. However, a shift in focus from local to state and national arenas for educational decision-making has resulted in a paucity of research in the latter half of the century with unpublished dissertations serving as a primary source of empirical information. There are a number of studies that were made before the middle of the 20th century, but they seem less relevant as our society has undergone massive social, legal, economic, and political changes in the past fifty years. Therefore, this portion of the review will focus on literature that has been published or presented since 1950. The examination of the literature will utilize a historical approach to represent the studies that predate the present proposed exploration.

A case study methodology was utilized by Goldhammer (1955) to examine the motives for membership to a local board of education. The study illustrated the conditions for board membership in a small community. Motivation for membership was illustrated by the behavior of the members of the community as they are approached

to join the power elite. "The commonest way, it appears, for one to become a board member was for a friend to come to him prior to election and tell him that there was something wrong and he was the man who could straighten things out" (Goldhammer, 1955, p. 23). School board membership was open only to a few privileged members of the community that held values consistent with those of the dominant culture. Individuals that rejected the domination of what appeared to be oppressive leadership either capitulated to the norms of the group and maintained their membership, or rejected the group and eventually left board membership. Goldhammer made six findings in this study.

1. Membership was self-perpetuating
2. Board members denied their affiliation with specific groups or individuals within the community, but the data suggested otherwise.
3. When groups within the community felt as if they did not have representation on the school board a contested campaign for membership occurred. However, this was a rare event.
4. School board members represented the power elite of the community.
5. School board members claimed to represent the community. However, the findings suggest that the representation was narrow in scope. The finding emanated from an analysis of board member contacts over a specific span of time. The claim made by board members was unsupported by the data.
6. School administrators need to understand the power structures of the community before exerting leadership events. (Goldhammer, 1955)

He concluded that school board membership was not representative of the community. The board members primarily promoted the interests of property holders through a

variety of choice mechanisms such as recruitment of individuals sympathetic to their needs. The findings provide an initial glimpse into the motives for board membership, and foreshadow much of the work that followed this study.

Gross (1958) conducted a study of school board members in Massachusetts during the early 1950s. He gave a checklist of motives to school board members and superintendents and then analyzed the difference in results from the two groups. Based on this analysis, Gross decided to utilize the data collected from the superintendents, as he believed the school board members were not objective in their responses. The initial procedure in the research yielded a checklist of nine motives of which three were used in the analysis. Motives were characterized as good or bad with civic duty being the lone good reason for school board membership, and representing a group in the community or a desire to gain experience in politics characterized as bad reasons for school board membership. The six other components were considered neutral and were not used in the analysis. The analysis of the data collected from the participating superintendents resulted in a characterization of a well-motivated and a poor-motivated board member.

The study appeared to use a quantitative approach to examine the problems associated with motives for school board membership. The sample size included 508 board members and 105 superintendents, and the participants used a checklist to respond to the questions offered. However, Gross qualified the discussion of the methodology by explaining that the data were gathered through personal interviews. Twelve indexes were used to analyze the data. These include:

1. Members with children
2. Religious affiliation
3. Sex (gender)
4. Income level
5. Level of education
6. Age
7. Activity in politics
8. Number of years on board
9. Level of satisfaction
10. Size of school system
11. Community economic type
12. Prestige of superintendent (Gross, 1958)

The findings from the study suggested that occupation, level of education, and income level were not good indexes to select well-motivated individuals, but school board members with children made well-motivated members. Additional evidence suggested that the longer a school board member served, the higher the likelihood was that he had good motivation. Another finding indicated, "There is virtually no difference between the percentage found for the cities and the percentage found for the representative towns. But there is a significantly higher percentage of well-motivated board members from 'open town meeting' communities, especially those involved in a 'union,' than from cities or larger towns" (Gross, 1958, pp. 83-84). Similarly, board members from "residential communities" (suburbs) are more likely to have well-motivated board members than "industrial communities" (cities), and smaller school

33

districts have a higher proportion of well-motivated board members than larger school districts.

Another study conducted in the 1950s yielded similar results but used data collected from school board members. McCarty (1959, 1960) studied data gathered from 52 school board members that were elected popularly by the members of the community. The researcher interviewed the participants and then performed a content analysis on the collected data. The participants came from seven communities of varying types in Illinois and Wisconsin. McCarty sought answers to the following research questions.

1. What were the motives for seeking school board membership?
2. What were the relationships of motives to community type?
3. What were the relationships of motives to such variables as age, sex, economic level, occupation, religion, or education?
4. What were the effects of these motives on the operation of the board? (McCarty, 1959, p. 1)

The findings McCarty reported contributed to the development of a method to categorize the nature of the relationship between the board, and the community. The findings indicated that 46% of the respondents identified civic duty and responsibility as the primary motives for board membership. A significant percentage of the respondents were persuaded or pressured to pursue a position on the board, but it was not clear if the pressure came from other board members, the community at large, or other unidentified sources. Seventeen percent of the respondents saw board membership as a professional challenge and opportunity to expand politically, and 10 % disapproved of the way

schools were managed, which motivated them to seek election. The board members were labeled as community-oriented (46%) or self-oriented (54%) based on the analysis of the responses. McCarty also found that the motives for membership became more complex as the population of the community increased. The path to board membership suggested that a caucus selection process that screened candidates resulted in more community-oriented members and conversely the open election process led to more self-oriented members. No relationship was found between motivation and gender, marital status, length of service on the board, age, income level, educational level and background, and political affiliation. McCarty developed the beginnings of a matrix that was used to categorize boards and communities. The matrix consists of four categories: the dominated board, the rational board, the log-rolling board, and the fractional board. He ended the report by suggesting a board type may define the role of the superintendent. It is also interesting to note that this matrix is presented in a refined form in a study that came later.

Garmire (1962) conducted a study of school board members residing in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. His findings presented in Table 2.1, led to the identification of three categories for board membership, which he labeled as self-interest, service interest, and neutral.

Table 2.1

<u>*Reasons for seeking office*</u> (Garmire, 1962)

Reasons given	*Percentage*
1. General interest in education	37.6
2. Civic duty or community services interest	33.0
3. Influenced by friends, relatives, or acquaintances	33.0
4. Children in school and a desire to see that they had a good education	24.0
5. Felt the capacity to serve	15.6
6. To represent a group in the community	10.1
7. Opposed a school board policy	9.2
8. For self-satisfaction	7.3
9. Interested in seeing that the taxes were properly administered	7.3
10. Opposed to a school board member	6.4
11. Appointed	6.4
12. Ran because of the reorganization issue in the district	3.7

Garmire hypothesized citizens became board members because their motives were either community-based, or they were dissatisfied with an individual on the board or a policy promulgated by the board.

Goldhammer (1964) provided an excellent summarization of the literature prior to 1955 in the sixth chapter of his book, *The School Board.* He suggested the evidence in these early studies identified two primary motives for board membership. The first is a desire to provide a service to the community and/or the students, and the second is dissatisfaction with an individual or policy. Goldhammer concluded that the board member that seeks office for self-interest motives either transforms because of the experience or leaves the board after the term of service.

The theme of disproportionate representation expressed by Goldhammer in his 1955 study seemed to emerge in a series of studies conducted in the latter half of the

1960s and the early part of the 1970s. Thomas (1967) conducted a study that examined the relationship of the political structure of Austin, TX and the patterns that existed within the interactions of those members of the community that were identified as leaders in juxtaposition to school board membership. Thomas used a research design that made use of a technique labeled "snowballing" to identify 70 members of the community that were reported to be influential by 700 community members. He then interviewed the 70 individuals in an effort to identify the visible and invisible leaders in the community. Thomas utilized a labeling pattern developed in a study by Bonjean (1963) that categorized groups as covert, symbolic, or visible. A second structure of groups labeled knowledgeables, and others was merged with the first group. Thomas discovered that covert group members were solely identified by knowledgeables. Symbolic group members were not identified by knowledgeables, but were identified by other members of the community. Visibles were identified by knowledgeables and others members of the community. Thomas analyzed the school board membership and found that a significant number of board members came from the covert group. He concluded that the school board did not mirror the community. The members were either influential or connected to influential members of the city or state governance systems.

McCarty and Ramsey (1971) performed a study that examined a number of questions, and included a section on motives for school board membership. This follow-up study suggested that school boards are products of the communities in which they operate, and superintendents must be cognizant of the mode of functioning if they are to survive in their position. McCarty and Ramsey also found that motives for board

37

membership emanated almost exclusively from external sources such as influential

members of the community that persuaded the individual to run for office, and many of

the boards were self-perpetuating. The rhetoric in the community was the door to board

membership was open to all, but the research indicated that those individuals defined as

outliers were excluded from membership through overt and covert means of control.

This finding is similar to the results advanced by Goldhammer almost 20 years earlier.

The grid (see Table 2.2) developed by Ramsey in 1959 was refined as a result of

the analysis of the data gathered for the 1971 study.

Table 2.2: *Board/Community type v. Superintendent type (McCarty and Ramsey, 1971)*

Community/Board Type	Superintendent type
Dominated community	Functionary
Fractional community	Political strategist
Pluralistic community	Professional advisor
Inert community	Decision-maker

An analysis of the grid indicates that the community and board type are directly related

to the superintendent type. Thus, the elected board is reflective of a small section of the

community and the board seeks a superintendent that meshes with the identified type.

Conflict occurs when the board and the superintendent are miss-matched.

A nationwide study that developed a profile of board members and attempted to

identify the motives for membership was made by Zazzaro (1971). The study examined

quantitative and qualitative narrative data as a part the methodology. The analysis of the

data suggested the representative board member is a white, middle aged, individual with

strong ties to the community. However, this aspect of the study was down played in

what seemed to be an effort to present a somewhat sympathetic view of the service

provided by board member. Zazzaro suggested that board members are unappreciated

and misunderstood. She used qualitative data to develop the conceptual framework of

community service and self-service at bipolar ends of the same continuum, and then

located board members at some point in the scale based on their responses. The initial

conclusion suggested the board member encounters a number of surprises following a

successful bid for election. A second conclusion suggested that membership caused

board members to change attitudinally in positive and negative ways. Some board

members expressed their transformation in terms of developing a deeper understanding

of the job of providing and education, and others developed a jaundiced eye toward

teachers and administrators. The hypothesis Zazzaro draws is that board membership is

a difficult job, full of personal sacrifices, but the rewards are far greater than the

problems. She suggested that board members would continue to seek service for

intrinsic motives.

Alby (1979) replicated the study done by McCarty in 1959 for his doctoral

dissertation. The 51 participants came from eight schools located in selected

communities in Wisconsin. Alby used the same methodology developed by McCarty to

perform the research. The results of the study presented in Table 2.3 indicated that

board members cited the following reasons at the identified rates.

Table 2.3: *Motives for board membership* (Alby, 1979)

	Motive	*Percentage identified*
1.	Problems that needed correction	41
2.	Recruited or persuaded by others	37
3.	Civic interest or responsibility	29
4.	Concerned about students	17
5.	Outgrowth of committee involvement	17
6.	Political process interest	13
7.	Interest in educational process	11

The study yielded six conclusions:

1. Citizens became involved in school board service because they felt that problems existed and they wanted to correct the situation. Other leading professed motives were recruitment and civic interest.

2. Leading motives ascribed by board members were: civic interest and responsibility; a need for involvement; recognition, prestige, and ego.

3. Leading motives for board membership ascribed by superintendents were: civic interest, recruitment, political involvement, prestige, or personal ego.

4. Motives were related to the type of community investigated. Several factors including size, social and cultural composition, sex, occupational involvement, and community consolidation reflected varying motives for board service.

5. The findings in this study indicated that board members could not be stereotyped in their motives for board service based on age, sex, economic level, occupation, or level of education.

6. Board member motives had an effect on board operations and board member motives had an effect on superintendent involvement. The effect depended upon the degree of intensity of the motives of the members of

each board collectively, and the leadership aggressiveness of the

superintendent for the corresponding board. (Alby, 1979)

Alby affirmed the findings made by McCarty, but also found that more members were

motivated for board membership due to dissatisfaction.

The composition and motives of board members in southern Illinois was the

subject of a study performed by Trampe (1986). The primary focus of the research was

to develop a profile of the board members of these rural school districts and through this

exercise enhance the understanding of the characteristics of the individuals. Trampe

used a survey completed by the board members/participants to gather his data. He found

that board members were white males, 30 – 50 years of age, married with children in the

schools that were motivated to run for the school board due to "an interest in improving

the curriculum and school community relations" (Trampe, 1986, p. 2). He also found

that the typical board member reported two or more issues that are controversial had

occurred in the district in the past three years, but this would not hamper his desire to

continue to serve. Profiling board members characteristics was used for other

dissertation studies.

A study that examined the role of school board membership as a vehicle for entry

into the political environment was made by Cartisano (1987). The study cited the story

of former President Carter who began his political career as member of the Sumter

County school board in 1955 and was elected to the office of the President of the United

States in 1976. Cartisano conducted interviews, performed observations, and reviewed

records associated with former board members that pursued other public office

following their service on the school board. He found that a significant number of the participants were successful in their election bids, and the service on the school board was a springboard to higher political office.

A study designed to develop profiles of Texas school board members and measure the relationship of board membership with factors such as gender, race, age, length of service, length of residence, community type, and superintendent tenure was conducted by Fisher (1991). This quantitative study examined survey data from 504 school board members that served in 101 Texas districts. The findings suggested board members are persuaded to pursue membership by their families and other sitting board members. Fisher also found that younger board members were motivated by self-interest and the older board members were motivated by dissatisfaction. Another interesting result of this study suggested that board members in smaller communities or less diverse ethnically were more motivated to pursue membership for self interest reasons, and those individuals in large or ethnically diverse districts were motivated by dissatisfaction.

The two-factor theory of motivation developed by Herzberg et. al. served as the theoretical foundation for a study made by Fossum (1996). The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of current and former South Dakota school board members. This quantitative study used a critical incident survey instrument gathered from approximately 193 participants. The analysis of the data yielded several results worthy of note. The participants cited achievement and responsibility as the greatest motivators and, interpersonal relations with subordinates as

the factor of greatest dissatisfaction. Factors with the least effect were status, supervision, interpersonal relations with peers, and the potential for personal growth. Fossum recommended that school board training should recognize the factors of job dissatisfaction and develop workshops to help board members develop coping skills to overcome the problems associated with these aspects of board membership.

A study conducted by Wiley (1999) contributed to the line of research focused on developing a profile of board members. However, the location of the participants shifted to rural districts in Georgia. This research followed a legislative initiative that modified the structure of the board/superintendent relationship. Wiley qualitatively examined responses from 18 board members in northeast Georgia. She used a semi-structured interview protocol along with a demographic survey instrument reminiscent of the studies conducted by McCarty and Alby. The motives cited most frequently by the participants were children in the schools, a desire to contribute, and civic duty. The participants did not characterize themselves as single-issue members or representing any specific groups. Wiley also found that the concerns voiced by the participants in this study were consistent with those echoed by boards across the country. These include test scores, accountability, financial, enrollment increases, and student safety.

Mountford and Brunner (1999) suggested that identifying motives for board membership was a complex line of research that required an in-depth methodology. The research they conducted used a traditional qualitative approach to capture and analyze the narratives of 10 current board members. Three continuums emerged from the analysis. The first scale located board members on a line from single-issue to altruistic.

43

The second scale situated board members in a line from status quo to change agent. The

third scale categorized board members based on their self-reported decision-making

style. The researchers made three conclusions. The first finding was single-issue board

members were micromanagers that created barriers to collaborative behavior. The

second finding held that board members that were classified as "reformers" operated in a

more collaborative manner, and empowered others through their behavior. The third

finding indicated that single-issue board members silenced the voices of the more

collaborative members and excluded them from the decision-making process. This

research is linked to a recent study conducted by Mountford (2001)

     A study conducted by Mountford (2001) emanated from research presented by

Mountford and Brunner in 1999. Mountford stated, "The purpose of this research was to

explore motivations for school board membership, conceptions of power held by school

board members, and their effects, if any, on decision making" (Mountford, 2001, p. 20).

Mountford utilized traditional qualitative methods in this research. The study involved

30 participants from five rural districts, four suburban districts and one urban district.

Superintendents in ten districts located in the Upper Midwest of the US were asked to

identify two board members with different orientations for membership (personal v.

altruistic taxonomy). The board members were interviewed twice to fulfill two aspects

of data collection – their own orientation and motivation for membership and the

motivation for other members on the boards they served. The superintendent from each

district was also interviewed as a method of triangulation. Board members consisted of

11 males and 9 females. Mountford found, "A relationship exists between motivations

for school board membership and conceptions of power held by school board members. A very strong relationship exists between the way school board members define power and the way they approach decisions. Finally, the study found a relationship between initial motivations for school board membership and how board members approached decision making" (Mountford, 2001, p. i). It is clear that Mountford found motivation for board membership was more complex than the commonly cited "civic duty" theme that seems to permeate a substantial portion of the literature.

A very recent study conducted by Hess (2002) examined data collected from 2000 school districts. Hess stated the purpose of the study was to provide a "…clear and penetrating look into the groups of men and women who govern the nations 14,890 school systems" (Hess, 2002, p. 3). The questions that guided the study included: 1) How are the board members selected for office; 2) How long do they serve; 3) How competitive are board elections; 4) How demanding is board service; and 5) How prepared are board members to address the challenges they face? While this study did not directly ask why citizens seek the elected position of a seat on a local board, the results indicated there were significant differences between urban and rural boards.

> The most striking conclusion from these findings is that large-district boards are fundamentally different from their smaller more plentiful, counterparts. In large districts (defined as those with 25,000 or more students), school boards are relatively political bodies, with more costly campaigns, more attentive interest groups, more politically orientated candidates, and more hotly contested elections. Boards in small districts, on the other hand, tend to be relatively apolitical bodies that

45

attract little attention and feature inexpensive, often uncontested

campaigns. (Hess, 2002, p. 3)

The increase in political activity from the rural or small district to the urban or large

district suggests the interest in serving on the school board in the large board districts is

greater and more contentious, and the pool of potential candidates is greater as well.

Another finding in the size of the community dimension was, "Boards in large districts

are more likely than those in smaller districts to attempt to engage the community in

decisions" (Hess, 2002, p. 15). This finding suggested that boards in larger

communities have a need to be participatory in nature and practice. Perhaps this is due

to the increase in political activity that surrounds the urban board and a large number of

voices with a greater diversity of issues and competing interests. In any event, the study

confirms the existence of differences in boards along four dimensions: 1) School boards

and policy issues; 2) Board service and preparation; 3) Board member profiles; and 4)

Board elections. However, the differences in individual behavior and motivation for

board membership are germane to the present study, and thus, contribute to the extant

knowledge.

This portion of the literature review presented a series of studies from 1955 to

the present time. A historical frame was used to present the literature in an organized

manner. It is clear from a presentation that the substantial body of research along these

lines has been conducted by students in various doctoral programs in the Midwest and

Southern regions of the country.

Scene v: Three themes

The presentation of the literature in the present proposal would not be complete without a section devoted to an analysis of the evolving themes and the methodological concerns that emanate from the studies. Each of the reports showcased in this Act offered a variety of conclusions and an array of research designs. The next section will present a discussion addressing these areas.

An analysis of the relevant literature suggests three themes. First, elected school boards are essentially closed systems that perform acts of self-perpetuating behavior to maintain their position and status. (Goldhammer, 1955; Thomas, 1967; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971, Zazzaro, 1971) Second, school board members are not representative of the demographic structure of the community. (Goldhammer, 1955; Thomas, 1967; Wiley, 1999) Third, motives for school board membership are personal and complex and affect the work performed by the board. (McCarty, 1959; Garmire, 1962, McCarty & Ramsey, 1971, Alby, 1979; Trampe, 1986, Fisher, 1991)

Theme 1: Elected school boards are closed systems.

The theme of self-perpetuating choice mechanisms used by school boards to limit participation and maintain a closed system is elaborated upon in several studies. Goldhammer (1955) found the board members in the community he studied actively influenced the outcomes of elections by limiting opportunities for potential board members that did not ascribe to the dominant power structure. It is clear the incumbent school board members encouraged individuals with like minds and discouraged

47

individuals that did not support the status quo. Thomas (1967) extended this theme in

his study. The analysis and supporting evidence suggested the existence of a closed

model of school governance that used overt and covert mechanisms to achieve the goal

of exclusive membership open to few. Thomas concluded that individuals that were not

visible in the public view pushed certain members of the community toward board

membership. Thus, the power brokers established another avenue of influence that

could be used to maintain their position as leaders in the community, and reinforced

their ability to manipulate outcomes to be beneficial to their positions. The 1971 study

conducted by McCarty and Ramsey continued to advance the theme that school boards

are closed, self-perpetuating systems that use mechanisms to maintain control. The

participants in the study suggested that board membership was open to all, but an

analysis of the behavior betrayed their language. Thus, the behavior and the rhetoric

were disconnected, and the researchers found the existence of outside influences in the

recruitment and selection of board members. While the Zazzaro (1971) study seemed to

be focused exclusively on the difficult task faced by board members, an alternate

conclusion reinforced the theme that boards are self-perpetuating. Zazzaro found that

that the typical board member was a white, middle-aged individual with a significant

level of influence in the community. The finding suggests that individuals of color or

those that are new to the community would have difficulty developing the support to run

a successful campaign for a school board seat. Hess (2002) confirmed the existence of

differences in several dimensions between large and small community boards, and

suggested the motivation for board membership would be significantly different. While

the boards and potential board members in the large communities must account for the multiple voices with competing interests, the large community districts is relatively small in number. The greater number of districts are located in smaller communities where the board is much more apolitical in nature and it is highly likely that board members are heavily recruited by the current board members and their supporters. If school boards are self-perpetuating and utilize choice mechanisms that influence some to run and discourage others, then the idea that boards are not aligned with the demographics of the community is a logical extension of this argument, and is explored in the next section of this paper.

Theme 2: School board members do not represent the community demographics.

Goldhammer (1955) and Thomas (1967) explored this theme and concluded that board membership was only open to a few members of the community, and these few differed significantly from the extant demographic structure. The profiling performed by Zazzaro (1971) bolstered the findings of the earlier studies through the development of a prototypical board member. A more recent study conducted by Wiley (1999) contributed to the line of research focused on developing a profile of board members and found a significant disconnect between board and community demographics. This research followed a legislative initiative that modified the structure of the board/superintendent relationship. Wiley qualitatively examined responses from 18 board members in northeast Georgia. She used a semi-structured interview protocol along with a demographic survey instrument reminiscent of studies conducted by McCarty (1959) and Alby (1979). The motives cited most frequently by the participants

were children in the schools, a desire to contribute, and civic duty. The participants did

not characterize themselves as single-issue members or representing any specific groups.

Wiley also found that the concerns voiced by the participants in this study were

consistent with those echoed by boards across the country. These include test scores,

accountability, financial, enrollment increases, and student safety. Wiley suggested that

board members differed from the general population. The typical board member in this

study was a white male, with access to more resources than the rest of the population.

This finding is consistent with research conducted by Zazzaro (1971), Trampe (1986),

and Fisher (1991).

The theme that the demographic configuration of the board is misaligned with

the composition of the community is an extension of the concept of a closed system of

governance. The recruitment literature suggests the existence of a significant gap

between the many governed by the elected few, which is a common phenomenon in

models of democratic governance. (Dahl, 1961; Prewitt, 1970; Cistone, 1974a, 1974b)

Thus, the few that govern must have sufficient motivation and ambition to seek office,

or be heavily recruited to run. Why this group seeks election to local boards of

education is explored in the next section of this paper.

Theme 3: Motivation for school board membership is personal and complex and affect

the work performed by the board.

The nature of motivation is complex, and scholars have devoted a substantial

portion of their research agenda to understand the multiple facets of the subject.

(Maslow, 1943; Herzberg et. al., 1959; Vroom, 1964; Bandura, 1977; Cavalier, 2000)

Understanding motivation and the myriad of conceptions associated with the extant research is difficult to condense. However, it is clear from the literature discussed in this report that the motives for membership vary with the individuals that seek election on local boards of education. While some members may claim their only reason to mount a campaign for election is to exercise their civic responsibility, or improve the quality of the schools, the evidence presented here suggests the motives are not so pure in nature. In addition, it is also clear that the multiple agendas of the individuals that are successful in their pursuit of office frequently conflict with the ability of the administration to improve a school district. These findings represent a question or series of questions, which influences the behavior and functioning of the board and the effectiveness of the district to meet the mission of educating the next generation.

<center>Scene vi: Methodological concerns</center>

There are a number of methodological quandaries that exist in the motives for school board membership literature that must be addressed so that a firm theoretical framework and an appropriate research design may be constructed for the present proposal. Two researchers used a mixed method model or reviewed other relevant literature in an effort to define motives for school board membership. (Gross, 1958; Goldhammer, 1964) The authors of seven studies or forty-six percent of the literature included in this report used what appeared to be a quantitative approach to examine the question of motive for school board membership. (Garmire, 1962; Zazzaro, 1971; Trampe, 1986; Cartisano, 1987; Fisher, 1991; Fossum, 1996; Hess, 2002)   Finally, the researchers that produced eight studies, or fifty-three percent of the literature in this

<center>51</center>

proposal, appeared to use a qualitative methodology to investigate the subject.

(Goldhammer, 1955; McCarty, 1959; Thomas, 1967; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Alby,

1979; Wiley, 1999: Mountford & Brunner, 1999; Mountford, 2001)

The quantitative studies provided a broad view of the landscape related to the

motives for school board membership. Quite a few of the researchers used the data they

gathered through surveys or other forms of instrumentation to develop a profile of the

school board members that participated in the investigation. (Zazzaro, 1971; Trampe,

1986; Fisher, 1991) While this information is important, the studies presented a surface

view of the topography, and served to establish some of the boundaries of the area of

study. Predictably the previous quantitative studies did not provide any depth to the

questions surrounding the reasons citizens seek membership on school boards.

However, the qualitative studies offer a significantly different picture.

An analysis of the qualitative studies found that many of the studies used a single

source of data to develop their arguments, and the results of this work seemed shallow

and lacked validity. Other investigators utilized multiple sources of data to improve the

validity of their findings. (e. g. Thomas, 1967; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Mountford,

2001) The findings from these studies offered a multidimensional perspective of the

question of motives for school board membership. The reviewed studies included in this

Act provide a foundation for the present investigation, and while the researchers made

use of multiple methods, none of the studies appeared to use a focused life history

methodology such as the approach advanced by Seidman (1998) with the school board

member participants, or the critical incident technique discussed by Flanagan (1954)

with superintendents. The present study will attempt to make use of these methods to explore and compare the construct of motivation from multiple perspectives. Therefore, this brief analysis suggests the use of a qualitative methodology for the study, which will be discussed in detail in Act III.

Scene vii: Theoretical framework

Cavalier (2000) provided an interesting point of view to the theories of personal motivation. It appears that much of the early motivation research utilized an epistemological framework based on determinism (e. g. Freud), or based their findings on the observations of animals (e.g. Skinner). These preliminary investigations either assumed that humans are incapable of expanding upon predetermined psychological boundaries or presumed that humans are animals possessed of greater complexity and when presented with similar circumstances will behave as animals. However, the Triarchic theory of motivation rejects the concepts that we are bound by predetermined constructs, or we are complex animals because we have the ability to expand our boundaries and use reason to make decisions. The Triarchic theory suggests that motivation is a system consisting of three parts that are autonomous, interactive and interdependent and exist at different levels simultaneously. Motivation in this sense is a process of decision-making, and not a function of psychology or behavior, and human beings in this model make decisions based on cognitive and intuitive analysis of data, and then chart their course for future endeavors. If we accept the argument proposed by Cavalier, we are able to open a window to examine the effects of motivation from a

variety of different sources, and understand decisions affected by internal and external influences may be present within the same human being.

Therefore, the present study will be concerned with examining the third theme situated in the literature; motivation for school board membership is personal and complex in an in-depth manner. The other themes; elected school boards are closed systems and school board members do not represent the community demographics have been explored extensively. While it is tempting to expand the scope of the present study to include these areas, it is advisable to focus on an area of scholarship that is not well defined as of yet.

<div align="center">Scene viii: Summary of the Act</div>

The decision to use the Triarchic theory of personal motivation to examine the motives that influence the decision to seek membership on a local board of education is an appropriate choice. A thorough analysis of the literature suggests the study of school board member motivation has progressed from an analysis of checklists and self-reported data that contributed to the development of the profile of a school board member to a model that seeks greater depth in the research. Act III will present the research design, Act IV the analysis of the research, and Act V the findings, conclusions and recommendations that emerge from the analysis.

ACT III
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (II, vii)

Scene i: Introduction

The prelude to the performance begins with actors entering the stage in a deliberate manner, the choreographed well-rehearsed movement creates a series of kinetic tableaus designed to evoke feelings of compassion and interest in the hearts and minds of the spectators. Eventually each player finds his or her mark and assumes a position of measured interest. The striking of a gavel signals the start of a monthly performance that occurs in urban, suburban, and rural communities across the country. The performers, school board members and the superintendent, seemingly gather to accomplish tasks existing on a published agenda. However, the language and behavior of the performers contribute to a sense of community harmony or dissonance, which may be indicative of the motives of the players that seek election or appointment to the school board.

The individuals that constitute the membership of a local school board certainly had at least one reason to seek election to the office and it is highly likely that the work performed as a board member has been subsequently affected by their motive for membership. (Fossum , 1996; Mountford & Brunner, 1999; Mountford, 2000) The work

55

performed by the school board varies from matters such as the application of human and financial resources, approval of curricula, and policy decisions, which are intended to merge the values of the community with the knowledge provided by professional educators such as the superintendent, principals, and teachers. The school board members portrayed in the literature utilized for the present study cited a variety of reasons when asked why they sought to serve on the stage of public service as elected representatives of the community. Claims regarding motives for membership appear to exist on a continuum which places the community spirited individual overflowing with a desire to shape the future of the neighborhood at one end of the scale to the egocentric politico full of ambition and a craving to advance their own personal agendas at the other. However, an analysis of the literature provided greater understanding of the phenomena associated with the motives for school board membership.

The review of the relevant literature explored three themes that seem to capture the essence of the previously performed investigations. Succinctly stated, the themes are: elected school boards are closed systems; school board members fail to represent the community demographics; and motivation for school board membership is personal and complex and appears to affect the work performed by the board. While the first two themes have been investigated extensively in the literature, the third theme seems to have been neglected in earlier studies. Thus, there is evidence in the extant literature suggesting a need to further investigate the motives for school board membership and the effect of personal motivation on the work performed by school boards. The

challenge now at hand concerns the selection of the most appropriate method to conduct

such an inquiry.

The present Act offers a discussion of a method designed to examine the

personal motivation of school board members, and how their individual motives affect

the work of the board. The remainder of the Act will have five sections: the design of

the study, the description of potential participants, the procedures and data collection,

the data analysis procedure, and a summary of the Act.

Restatement of the purpose of the study

In this research, I seek to understand why citizens actively seek and work to

retain membership on local boards of education in suburban communities and how the

motives of the elected or appointed board members affect the work performed by the

group. The research questions that follow are designed to direct the proposed inquiry.

Research questions

1. What motivates individuals to seek membership on a local board of
    education?
2. Do patterns of behavior or roles exhibited by school board members as
    described by superintendents, reveal the motives contributing to the
    desire to seek election and remain on the school board?

Scene ii: Design of the study

There are numerous means available designed to seek answers to research

questions in the milieu of academic study. However, the method most appropriate to

direct the investigation proposed for the present research is the purpose of the following

57

discussion. The two questions intended to guide the study have emerged from extensive examination of the literature related to the topic. Additional research was conducted to locate an applicable research paradigm most suited to answering the research questions. Extensive review and analysis suggested a research paradigm was located at the intersection of the hermeneutic tradition and the method of script and character analysis utilized by contemporary theatrical actors and directors. The description of the methodology that follows, proposes to merge the elements of the hermeneutic circle described by Reeder (1998) with the traditions of modern theatrical theory represented by Stanislavski (1936, 1949, 1961), Benedetti (1976), Ball (1983), Hodge (2000), Krasner (2000), and Strasberg (1987). The discussion will begin with an examination of the hermeneutic circle, then move to the arena of theory associated with the contemporary play and character analysis, and conclude with a description of the research design that will blend both models.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics initially emerged as an interpretive model, evolved into a philosophy of sorts and has now become associated with the science associated with artificial intelligence. (Mallery, Hurwitz, & Duffy, 1987) Classic hermeneutics often focused on the interpretation of literature, religious, and legal texts, and may be defined as, "…a branch of continental philosophy concerned with human understanding and the interpretation of texts" (Mallery, Hurwitz, & Duffy, 1987, p. 362). Methodological hermeneutics places the text in the world in which the author wrote and considers the broader historical and social context as a part of the analysis. Philosophical

hermeneutics, attributed to Gadamer (1976), explored the concept of foreknowledge in relation to the production of the text. Understanding for Gadamer was affected by the knowledge the interpreter possessed combined with their experience, prejudice, and perceptions. Philosophers such as Habermas then took the act of interpreting text to a new level with the development of a critical method of hermeneutics.   The theory of communicative action emerged from his perception and application of the hermeneutic act. Ricoeur extended the boundaries of the method through the development of a phenomenological approach to hermeneutics. (Mallery, Hurwitz, & Duffy, 1987) However, in each instance, the act of interpreting text is central to the hermeneutic act. Kvale (1998) suggested the act of hermeneutical interpretation is a back and forth process where the analyst reads the text and develops an intuitive meaning. Then, the text is deconstructed and the interpretations of the parts are compared to the totality of the text. The back and forth process continues until a sense of good gestalt is reached and meaning is then constructed from the analysis that is cyclic in nature.

The hermeneutic circle is a common theme in the discourse about the methodology. Reeder (1998) provided an insight into the process by constructing a model based on the process described by Ricoeur. The cycle constructed by Reeder consists of four dimensions of knowing: inscription, anticipation, interpretation, and signification. Each dimension plays an important role in the application of the hermeneutic act. Inscriptions appear to be indistinct imprints left in the psyche through the application of the hermeneutical cycle. Reeder suggested, "Inscriptions are not representations and are thus unavailable to introspection" (p. 67). Thus, inscriptions

59

appear to be impressions deposited in the conscious or sub-conscious mind of the

analyst, and exist in the region of intuitive feelings. Anticipation, the next stage of the

cycle, suggests the analyst has awareness of or foreknowledge of the subject.

Anticipation is related to the notion of presupposition, which is fundamental to the

hermeneutical circle. Gadamer (1976) suggested the construction of meaning through

the application of the hermeneutical cycle is affected by the foreknowledge of the

analyst. Reeder further characterized anticipation by suggesting the analyst has

preliminary comprehension of the subject but the knowledge has not become

internalized. The act of interpretation is the next step in the hermeneutic cycle, and is

the point in the hermeneutic cycle when words begin to form and new narratives emerge.

Reeder (1998) stated, "The hermeneutic act differs fundamentally from the transcription

of something already comprehended in a new form – interpreting is not a mere variant of

'translation'. Instead the world is created anew – *ex nihilo*, as it were – to form a

separate reality" (p. 68). Now the analyst is able to fully comprehend the text

undergoing the inquiry and new understanding emerges because due to application of

the hermeneutic act, which leads to signification, and completion of the hermeneutic

cycle. Reeder suggested signification is achieved when the analyst is able to claim the

knowledge resulting from the interpretative act. "Signification is the mediatory link

whereby words are metamorphosed back into flesh, and their meaning-deposited in the

form of inscriptions on the soul" (Reeder, 1998, p. 69). The realization of signification

may appear to complete the event; however, the process is likely to continue as a spiral

leading to new level of text analysis through the hermeneutic act, a process similar to the theory associated with the act of script and character analysis.

Script and character analysis

Effective directors of theatrical productions must employ a method of script analysis during the pre-production phase of a theatrical event if they aspire to mount a successful production. (Hodge, 2000) The method will vary to some degree dependant upon the director and in some cases the text supplied by the playwright. While there are numerous variations and advocates for methods of script analysis, most modern systems utilize similar elements that seem to emanate from the production and writings of Stanislavski during the early part of the 20th century and his American disciples, Strasberg, Adler, and Meisner. The introduction of script and character analysis transformed the theatrical process from the application of technique of external business performed by actors to intensive internal examination of the motivation and psychology of the character. (Benedetti, 1976; Hodge, 2000) However, understanding the motives of the character are not enough to bring together all the elements of a theatrical event. A method of analysis permits the theatrical director, designers, and performers to come to terms with the script in totality, and bring a sense of cohesion to the production.

The method of acting and script analysis that leans heavily on a psychological interpretation of the process seems to emerge with the contributions of Stanislavski. (Benedetti, 1976) His most significant work, *An Actor Prepares*, leaves the reader with an understanding of three major points. First, the actor must have an inner grasp of the character he or she is to portray, which comes from an in-depth analysis of the text

prepared by the playwright. Second, there must be a through line of action, the unbroken line, which allows the actor to understand and portray the dramatic action inherent in the text, which is discovered though analysis and interpretation. Third, the text written by the playwright, if the play is well developed, will have what Stanislavski labels a super-objective, which is the overriding theme of the play. Thus, the task of the director and actors is to tease the super-objective or theme out of the lines written for the characters through interpretation and application of the elements of play analysis. Stanislavski started a revolution in the theatrical world by introducing these concepts to the act of producing a work for performance. The Stanislavski System formed the foundational underpinnings of contemporary theatrical analysis, and directly influenced the development of the Method. A theory of acting and character analysis is advanced by Strasberg (1976), and other visionaries of the modern American theatre. (Krasner, 2000) Method actors seek the reality of the text presented in the script and blend the motives of the played character with own past personal experiences. Thus, creating a sense of reality in the performance that inspires an audience to transcend the artificiality of the theatre and accept the representation of the character as an existing individual. However, the System and the Method are not the only processes available for script analysis. Practitioners such as Ball (1983) and Hodge (2000) encourage the examination of a play script from a broader perspective.

Ball (1983) explored the elements of script analysis and developed a process that makes use of five distinct factors: 1) exposition, 2) forwards, 3) character, 4) image, and 5) theme. He defined exposition as information needed to understand the initial action

of the play, and suggested there are two forms; that which is needed by the audience and that which is needed by the actors. Ball (1983) defined forwards as, "…anything that arouses an audience's interest in things yet to come" (p. 45). Action that causes the audience to be interested in what is to come is considered a forward in the model. The next element, character, "…consists of all the qualities, traits, and features that create the nature of a person and distinguish that person from another person" (p. 60). However, Ball also lumps three distinct elements into his model. He states, "The first step in delving into a character is to find out 1) what the character wants, 2) what is in the character's way (obstacle), and 3) what the character does or is willing to do to satisfy the want" (p. 60). Thus, the development of understanding of a character is clearly a sequential process that explores the internal motivation of the individual the actor portrays as an initial step leading to multitude of layers that comprise the character when fully developed. Image is defined as, "something we already know or can easily be told that is used to describe, illuminate, or expand upon something we don't know or cannot easily be told" (p. 69). Verbal and visual metaphors are integral factors in this definition. The director that understands the images developed in the text will be better able to communicate the nuances found in the subtext of the script. Each of the factors (exposition, forwards, character, and image) contributes to the development of theme. "Theme is a result. Look for it last. First, analyze with care the action, characterization, images and other components. By then theme will bemanifestly apparent almost by itself" (Ball, 1983. p. 77). Clearly, the method of analysis advanced by Ball, leads to the

63

development of a theme, which will then guide the development of all aspects of the production.

An intriguing aspect of the method of analysis conceived by Ball is the concept of working backwards from the end of the play to increase the depth of understanding of the text. Scripts are in his model, a series of actions leading to a concluding event, and the eventual end of the play. Ball considered each action to be two connected incidents, a "trigger" and a "heap", or a series of causally linked events. By reading backwards, he suggested the director will be able to trace each trigger and heap and better understand the action of the play. The process clearly presents a method of systematic text analysis that allows a director to extract deep meaning from the script, much the same as the hermeneutic cycle. However, the method appears to be lacking when compared with a model developed by Hodge (2000).

A thorough method of play analysis formulated by Hodge (2000) is frequently a driving force in the process of creating a theatrical event for a significant number of directors. Play analysis allows the director, designers, and actors to come to terms with the text and sub-text present in the script and breathe life into a production. However, Hodge cautions his readers to be aware that, "Many people in the theatre shy away from the phrase play-analysis because they think it has a dry, academic ring that implies cold, factual, scientific examination of a playscript, a process that will kill their gut (subjective) feelings about it" (2000, p. 7). In-depth play analysis allows the director to fully comprehend the text contained in the script. The Hodge model includes five broad factors of analysis: 1) given circumstances, 2) dialogue, 3) dramatic action,

4) characters, and 5) idea. Given circumstances is a term lifted from the writings of Stanislavski, and delineates the environment or "special world" in which the action of the play occurs. Hodge further defines the term by providing three sub-factors 1) environmental facts, 2) previous action, and 3) polar attitude. The environmental facts represent items such as the geographical location of the play, previous action is the action that has occurred before the start of the play, and polar attitude accounts for the change in mind-set of the character from the beginning to the end of the play. Hodge suggested dialogue, the second major element of his model of play analysis, is more than the words actors say. "Dialogue is not merely a verbal exchange between characters; rather it is an artificial, highly economical, and symbolic intercommunication of actions between characters in which each forces his wants and needs on the other" (Hodge, 2000, p. 28). Therefore, dialogue is causal in nature and becomes a vehicle for the dramatic action encompassed in the script. Dramatic action, the third major element, is conceptualized as encounters between characters contained within the boundaries of the acts and scenes of the script. Hodge suggested, "Dramatic action is the clash of forces in a play – the continuous conflict between characters" (p. 28). Dramatic action is an outgrowth of the work of Stanislavski (1936) who conceptualized the concept of units of action within the script. An entire script is an overwhelming piece of literature for a director to digest, however, when broken into small parts it becomes manageable. Hodge advances the concept of units by declaring they contain the dramatic action of the script. Each unit is further refined by assigning transitive verbs to each action taken by a character in a unit. Stringing the units together eventually leads to the more formalized

65

conventions of scenes and acts. The characters portray the dramatic action of a script

and when well conceived will contribute to the forward movement of the production.

"A character is made up of all the dramatic actions taken by an individual in the course

of a play. Therefore, character is a summary statement of specific actions" (Hodge,

2000, p. 37). Hodge further delineates character into four sub-factors of analysis: 1)

desire, or what a character wants most, 2) will, or the strength of the character in

attaining the desire, 3) moral stance, or the values of the character, and 4) decorum, or

the physical appearance of the character. Developing an understanding of each of these

factors will contribute to intense comprehension of the motives driving the actions of the

character.

The analysis of the given circumstances, dialogue, dramatic action, and character

all contribute to development of an idea that is the essence of the script.

> The idea of a play is the core meaning of what it has to say.... *Given*
> *circumstances* provide the underground foundation. *Dramatic action* is at
> the ground level and moves upward with each incident to unfold characters
> until the summit – the *idea* – is reached. The whole structure is covered
> with a façade of *dialogue*. (Hodge, 2000, pp. 43)

The idea is what the director is working toward through analysis of each conjoined

factor, for the idea is the overarching assertion that drives the production from start to

finish.

Stanislavski calls the main thrust of a play the super-objective, Ball refers to it as

a theme, and Hodge labels it idea. Although each of these architects of the process of

play analysis uses slightly different terminology, when a model of analysis is applied,

the result will be the development of a concept that will serve as an unshakable

conceptual base for a production. Play analysis is a tool used by enlightened directors,

actors, and designers to understand the unbroken line of motivation that drives the play

forward to the final outcome. The absence of the application of play analysis will

contribute to a production that will be disconnected for the players and lack truth for the

audience.

Truth and the unbroken line: A blending of ideas

The theorist interpreting text through application of the hermeneutic act, the theatrical

director and actor analyzing a script, and the academic researcher performing qualitative

analysis are all in search of truth. Truth for the theorist may be found in the series of

linking spirals that leave inscriptions upon on his soul as he journeys through the text

and makes meaning of the text through application of the hermeneutic circle.

Eventually, a new insight emerges and what was once foreign becomes an integrated

part of the theorist. Truth in the theatre is found through analysis of the written words

meant to be spoken and the underlying dramatic action leading to a theme that will

nourish and drive the production. Stanislavski (1936) commented on the need for truth

in the theatre, "Truth on the stage is whatever we can believe in with sincerity, whether

in ourselves or in our colleagues…Everything that happens on the stage must be

convincing to the actor himself, to his associates and to the spectators" (p. 129).

Directors urge actors to find truth and honesty in the performance of their part so the

production may achieve the artistic intent of the playwright and the company. The

academic researcher seeks truth by using a qualitative methodology in the analysis of

research interviews after the interview is converted to text. Kvale (1996) suggests, "The research interview is a conversation about the human life world, with the oral discourse transformed into texts to be interpreted" (p. 46). However, truth in the human life world of qualitative research may be relative to the view of the participant and the researcher and their unique world. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggested, "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 3). The qualitative researcher may view truth from multiple viewpoints, each valid in the context of the world. However, the task of the qualitative researcher is to make meaning from the spoken words of participants and locate truth, knowing that the truth is relative to the special world created through interview research.

Stanislavski (1936) discussed the concept of an unbroken line in an effort to explain to his student actors the importance of establishing a link from one unit to the next during the course of the performance. The unbroken line is a metaphor for the intentional connection of events that occur during a play. When the actor breaks the line by failing to connect the units discovered through the analysis of the script or losing concentration and a sense of presence, the production will suffer. Is it possible to extend the concept of the unbroken line to life beyond the walls of a theatre? Stanislavski (1936) provides the following insight.

'Do you see that in ever art we must have an unbroken line? That is why, when the line emerges as a whole, I say creative work has begun.'

'But can there really be a line that is never broken either in real life or, much less on the stage?' objected Grisha.

68

'Possibly that line can exist,' explained the Director, 'but not in a normal person. In healthy people there must be some interruptions. At least, so it seems. Yet during those breaks, a person continues to exist. He does not die. Therefore some sort of line continues.' (p. 254)

The concept of the unbroken line exists as a life theme for the purpose of the present study. Therefore, discovering the unbroken line in the personal history of school board members should help to answer the questions posed by the present research. Oral discourse that occurs during interview research provides the text needed for analysis. Use of the hermeneutic circle by applying play analysis tools such as given circumstances, dramatic action, image and text analysis provide the means to explore original transcripts, which lead to insight into the motives associated with school board membership. Just as the Method actor seeks to understand the motives of the character in the text supplied by the playwright and combine these insights with personal experiences to provide motivation for the language and behavior displayed during a production. Perhaps the analyst may use a similar approach to ascertain the motives associated with school board membership. Interviews with the participants and observation of participants as they perform will provide rich texts for analysis. Identification of the potential participants is contained in the following section of the Act.

Scene iii: Description of potential participants

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) maintains a body of comparative data, which categorizes demographic data gathered from public school districts and charter schools annually. According to a recent available report, there were 1,040 school

69

districts in the state. (Snapshot, 2001) Sixty-three of the districts were categorized as

"Major Suburban" based on the definition provided by TEA, which is about 6 percent of

the public school districts. While this is a small percentage of school districts, a

significant number of schools and student population are situated in Major Suburban

districts. Table 3.1 indicates 20 percent of the schools are situated in Major Suburban

districts and 28 percent of the student population attends these schools.

Table 3.1: *Community Type Comparison Data (TEA Snapshot, 2001)*

District Type	# Districts	Percentage	# Schools	Percentage	# Students	Percentage
Major Urban	10	1%	1230	17%	866,959	22%
Major Suburban	63	6%	1433	20%	1,129,931	28%
Other Central City	38	4%	1065	15%	675,719	17%
Other CC Suburban	91	9%	685	9%	368,187	9%
Independent Town	75	7%	622	8%	326,382	8%
Non-Metro Fast Growing	62	6%	220	3%	74,531	2%
Non-Metro Stable	281	27%	1229	17%	442,300	11%
Rural	420	40%	834	11%	137,632	3%

It is clear that the actions performed by school board members serving in the Major

Suburban districts have an affect on a significant number of students as well as the staff

employed to operate the schools, which suggests the area of study has significance for a

large part of the student and staff population.

The number of school board members elected or appointed to a district defined in

section 11.051 of the Texas Education Code suggests that each district maintain a seven

member board, but recognizes that boards may vary in number. Local district policy is

another source of information regarding the size of a local school board. An

examination of the 63 Major Suburban districts in Texas found that all but one of the

districts has a seven-member board, and the lone exception is a district with a nine

member board. There are 443 school board members serving the students in the Major Suburban districts across Texas. However, the elected or appointed school board is only a part of the leadership team. The superintendent, an individual hired by the school board, is the link to the professional educator side of the equation. It is clear the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent, the chief educational officer of a school district, are numerous and complex, and the members of the school board and the superintendent have a relationship that is unlike any other in a school district. The eight or more individuals that co-exist in what appears to be an intensely political stage must find ways to perform the task of leading the school district effectively if the mission of educating all children is to be achieved. (Johnson, 1996) Failure in this arena may lead to disastrous consequences for the next generation.

An analysis of time, effort, and proximity was performed, which led to a decision to focus on one of seven Major Suburban districts in Central Texas. One district in the group will be eliminated from consideration for this study due to familiarity of the researcher with the school board members and the superintendent.   Further analysis led to the identification of a single school board/superintendent group.

The initial unit of analysis for the present study will be the school board member participants (SBMP). Each SBMP possesses motivation that has caused them to seek election and remain on a school board. Since the research examines motivation through the lens of the Triarchic theory and the synthesis of the pertinent literature indicates that motivation for school board members is personal and complex, the decision to seek entrance with SBMPs is valid. The individuals best suited to speak about their lives are

71

the SBMPs as they know their history and the people and events that were significant in their development. Text gathered from interviews with SBMPs should yield a rich set of data, which will allow the analyst to extract the unbroken line of motivation for each participant. The superintendent/participant (SP) will enhance the analysis by adding a level of trustworthiness and authenticity to the study. The SPs are in a unique position as they work directly with the SBMPs and are able to discuss their observations of SBMP behavior and apparent sources of motivation. A third level of analysis is found in the observation of the SBMPs and the SPs as they perform on the stage of the school board meeting. Field notes emanating from these observations will add to a more complete analysis of motives for membership and add to the authenticity of the study.

Scene iv: Procedures and data collection

The research questions that have been developed to guide the inquiry require an approach that will permit the researcher and the participants to journey to a deep level of investigation due to the complex nature of personal motivation characterized by Cavalier (2000). While data collection techniques such as surveys and brief interviews were considered for the present study, they were rejected due to the nature of the research questions. A semi-structured interview protocol consisting of three ninety-minute interviews will be utilized with the school board member/participants (SBMP), and a single interview will be preformed with the superintendent/participants (SP). Life history scholars discuss the need for the participant to explore their personal history in a narrative fashion, and personal narratives allow the individual to tell their story unabated. (Bertaux, 1981; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998) The initial interview with the

72

SBMP will focus on their personal history; the second interview will explore the work performed by the school board member participant in the context of the life history discussed during the first meeting; and the third interview is designed to construct meaning from what was learned earlier. Critical incident technique methodology will be used to interview the participating superintendent. The purpose of the superintendent interview is to provide trustworthiness to the analysis through a form of triangulation. Confidentiality will be assured at the beginning of each interview session.

Interview methods

The present study will use two interview methods founded in the traditions of qualitative methodology to gather data, Focused Life History (FLH) and Critical Incident Technique (CIT). An in-depth interviewing methodology advanced by Seidman (1998) examines in detail the life history of the participant and the work they perform. The Focused Life History method will be used with the school board members. Critical Incident Technique is an interview method in which the researcher asks the participant to reconstruct a significant event and analyze it from a variety of perspectives. The CIT methodology will be used to interview the superintendents that participate in the study. Both interview methods will be described in the sections that follow.

Focused life history

The Focused Life History interview method described by Seidman (1998) is rooted deep in the conventions associated with sociological research. Chalasinski (in Bertaux, 1981) examined the use of the life history model as a research methodology

and traced the most recent roots to Poland in the early 1900s. Researchers exploring the inner depths of the individual from their unique perspective as well as journalists seeking to tell a story have utilized the technique. More recently, Terkel (1975) used the life history approach to examine the occupational paths of a variety of working class individuals in an attempt to portray the depth of their character and their ability to persevere in spite of the obstacles they faced. There is little doubt that the methodology has a profound tradition and has been used for a variety of sociological research.

Seidman stands on the shoulders of researchers such as Schuman (1982) and presents a compelling argument for a multiple interview methodology. The model, founded on the supposition that the methodology contributes to the capacity of the researcher and the participant to make meaning out of experience is well conceived. "A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience" (Seidman, 1998, p. 4). Although, the foundation for the methodology advanced by Seidman is situated in the realm of storytelling, the process is more complex.

> Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people
> tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of
> consciousness…In order to give the details of their experience a
> beginning, middle, and end, people must reflect on their experience. It
> is this process of selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting
> on them, giving them order, and thereby making sense of them that
> makes telling stories a meaning-making experience. (Seidman, 1998, p.
> 2)

The method described by Seidman and selected for the present study requires three interviews of each participant. The initial interview is focused on exploring the history of the participant. "In the first interview, the interviewers task is to put the participant's experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about him or herself in light of the topic up to the present time" (p. 11). The second interview explores the perceptions of the participant in the context of the research. "The purpose of the second interview is to concentrate on the concrete details of the participants' present experience in the topic area of study" (Seidman, 1998, p. 12). Finally, the third interview is designed to make meaning of the participant's history in the context of their lived experience. "In the third interview, participants are asked to reflect on the meaning of their experience. The question of 'meaning' is not one of satisfaction or reward, although such issues may play a part in the participants' thinking. Rather, it addresses the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' work and life" (Seidman, 1998, p. 12). A more complete representation and understanding of the lived experience should emanate from the in-depth process described by Seidman.

Critical incident technique

Flanagan (1954) introduced Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as a sociological research methodology, and Chell (1998) later explored the utility of the method in greater depth. CIT is portrayed as a method, which will contribute to the in-depth exploration and analysis of a specific event. Kemppainen (2000) suggested, "The goal of this methodology is to help participants be as specific as possible in describing specific incidents from memory and to include all relevant details" (p. 1265). The

75

methodology was used in a recent study designed to explore counseling practices used by Catholic priests in Northern Ireland. O'Kane and Millar (2002) suggest, "First, critical incident technique (CIT) can help elicit key components (that is, thoughts, ideas, behaviours and strategies) present in encounters between individuals. The technique provides a structure that enables individuals to recall and describe their experiences…" (p. 190). The use of the CIT to gather data in the present study should serve as an adequate vehicle and allow the superintendent/participants to explore their perceptions regarding the motivation of school board members with the researcher.

Data collection steps

Kvale (1996) devotes a significant portion of his discussion on the qualitative research process to the problem of the 1000 page question, which is what occurs when the researcher does not have a plan to collect and analyze data. The following text is offered in an effort to describe the data collection process that will be utilized for the present research.

1. A letter explaining the purpose of the study and a copy of the lay summary will be sent to the school board members and superintendent of a suburban central Texas school district.
2. The researcher will make a follow-up phone call one week after the letters have been sent. The purpose of the phone call will be to answer questions the potential participants may have, and to set up appointments for an initial face-to-face meeting with those individuals that express an interest in the study.
3. The purpose of the initial meeting will be to explain the intent of the study and present the consent form. An interview schedule will be established during the initial meeting if the school board member or superintendent is willing to

participate in the study. The willing participant will complete two signed consent forms. One for the participant and one for the researcher.

4. A participant information form will be sent with the initial letter, and collected at the initial meeting. The purpose of this document will be to facilitate communication between the researcher and the participant.

5. All interviews will be taped. The researcher will bring two tape recorders to each interview to ensure that the interview is recorded.

6. The researcher will listen carefully to the tape from the initial and second interview before the second and third sessions. The purpose of this step will be to make notes, which will be used to influence the questions for the second and third interviews.

7. Transcripts will be made from each taped interview.

8. The transcripts will be line numbered and analyzed for using the data analysis method that follows.

9. The analyst will attend three school board meetings and construct taped field notes immediately following each observation.

Scene v: Data analysis

The data will be analyzed using a coding scheme that will permit a careful examination of the unbroken line associated with each SBMP, which will lead to better understanding of their source or sources of motivation as well as the effect the motivation has on their individual and collective performance. The first level of analysis in the scheme borrows from the literature of school board motivation and recruitment. A concept of community-oriented and self-oriented is a common theme in the literature. A second factor in the scheme examines the source of motivation. In this instance, the researcher will be looking for references to sources of motivation through discovery of the unbroken line of each school board member/participant. Table 3.2 illustrates the

77

dimensions of orientation and sources of motivation that will provide a foundation for the analysis of the data.

Table 3.2: *Dimensions of community orientation and sources of motivation*

Low Community-orientation High Self-orientation High External Motivation (Politicians)	High Community Orientation High Self-orientation High External and Internal Motivation (Representatives)
Low Community-orientation Low Self-orientation Low External and Internal Motivation (Statics)	High Community Orientation Low Self-orientation High Internal Motivation (Difference makers)

A third level of analysis will utilize the Triarchic theory of motivation. Cavalier (2000) theorized that motivation is a function of three autonomous, interactive and interdependent systems. The formative, operational and thematic systems exist on multiple planes in the conscious and subconscious mind and are useful in explaining the motives for board membership. The purpose of this level of analysis will be to examine which motivational system is dominant with the school board member participants. A fourth level of analysis will examine the type and quality of work performed by the board as expressed by the school board member participants and the superintendent participants.

Authenticity and trustworthiness

The selected methodology will utilize elements of authenticity and trustworthiness to enhance the findings of the present research. Authenticity will be

78

accomplished through the inclusion of interview data from participants in the same district, which should contribute to the credibility of the study. The use of multiple sources of data (triangulation) has become an accepted and encouraged practice when a qualitative methodology emerges as the most appropriate method to answer research questions.   Trustworthiness clearly enhances the value of a qualitative study. Components such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability contribute to trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest these terms are parallel to, "the conventional terms 'internal validity,' 'external validity,' 'reliability,' and 'objectivity'" (p. 300). Trustworthiness and authenticity should be enhanced by the credibility of the participants and the researcher. (Hodder in Denzin & Lincoln, 1993) Seidman (1998) suggests, "Because we are concerned with the participant's understanding of her experience, the authenticity of what she is saying makes it reasonable for me to have confidence in its validity for her" (p. 19). Coding done by two trained analysts should contribute to the authenticity of the study. Coding will be considered authentic if a 90% consistency rate is achieved. A conversation with the text in the hermeneutic/play analysis paradigm occurs during the coding of data. The discovery of the unbroken line of each participant will result during the conversation, and analysis of the data.

<center>Background of the researcher</center>

The researcher has an extensive experience in developing and conducting interviews to gather data. The initial experience occurred when the researcher was a teacher in Houston. The researcher interviewed students that were interested in

<center>79</center>

attending the High School for Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA). During the audition, a structured interview questionnaire developed by the faculty in the Theatre Department was used in an informal setting to capture pertinent data from the subject. The results of the interview were analyzed and included as a part of the audition process. The researcher was fortunate to implement this interview process each spring for approximately seven years. The interviewing skill of the researcher improved during this time. The researcher has also had extensive experience developing and implementing interviews as a public school administrator for job applicants during the past eleven years. An approximate average of five positions was advertised each summer. A set of interview questions were specifically developed and implemented for each open position. The positions interviewed for included core and elective teachers and athletic coaches, custodians, clerical positions, and assistant principals. The researcher received training with the SRI Gallup Teacher Perceiver model, is a Dupont Leadership trainer, and a School Administrators Skills Assessment (SASA) Principal Assessor. Since entering graduate school, the researcher has participated in formal and informal qualitative studies as part of the assigned course work. Most recently, the researcher conducted an extensive oral life history narrative analysis of a prominent individual in the community. The project was a precursor to the work contained in this dissertation, and was a factor that contributed to a decision to utilize a focused life history methodology for the present study.

Scene vi: Summary of the Act

Act III has presented a discussion of the research methodology and procedures that will be utilized for the present study. The Act was divided into the following segments: the introduction, the design of the study, the description of the sample, the procedures and data collection, and the data analysis procedures. The use of a qualitative research paradigm should yield varied and fascinating results and conclusions. The analysis of the data and findings from the study will be presented in Act IV and the conclusions and recommendations that emerge from the research will be located in Act V.

ACT IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

- **"Speech is a mirror of the soul: as a man speaks, so is he." Publilius Syrus**

- **"Behavior is what a man does, not what he thinks, feels, or believes." Author Unknown**

Scene i: Introduction

The thirteenth century philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas noted, "There is one thing common to every living thing. That is the soul – for all living creatures possess a soul. Therefore, to discover knowledge about living creatures, the best way to proceed is first study the soul, which is present in each one of them." (as quoted in Strathern, 1998) While the comment may be somewhat archaic, the language addresses the depth of the analysis that will emerge in chapter of four of the present report. The motives that propel or pull the individual into the arena of public service to perform on the dais of the school board are complex. However, motives may be teased out through a method that allows the researcher to study the "soul" through careful examination of the dialogue of each participant melded with a view of each School Board Member Participant from the point of view of the superintendent that works most closely with them in the context of their shared environment or special world.   The present chapter will provide the reader with a thorough analysis of the data that was discussed in chapter three. The method of analysis blends the processes of play and character study utilized by theatrical directors with the hermeneutic circle described by Reeder (1998).

The chapter will begin with an analysis of the environmental factors that exist in the community. Play analysis methodology requires a thorough and complete investigation of the various factors that exist in the setting. Hodge (2000) states, "Many people in the theatre shy away from the phrase play-analysis because they think it has a dry, academic ring that implies cold, factual, scientific examination of a playscript, a process that will kill their gut (subjective) feelings about it." (p. 7) Hodge goes on to suggest the areas of analysis should include the given circumstances. "The term given circumstances (the playwright's setting) concerns all material in a playscript that delineates the environment – or the special 'world' of the play in which the action takes place." (Hodge, 2000, p. 17)   Knowledge about factors such as the social environment provides the analyst with a richer understanding of the stage upon which the players, the School Board Member Participants (SBMP) play. A thorough analysis of any playscript requires a complete character analysis which will result in a theme or idea for each character and eventually the totally of the study. Ball (1983) suggests, "Theme is a result. Look for it last. First, analyze with care the action, characterization, images and other components. By then theme will be manifestly apparent almost by itself." (p. 77) A tool used by this investigator in previous examinations will be employed to render the milieu of this special world.

The SLEEPEOE model will be utilized to provide a detailed analysis of the environmental characteristics related to the community and will serve as the background for the individual character analysis of each SBMP that will follow. The character analysis will explore the ideas, events, and people that appear to be significant in the text

that emerged from each participant interview. An analysis of the interaction that was observed at board meetings will complete the image of the board members in this particular setting. Finally, a discussion linking board member behavior and language with the construct created in chapter three will provide insight into the motives associated with this specific group of participants.

Restatement of the purpose of the study

In this research, I seek to understand why citizens actively seek and work to retain membership on local boards of education in suburban communities and how the motives of the elected or appointed board members affect the work performed by the group. The research questions that follow are designed to direct the proposed inquiry.

Research questions

1. What motivates individuals to seek membership on a local board of education?
2. Do patterns of behavior or roles exhibited by school board members as described by superintendents, reveal the motives contributing to the desire to seek election and remain on the school board?

Scene ii: Special World Analysis

SLEEPEOE is an acronym for the Social, Legal, Educational, Ethics, Political, Economics, Organization and Emotional dimensions typically found within social and organizational constructs. Dr. William Moore of the University of Texas at Austin introduced a portion of the model to the researcher, and it has been employed and expanded upon by this investigator for a number of projects. The model embraces the

multiplicity of dimensions connected to social situations that have an extensive depth.

Each factor is carefully unfolded, which allows the researcher to explore the depths

associated with the organization. Data for the analysis in this instance is derived from

published sources as well as the dialogue of the participants associated with the present

study.

Social Dimension

German immigrants founded the community of Suburbia during the 1850s and

until recently, agriculture was the primary endeavor for the majority of the residents.

The farming community existed for many years as an unincorporated territory within the

county. Action was taken by the residents of Suburbia in 1965 to incorporate and

become an identified political subdivision. The community apparently changed slightly

from 1965 until 1980. Arvin Lawn, the most senior member of the school board

participating in the present study, moved to the community in the 1970's, and provides

an image of the community at that time.

> There were 300 and somewhat people here in town. And the western
> boundary I guess was the high school. I guess it was. We didn't even
> have a blinker light. Three taverns, and they were frequented by, no
> grocery stores except mom and pop. Odell Oswald had a grocery store.
> And uh (*pause*) two, it was just a hardtop highway between here and the
> interstate no shoulders. The taverns were not your beer joints as you
> would normally think of a beer joint. The taverns were a place where the
> farmers after a day of work would go in and play dominoes. (Lawn
> interview, 2003)

85

In 1980, the nearby city underwent an explosion in population, which resulted a

boom in growth and the population of Suburbia. Statistics show the general

population of the community expanded significantly from 1970 to 2003.

Table 4.1: *Suburbia population statistics (Suburbia city website, 2004)*

Year	Total Population
2003	26,111
2002-Mid Year Estimate	21,738
2000	16,335*
1990	4,444*
1980	745*
1970	530*

Meanwhile, the school district grew in student population as the community expanded.

Table 4.2 demonstrates the growth in student population from 1993 to 2003.

Table 4.2: *Student population 1993 – 2003 (TEA, Website, 2005)*

Year	Student Population
2002/03	15819
2001/02	15203
2000/01	14545
1999/00	13458
1998/99	12574
1997/98	11566
1996/97	10725
1995/96	9689
1994/95	8934
1993/94	8267

The data in the table clearly shows the student population nearly doubling in size from

1993 to 2003, which caused the district to develop and implement a bond package to

create revenue to build additional schools. The district had 11 schools during the

1995/95 academic year (TEA Snapshot website, 2005) and now has 22 schools. (School

district website, 2005) The growth was only one dimension of change in the student

population.

While the community has grown in size, the demographics have changed in the

past decade. Table 4.3 demonstrates the change in student demographics over the past

decade. White students comprised 64.9 percent of the population during the 1993-1994

academic year. By 2002-2003, the white student population had diminished to 44

percent. During the same period, the African-American population grew from 10.9

percent to 19.4 percent, and the Hispanic population grew from 18.3 percent to 27.9

percent.

Table 4.3: *Student demographics displayed by percentage of total population 1993 –*
2003 (TEA, Website)

Year	AA	HISP	W	API	NA
2002/03	19.4	27.9	44.0	8.3	0.5
2001/02	18.0	26.1	47.3	8.1	0.5
2000/01	17.2	24.7	50.1	7.4	0.6
1999/00	16.7	23.0	52.7	6.9	0.6
1998/99	15.2	22.0	55.3	6.8	0.7
1997/98	14.4	20.6	57.9	6.5	0.5
1996/97	13.1	19.6	60.5	6.3	0.5
1995/96	11.7	18.6	63.0	6.2	0.5
1994/95	11.1	18.1	64.5	5.9	0.5
1993/94	10.9	18.3	64.9	N/A	N/A

The superintendent is aware of the changing demographics and reflected this realization

during the interview. "So, a more diverse population began to grow, to come to

Suburbia. In fact, right now we are a minority/majority school district." (Ivory

interview, 2003) The superintendent suggested there are a greater number of children of

color in the district than white students and the data verifies the assertion. Suburbia has

experienced a significant change in population and demographics, which is reflected in

the ethnic diversity present in the schools. The change in size of the population and the ethnic distribution of the community also had a significant effect in the dynamics of the school board and the relationship with the previous and current superintendent.

Legal Dimension

The Suburbia Independent School District is a legal subdivision of the state of Texas and as such is required to follow the laws written and promulgated by the legislative branch of the state and signed by the governor. The state also has a governing body, the State Board of Education (SBOE), which is comprised of individuals elected from the general population. The SBOE allegedly collaborates with the Commissioner of Education, an individual appointed by the governor to provide oversight to the independent school districts across the state. This collaboration results in the education rules, a portion of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). Independent school districts are also required to have policies and many school districts subscribe to a policy service provided by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for legal and local renditions. However, the local school board does have the authority to modify local policy as long as the policy does not violate state law.

Suburbia ISD utilizes the TASB policy service, and the board adopts policy from TASB updates when required. Policy modifications emerge from TASB regularly and follow the codification of state law after each legislative session. The district also has other documents such as the student handbook and the student code of conduct. These documents must be grounded in state law and operationalize the rules and regulations as well as communicating the practices of the district all stakeholders.

Educational Dimension

The primary function of a school district is to provide an exemplary educational system, which will result in high student performance in multiple dimensions. Educators in the pubic education system in the state of Texas have seen a significant change in culture over the past 20 years resulting in an increased focus on student performance in the academic arena. Standardized tests designed to measure acquisition of knowledge and skills by students appear to be driving the children attending public schools to a higher level of performance.

The stakeholders in SISD are very aware of the implications of low academic performance by their students and express a desire to improve in this dimension. The district appears to devote extensive resources to achieve stated student performance goals. Reports are made to the School Board and the community on the progress toward the stated goals and plans are adjusted when data suggests there is a need. Documents such as a District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) are created with the express purpose of improving student performance by manipulating a wide variety of variables extant in the school system. The creation of the DIP and individual school CIPs exist on a foundation of analysis and findings that emerge after each administration of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and the State Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) tests. Suburbia also has an extensive system of benchmarks that allow teachers and administrators the opportunity to measure student progress toward the attainment of co-constructed student performance

expectations. Measurement of student progress also affects the outcome of the evaluation of the teachers and administrators.

Suburbia utilizes the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) evaluation model for teachers. Student performance in the academic arena is a significant dimension of the PDAS model, with one domain of the eight present in the system specifically devoted to examining teacher strategies designed to improve student performance on state developed assessments. The evaluation system used for administrators also contains elements measuring student performance on state assessments. Regulations developed by the SBOE and the Commissioner specifically state that student performance must be an element of any teacher or administrator appraisal system. Suburbia also uses the Organizational Health Index (OHI) as a tool to measure perceptions of leadership displayed by the campus administration. Principals leading schools with low OHI scores eventually develop personal growth plans that are designed to shore-up the skills that the OHI assessment suggests are deficient.

Student performance indicators such as TAKS and TAAS results, dropout data, and attendance data suggest the district is making steady progress. Table 4.4 represents student performance data from 1993 to 2003.

Table 4.4: *Suburbia student performance on state asses*sment instruments (TEA, *Website)*

Year	TAKS/TAAS - All Tests
2002/03	74.5% (TAKS 1st year)
2001/02	89.9%
2000/01	87.5%
1999/00	87.6%
1998/99	85.3%
1997/98	83.1%
1996/97	80.3%
1995/96	77.0%
1994/95	73.2%
1993/94	N/A

The students in Suburbia made steady gains on the Texas Assessment of Academic

Skills (TAAS) instrument during the period displayed in the table. The state

implemented the TAKS test at the end of the 2002/03 academic year. The new

instrument was more rigorous and the performance standard was raised, which caused

all districts to drop in this measure of accountability. Another indicator used to measure

student performance is the annual dropout rate. These data are represented in table 4.5,

and suggest the district underwent a change in terms of the percentage of students

dropping out during this time.

Table 4.5: *Suburbia dropout rate 1993 – 2003 (TEA, Website)*

Year	Dropout Rate
2002/03	N/A
2001/02	0.3%
2000/01	0.3%
1999/00	1.2%
1998/99	1.9%
1997/98	2.0%
1996/97	1.4%
1995/96	1.0%
1994/95	0.4%
1993/94	0.2%

The dropout rate in 1993/94 was low, however, it grew as the population expanded and the demographics changed. The dropout rate grew to 2.0% in 1997/98 and then fell to 0.3% by 2000/01. These data suggest the district became aware of the expanding dropout rate and implemented strategies to keep students in school until graduation. A third indicator of student success is evidenced in the attendance rate, which is portrayed in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: *Suburbia Student Attendance Rate 1993 – 2003 (TEA, Website)*

Year	Attendance
2002/03	96.0%
2001/02	96.2%
2000/01	96.1%
1999/00	96.4%
1998/99	96.2%
1997/98	96.4%
1996/97	96.3%
1995/96	96.1%
1994/95	95.9%
1993/94	95.7%

The attendance rate during this period ranged from 95.7% to 96.4% and averaged 96.1%. These data suggest families with school age children expect their children to attend school regularly and the school district makes a conscious effort to monitor and report attendance data.

The evidence in the educational dimension suggests the school district is an integral aspect of the success of the community and there appears to be an understanding that student performance is a critical facet of the educational dimension. Communities that view schools as influential institutions in the fabric of the society tend to embed this expectation in the hearts and minds of the residents. Schools with a high degree of

92

student success establish and nurture bonds between parents and the community as a whole. Suburbia ISD appears to have made this link, however, there are undercurrents that contribute to fragmentation and dysfunction within the system.

Ethical Dimension

School board members in the present study report they are held to a high level of behavior in the ethical dimension by their constituents. Election to any political office appears to carry a dimension of visibility that results in an increased awareness on the part of the elected official with respect to their personal and professional behavior. However, there are numerous reported incidents in districts across the state and nation that clearly show a lack of the understanding of the underpinnings of ethical behavior on the part of some school board members. Incidents vary from patronage-like behavior to criminal acts.

Many school districts have adopted a code of ethics to provide guidance for school board members, and Suburbia ISD is included within this group. The board developed and implemented a local policy in 2000 designed to address the ethical element of board membership. The policy contains 19 statements that define board member behaviors within six broad dimensions.

As a member of the Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

I. EQUITY IN ATTITUDE
   a. I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
   b. I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.

93

c. I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

II. TRUSTWORTHINESS IN STEWARDSHIP

a. I will be accountable to the public by representing District policies, programs, priorities, and progress accurately.

b. I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.

c. I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of District resources.

d. I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities.

III. HONOR IN CONDUCT

a. I will tell the truth.

b. I will share my views while working for consensus.

c. I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.

d. I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

IV. INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER

a. I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the District as a whole.

b. I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.

c. I will not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.

V. COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

a. I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.

b. I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.

c. I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.

d. I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

VI. STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS

a. I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the District.   (Suburbia ISD Board Policy BBF)

A well-conceived and adopted code of ethics should normalize behavior on the part of board members, which will result in good governance practices. The Suburbia code appears to be inclusive, broad enough to address most situations, and well crafted, however, board members must agree to follow the code and become self-regulated if a the policy is to be effective. While the Suburbia school board members did not acknowledge the existence of this policy, they did seem to have some sense of internalization of the policy. Participants had a frame of reference that included a dimension of ethical behavior with respect to their board service.

Political Dimension

The members of the school board are elected or selected from the general population and as such become intensely aware of the existence of their constituencies well before taking office. The Chinese Box Puzzle construct developed by Prewitt (1970) provides a lens to view the political dimension extant in Suburbia school district. Prewitt posited that elected officials emerged from the general population and eventually made a decision or were compelled by outside forces to seek political office through a winnowing process. The School Board Member Participants (SBMP) in the present study referred to the concept of constituencies with varying degrees of sophistication.

95

Abbott suggested the existence of a very rudimentary political machine, which propelled her into the office.

> We had a team of people that worked very hard. I belong to a mom's group at a local church, Mothers of Munchkins, when like the children were born I was very involved with socially um we would meet once a month and we would also do a lot of social things, play dates and all this other stuff. And they were mainly college educated professional that were choosing to stay home with their kids…very intelligent women, who y'know when I asked for help, they were more than willing to help so we had, we partitioned out for instance the names of e-mail addresses, you could figure out people's e-mail address by their name, you would put their name @ middle school and I wanted to send an e-mail to every employee explaining who I was and why I was doing this. But I didn't want to do it through the school district. I knew I couldn't ask my friends to forward these kinds of things that worked for the district. So, they physically typed in every single e-mail address for over a thousand people, y'know we kind of partitioned it out and all of my friends helped do that. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The informal arrangement, a circle of friends coming together with a similar outlook described by Abbott seems to be consistent with experience of other SBMPs. Elkins discussed an awakening of community political awareness through membership in a religious organization.

> Well, what happened was at my church…we had a group called Friends of the Community that I had started. Uh and we were just trying to figure out how do we become more active in the community um and so one night we decided you know what, let's go to a school board meeting…there was 25 of us that came from the church and spoke and

96

our concern was, hey, is this place open to make, insure that our kids

have a quality education. And one of the things that we had noticed was

that this place had a very high drop-out rate and really minorities was

really being affected. And so uh and we had done a little research and at

that time I think we had 28 credits and things of that nature. And then

also have the kids in the district and that was also another impetus to say

hey, let's do something for the – and from my perspective not only was I

running for the school board, I was running also to engage the entire

Suburbia community. So, that was one of the visions that I had when I

decided to run for the school board. (Elkins interview, 2004)

While Elkins was initially elevated into the public arena of board membership via a

loosely constructed religious organization, he sought to maintain a sense of individual

identity, which allowed him to act freely. Lender discussed the outside influences that

were in play as she took her place on the dais. However, some individuals within her

constituency group had different perceptions about her role and political efficacy as a

board member.

Different people had different reasons. Some people were just my

friends, some people didn't like Adele. They thought it would be, make a

difference. In fact, it was kind of an interesting story. One of the people

uh was an assistant principal and he thought, I mean he really thought I

could go in there and fire her. And I never told him I would, but he really

thought I could. I think that was very naïve on his part and then after I

was on the board for a while he um, he uh, we were at um homecoming

BBQ and so I sat down with him to chat, and he just lambasted me for the

whole dinner. (Lender interview, 2003)

Lender acknowledged the existence of those members of her constituency with differing

agendas, however, she appeared to transcend the banal desires of those with base

attitudes and immerse herself in the work of the board. The political dimension affecting the decision-making function of the board is not limited to the extant constituencies, which contributed to the decision to seek office. Another group also plays a role in the political dimension; the administration of the district.

The conflict between elected officials and individuals hired to administer the various aspects of the district is evident in the language and behavior of the board members and the administrators in this case. Several board members had lengthy discussions during their interviews regarding their decision-making process as a vote on a controversial issue appeared on the horizon of their undertakings. Redistricting is one area that is overtly political in any community and Suburbia ISD is not immune from this action. In this instance, the general population lobbies the School Board Members for special consideration as the administration develops and presents plans to redistrict. Often this becomes an emotional dilemma for the board members and on occasion the members of the administration. However, the board members will typically gravitate toward a politically expedient solution, particularly when re-election is looming in the very near future. The behavior of school board members as they take on the mantle of the community will occasionally conflict with what appears to be well-grounded decisions developed by the administration. The administration will then become confused with the decisions made by board members if they fail to account for the political dimension of decision-making. The political dimension in Suburbia follows this path as decisions emerge in the public and private sides of the dialogue. The dais

serves as the public view of board politics however, dialogue contributing to decisions happens outside of the boardroom.

> I want to find out from the other board members how they feel things are going. I'm one of those that y'know I'll call and want people's opinions whereas Arvin poor Arvin, you don't have to say this either, but he would call and say, "Now, we need to do this, we need to vote this way" I would say, Arvin you can't do that. (Landry interview, 2003)

The topic of off the dais dialogue emerged in a subsequent interview with Landry. "I know there have been presidents in the past that have done that, called to see how you are going to vote and you can't do that, it's not legal." (Landry interview, 2003) The dialogue behind the scenes appears to contribute to the political climate and decision-making function of the board in Suburbia. While the political dimension appears to be a key ingredient influencing board membership and behavior, there are restraining factors that serve as an element of control.

Board membership in this instance may be characterized as soft-core politics. The participants are not obliged or compelled to reveal formal political affiliations. The attention a board election receives is often a minor intrusion in the daily lives of the members of the community. "I mean that's really the issue, in Suburbia, in any school board election is getting people to actually to vote." (Abbott interview, 2003) While school board membership for those within the political sphere may seem to be vitally important, in Suburbia there appears to be little interest in the process of electing board members. Certainly there are issues that serve to mobilize the community and

developing revised boundaries or re-districting is one of the few areas that will activate a

community.

> We went through nasty redistricting, rezoning kind of issue, which I'm
> sure I ticked off a lot of people about and um so if that were to come up
> then I have kind of, I guess I would say what my defense for my
> decisions would be. Maybe that's, whereas before I didn't have to defend
> any decisions so I didn't know what to counter. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The political nature of school board membership will change when an issue affecting a

significant segment of the population emerges. The board meeting room while normally

quite empty will seemingly change overnight and efforts to politicize

School board elections do not seem to emerge as raging concerns and the turnout

for school board elections in many communities is light with barely five percent of the

eligible voters casting a ballot. Voting pattern analyses suggests most individuals within

a community are distinctly uninterested in participating in local school board elections.

An analysis of Michigan voting behavior in school board elections suggests the turnout

is traditionally light. "In almost half of Michigan school districts fewer than 5% of

eligible voters participated in the 2000 school board election." (Weimer, 2001) Texas

seems to follow a similar pattern with low voter turnout. An analysis of election results

in Travis County, Texas found only 10 percent of eligible voters casting a ballot in a

variety of races. A low voter turnout combined with an apolitical environment suggests

a placid political landscape. The Chinese Box construct appears to apply to the political

framework extant in Suburbia. The school board members elected by the general

population serve to provide oversight of the district operations and develop policy to guide the actions of the employees.

Economical Dimension

The social dimension analysis suggests the community is a suburban district with boundaries adjacent to a major central Texas city. The social composition of the community has changed significantly and the economic structure has followed. While farming was the primary source of income with large tracts of land designated for agricultural use, the population explosion that occurred during the last 20 years has resulted in a change in the economic environment. Single and multiple family dwellings, small businesses and strip centers now exist in place of cotton patches, dairy farms and corn fields. Landry, during her second interview commented on the current economic structure, "…we are a start-up community y'know a bedroom community and almost everyone has a house, we don't have a lot of commercial [property] out here, it is almost all residential…" (Landry interview, 2003)   The change in the economic composition of the community has had a positive effect on the school district resulting in increased financial resources for the school district.

The primary source of revenue for Suburbia ISD emanates from a combination of local property taxes, state and federal aide. The district is required to develop an annual budget, which categorizes expenditures into various areas. An analysis of revenue sources and expenditures is presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: *Sources of District Revenue 1993 – 2003 (TEA, Website)*

Year	Local	State	Federal
2003	65.0%	26.5%	4.1%
2002	69.9%	24.8%	1.7%
2001	55.9%	39.0%	1.3%
2000	47.3%	46.9%	1.3%
1999	47.0%	47.6%	1.3%
1998	49.4%	45.2%	1.1%
1997	46.6%	47.8%	1.1%
1996	48.6%	45.7%	1.1%
1995	47.0%	44.4%	3.0%
1994	40.8%	52.0%	2.5%
1993	39.8%	53.6%	2.5%

The evidence presented in table 4.7 illustrates the transition from the state serving as the primary source of revenue to local funding serving as the primary source of revenue during the period selected for the analysis. In 1993, state revenue consisted of 55.9% of the district budget with local revenue at 41.5% and federal funding at 2.6%. A gradual change in the overall funding formula instigated by legislative action shifted more responsibility to local sources with the state contributing 27.7%, the federal percentage dropped to 2.6% and local funding sources making up 68% of the district revenue in 2003. The amount of revenue increased from $37,548,990 to $119,024,109, which is an increase of $81,475,118 during the period selected for analysis. District expenditures during these ten years increased by $79,670,425. Expenditures in 1993 were $37,581,980 and $117,252,405 in 2003, which is an increase of 147%.

Fiscal management during this span of time appears to be problematic. Table 4.8 presents a comparison of revenues to expenditures from 1993 to 2003.

Table 4.8: *Revenue and expenditures 1993 – 2003, (TEA, Website)*

Year	Total Revenue	Expenditures	Difference
2003	119,024,108	117,252,405	1,771,703
2002	107,448,591	107,608,910	(160,319)
2001	100,355,286	100,128,019	227,267
2000	86,770,250	86,523,562	246,688
1999	77,669,750	77,643,223	26,527
1998	66,294,175	66,295,860	(1,685)
1997	58,677,736	58,495,569	182,167
1996	51,180,400	51,207,506	(27,106)
1995	45,980,552	46,244,861	(264,309)
1994	41,664,686	41,725,581	(60,895)
1993	37,548,990	37,581,980	(32,990)

These data suggest the district had several years of deficient spending with (1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2002) punctuated with a few years of surplus revenue (1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2003). The pattern of fiscal management may be attributed to under or overestimating the size of the student population during a time of rapid growth.

The economic dimension presents the portrait of a community and school district experiencing rapid growth. The economic picture appears to track the changes illustrated in the social dimension. In this case, the economic situation in the school district expanded while the community experienced growth.

Organizational Dimension

The examination of the organizational dimension is designed to explore the formal and informal as well as visible and hidden organizational structures that exist within the boundaries of Suburbia ISD as inferred from the texts of the participants. The organizational special world must be investigated before the character analysis so that the context of the actions taken by the characters may be better understood in light of

103

their organizational structures. An examination of the organizational structure will follow a brief examination of the physical organization of the district.

The school district experienced rapid growth in the student population over the past ten years. Table 4.2 presented the data showing growth in student population from 1993 to 2003. The growth in student population resulted in the construction of additional schools with the number of schools doubling in the same period. The organization grew proportionally in teachers and necessary support staff at each new campus and in the central office. Growth in the organization often requires an increase in the organizational infrastructure to maintain the expected level of service and meet the needs and requirements of the individuals served by the organization.

A larger organization typically results in an increase in people and the number of organizational levels as the tasks associated with operating a school district is spread across more employees. A large bureaucracy often leads to a greater sense of isolation and disconnection between the various segments of the organization, which contributes to the development of a loose-coupled structure (Weick, 1976). "By loose coupling, the author intends to convey the image that coupled events are responsive, but that each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness" (Weick, 1976, p. 3). The loose-coupled concept leads to a structure of independent substructures embedded in the broader organizational model. Each school in the loose-coupled model operates to a certain extent as an independent structure with task and leadership roles performed by various individuals within the school. The loose-coupled model suggests the actions and activities that occur within one segment of the

104

organization may have little or no effect upon other parts of the structure. Suburbia ISD exists as a loose-coupled organization as defined by Weick. The organizational structure may appear to be flawed due to the fragile connections among the subunits, but this can also be perceived as an area of strength. "This capacity of loosely coupled systems to allow individual elements to adapt easily to local contingencies is a positive characteristic in that the resources of the whole system are not taxed by the solution of the problem of a single element" (Koff, DeFriese, & Witzke, 1994, p. 4). Under the umbrella of a loose-coupled model, a district may have effective and ineffective schools within the same organizational structure. The district leadership may design structures that increase the capability of the weak school and the effect is localized to the underperforming campus. Additionally, a catastrophic event at one campus may be contained and have no visible effect at a neighboring school within the district.

Each campus organization has formal and informal leaders, which exert various pressures upon the organization. Principals, the most recognized leader in a school are often charged with the task of improving student performance however; reluctant and occasionally recalcitrant teachers and parents, as well as students in some high schools may hamper the process and practices related to educational improvement. Teachers and in some cases, parents, also serve as formal and informal leaders. Suburbia ISD policy requires the formation and on-going involvement of a district and campus based decision-making group.

DISTRICT ACADEMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL	In compliance with Education Code 11.251, the District Academic Advisory Council shall advise the Board or its designee in establishing and reviewing the District's educational goals, objectives, and major Districtwide classroom instructional programs identified by the Board or its designee. The council shall serve exclusively in an advisory role except that the council shall approve staff development of a Districtwide nature.
CHAIRPERSON	The Superintendent or designee shall be the chairperson of the council. The designee shall be a District-level administrator.
MEETINGS	The chairperson of the council shall set its agenda, and shall schedule at least four meetings per year; additional meetings may be held at the call of the chairperson. Scheduled meetings shall be announced at the first meeting. All council meetings shall be held outside of the regular school day.
DUTIES OF COUNCIL	The council shall perform duties as described in BQA(LEGAL).
COMPOSITION	The council shall represent campus-based professional staff, District-level professional staff, parents, businesses, and the community. Not less than two-thirds of the professional staff shall be classroom teachers. The remaining employee members shall be nonteaching professional employees.
COMMUNITY INPUT	The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District-level council obtains broad-based community, parent, and staff input and provides information to those persons on a systematic basis. Methods of communication shall include,

106

	but not be limited to articles in in-house publications regarding work of the council.
PARENTS	The council shall include at least eight parents of students currently enrolled within the District, selected in accordance with administrative procedures. The Superintendent or designee shall, through various channels, inform all parents of District students about the council's duties and composition, and shall solicit volunteers. [See BQA(LEGAL)]
COMMUNITY MEMBERS	The council shall include at least two community members selected by a process that provides for adequate representation of the community's diversity, in accordance with administrative procedures. The Superintendent or designee shall use several methods of communication to ensure that community residents are informed of the council and are provided the opportunity to participate, and shall solicit volunteers. All community member representatives must reside in the District.
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES	The council shall include at least two business people, selected by a process that provides for adequate representation of the community's diversity, in accordance with administrative procedures. The Superintendent or designee shall use several methods of communication to ensure that community residents are informed of the council and are provided the opportunity to participate, and shall solicit volunteers. Business member representatives need not reside in nor operate businesses in the District.
PROFESSIONAL STAFF	Not less than two-thirds of the professional employees serving on the council shall be classroom teachers; the

107

remaining employee members shall be nonteaching professional employees.

Professional membership shall consist of:

nonvoting professional-level staff, selected by the Superintendent or designee serving in an advisory role, two classroom teacher representatives from each four-year high school and one classroom teacher representative from every other prekindergarten-grade 12 campus (nominated and elected by campus peers),

one nonteaching campus-based professional from the elementary school level, one from the middle school level, and one from the high school level (nominees solicited through the principals),

one bilingual education teacher (nominees solicited through the executive director of student services),

one special education classroom teacher (nominees solicited through the director of special education), and one District-level professional staff member (nominated and elected by District-level peers).

The professional staff members shall be elected by the representative grouping.

Additional at-large teaching and nonteaching voting members may continue from prior year councils as long as the two-thirds teacher/nonteacher ratio is maintained or exceeded.

ELECTIONS An employee's affiliation or lack of affiliation with any organization or association shall not be a factor in either the nomination or election of representatives on the council. [See also DGA]

The consent of each nominee shall be obtained before the

	person's name may appear on the ballot. Election of the
	council shall be held in the fall of each school year at a time
	determined by the Board or its designee. Nomination and
	election shall be conducted in accordance with this policy and
	administrative regulations.
TERMS	Representatives shall be elected or selected annually and shall
	not be limited to number of consecutive terms served.
VACANCY	If a vacancy occurs among the representatives, nominations
	shall be solicited and an election held or selection made for
	the unexpired term in the same manner as for the annual
	election.
OTHER	The existence of the District-level council shall not affect the
ADVISORY	authority of the Board or its designee to appoint or establish
GROUPS	other advisory groups or task forces to assist it in matters
	pertaining to District instruction.

(Suburbia ISD Board Policy, BQA – Local)

The policy charges the group with developing and implementing an on-going process designed to facilitate school improvement. In such an environment, conflict emerges due to differing opinions related to improvement and the players will on occasion disagree with the direction or the method espoused for change. Transactional political behavior frequently emerges from this discourse as a climate of conflict ensues. Rewards and punishments are hallmarks of a transactional organization, and there appear to be schools in Suburbia that play that sort of organizational game. Several board members pointed to their experience as members of internal district organizations as a contributing factor in their decision to seek board membership. "So, I ended up being selected to the DAC. When I got on the DAC and the first thing we did on the

DAC we committed a sub-committee on diversity… And that is how I kind of got active in this process in the district…." (Elkins interview, 2004) Elkins discussed his role as a member of the District Advisory Council as a step to board membership. Other board members served as campus or district representatives on other formal and informal structures in advance of their pursuit of board membership.

Some teachers appear to be rewarded while others are relegated to the role of an organizational adversary. Two of the SBMPs served as teachers in the district and assigned less than stellar motives to some of the formal leaders they encountered within the organization. School board member participant Abbott discussed her perceptions of a double standard existing within the structure of the school district.

> Yeah, and they would turn off the air conditioner at 3:30 and school didn't let out till 3:45 to save money. Well it was still hot in the room, y'know and you've got 20, 25 sweaty middle school kids, then they start opening all the doors in and out. Well I knew they weren't turning off the air conditioner at 3:30 at the administration building. So to me that was another little insult and what I always say, and I say this continuously as a board member, we are fortunate to have two teachers on the board, but I try and remind people that its not the big things that drive people out of the class room, it's, I call it "death by a thousand paper cuts." It's the little daily insults and signals that you're not appreciated that make people say, y'know I'm smart enough to do something else. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Abbott suggests the administration intentionally denigrates teachers through their actions of turning off the air conditioning at her school and leaving it on at the administration building where the superintendent and her staff work. Clearly, the motives presented

here imply the existence of a tension embedded in the organizational structure. Teachers in this case are striving to remove shackles placed on them by administrators located within the broader context of the district.

Emotional Dimension

The emotional dimension provides for an area of analysis that often seems to be absent in most analytical frameworks, however, emotionality clearly exists within all humans. Goleman (1995) suggests individuals with a well-developed Emotional Quotient (EQ) are much more able to perform. He defines emotional intelligence through a construct with five main domains, "Knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships" (p. 43). The argument advanced by Goleman suggests our ability to fully understand phenomena requires both logical and emotional awareness. Therefore, an analysis is incomplete when viewing it only through a traditional logical lens, as the filter is often devoid of the emotional impact and understanding that exist within the organization. If representative bodies are brought together to provide the function of governance for a school district and the individuals that comprise the structure respond to events on an emotional level, then the emotional element is a present dimension in the organizational structure.

Elkins discussed his interaction with a former superintendent on an emotional level.

111

> Yeah, yeah, because when we first came to the school board from this little bitty church over here, St. Mary's, I probably would have never ran for the school board I mean I went to the march and everything, but when we came, and Osnebee said to us, what do you all want! (*pause*) Then it was 25 coming from the church because one of our charters was to get more active in the community, when he said, what do you all want in a derogatory, like what the fuck are you all doing? …Oh man! It had us hot! I mean it kind, he kind of galvanized a lot of people then. (Elkins interview, 2004)

Elkins responded through action by pursuing a seat on the school board and taking steps to counteract the perceived racial inequities, which Osnebee appeared to represent. The level of emotionality is difficult to gauge, however, Elkins and other board members were pleased when Osnebee made the decision to leave the superintendency. Each of the SBMPs discussed different aspects of their work on the board within the emotional context, and Superintendent Ivory related an extremely emotional incident that occurred during an executive session.

> While in executive session, again after I had signed my contract, the conflict was over um a racial issue and um it became apparent before I even started that there was a split in the board…. Well you go on and you come in knowing that there is a conflict between old Suburbia and the new population, and it is quite apparent in the board…. But when we actually had a fistfight, um y'know that was telling tale…. (Ivory interview, 2003)

The encounter described by Ivory clearly displays an emotional incident that emerged due to the changing demographics.

The two incidents cited above suggest the existence of a high degree of emotionality due to the change experienced by the community. Elkins and the members of his group had an emotional encounter with Osnebee and Ivory witnessed an emotional conflict between two board members. Race appeared to be the trigger that led to the conflict, and the changing demographic structure seems to be in the case of Suburbia ISD a theme that emerged. Goleman suggests the more developed an individual is within the emotional context, the more able they are to participate on a higher level.

An analysis of the emotional dimension is difficult to produce in a generalized context. Emotionality is a personal attribute and will be explored in greater depth during the character analysis.

Special World Finding
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Understanding the context of the special world of Suburbia ISD is critical to the character study that is to come. The analysis of the special world suggests that Suburbia ISD is in a state of flux and is undergoing rapid transitions. The growth of the district combined with the changing demographics has created a backdrop for rapid change at a macro or district level, which appears to contribute to some level of conflict within the organization. While each of the characters that appear on the stage of the Suburbia ISD school board bring their own contextual framework to the table, they must seek to understand where and how they may best participate in the environment they have sought to be a part of.

While the social dimension appears to be the most significant driving force in this case, the other dimensions all clearly play an important role and contribute to the

overall milieu of Suburbia ISD. The legal dimension is bound by the statutes and policies adopted by the board. However, some individuals may seek to work outside of those boundaries. The educational dimension is clearly a driver in terms of the work the school board is charged with, however, there are moments when board members seem to forget their charge and responsibility and venture into unknown waters. The analysis of the ethical dimension suggests a desire on the part of the board to conduct themselves in a principled manner, even to the point of drawing up a code of ethics. However, there are situations where board members clearly play outside of the periphery of their own code. The analysis of the political dimension suggests some of the board members understand they have a constituency and that they are elected to represent the broader population. The economic dimension analysis somewhat mirrors the social dimension in terms of the changing climate. Awareness of the organizational dimension suggests the existence of multiple levels of formal and informal structures. Occasionally these structures are at odds with themselves and each other. However, the dynamic of the organization appears to be focused on accomplishing the mission of providing a quality education for all children, and the conflict emerges in how to best accomplish this task. Finally, the emotional dimension analysis finds the existence of emotion within the work of the board members and that emotion plays a role in their labor.

A climate of rapid change combined with the strong personalities displayed by different board members suggests an environment of conflict tempered with appropriate social behavior. Goffman (1959) suggests each individual in a closed case contributes to the behavior and interaction of the participants, and the public persona will differ in a

private setting. However, understanding the general context of the Suburbia ISD special world is only part of the investigation and will not be complete without an examination of each of the characters. The next part of the act will be devoted to an in-depth character analysis of each of the School Board Member Participants. I will discuss themes that emerged during the analysis of the text of each interview, explore the unbroken line of each character then hypothesize as to their individual motivation contributing to their desire to seek and retain membership on the school board.

Scene iii: Character Analysis

The process of conducting a character analysis permits the study to descend to great depths with the express purpose of teasing out the unbroken line of motivation and particular to the present study understanding the motives associated with school board membership. Each of the elements of the character analysis creates a view of the individual from a variety of differing dimensions similar to the method of analysis utilized to dissect the community. The analysis begins with an in-depth review of the events and people identified by the participant as key in their development and the influence they had as the participants made the decision to seek board membership. This portion uses the framework of a historical narrative model in which the participant progresses from early childhood, elementary school, secondary school, young adulthood, adulthood, last twelve months and then the last twelve days. The third element of the character analysis uses the text from other participants as they identify, describe and further define the character from multiple angles. This dimension provides an initial element of trustworthiness as the analysis progresses. A dimension of character analysis

must include perceptions of the character from other individuals that interact with the player. The view from the third person provides a valuable perspective that cannot be teased out of the text provided by the individual. The fourth level of analysis examines the path the participant took to acquire the board seat. The path to the board presents a view of the internal and external motivators contributing to the decision to seek board membership. The final element of the character analysis is labeled the unbroken line of motivation. Stanislavski (1936) described the unbroken line as a connected series of actions and thoughts that contribute to the understanding of the character of a play. "If you join this line with the one that has gone before you will create one whole unbroken line that flows from the past, through the present, into the future…" (p. 256). The links that create the unbroken line should be strong enough to understand the motives and respond to the research questions offered in the present study.

The Characters

The initial requirement of a character analysis is the list of the cast members and the roles they play. In the present study, the characters are divided into two groups; primary and secondary characters. Primary characters are individuals who chose to participate in the study. Secondary characters are either Suburbia school board members who declined to participate or individuals situated in the texts generated as a result of the interview protocols.

Primary Characters

Olympia Landry, Suburbia ISD Board Member

Lynne Lender, Suburbia ISD Board Member

Dr. Leann Abbott, Suburbia ISD Board Member

Henry Elkins, Suburbia ISD Board Member

Arvin Lawn, Suburbia ISD Board Member

Dr. Adele Ivory, Superintendent

<center>Secondary Characters</center>

Arthur Ames, Suburbia ISD Board Member – Non-participant

Isaac Anderson, Suburbia ISD Board Member – Non-participant

Dr. Andy Andro, SISD Deputy Superintendent

Otto Emil, Chief Financial Officer

Tina Eldridge, Chief Curriculum Officer

Mike Jones, Director of Assessment

Will Randolph, Director of Technology

Oakley Ingram, Former SISD Board Member

Dr. Ulrich Evans, Former SISD Board Member

Erwin Ostheim, Former SISD Board Member

Odell Oswald, Former SISD Board Member

Pat Osnebee, Former SISD Superintendent

Ed Ives, Former SISD Assistant Superintendent

The purpose and form of the character analysis has been defined and the cast of the players have been identified now it is time to explore each of the primary characters and see if we can discover what motives have contributed to their individual decisions to seek and retain board membership.

<center>Scene iv: Olympia: The Perfect Hostess</center>

Historical Narrative

A young girl with a self-perceived problematic appearance growing up on the wrong side of the tracks in a small town serves as a prelude to what has become a very full and rich life as an adult in a thriving community. The child deprived of the many

creature comforts possessed by her peers contributed to a tender and soft interior

tempered with extreme adversity as a young adult. In many respects, a deep sense of

inadequacy has resulted in a life of achievement and fierce determination, and a desire to

do the right thing for children that may find themselves in a similar situation.

Olympia Landry was born in a small town in the panhandle region of Texas to

parents that in her own words were indifferent and intolerant toward her. "And my

mother was very young when she got pregnant with me and was not an affectionate

person and my father was very strict and not affectionate…." (Landry interview, 2003)

She described her parents as non-participants in her childhood and in some respects as a

negative influence. Olympia was the oldest child and the remainder of her nuclear

family consisted of two younger sisters. However, the extended family appeared to be

rather large with uncles and aunts as well as grandparents that all lived nearby.

> I grew up in a small rural community in the panhandle and we probably
> 1100 to 1200 people came from a very large family my dad – there were
> 17 in his family and mother had 5. So I had a lot of cousins, no privacy,
> it was one of those big families that had people around you all the time.
> (Landry interview, 2003)

Her childhood appeared to be uneventful with two significant exceptions. The first was

her relationship with her parents. "I was a very insecure child, very um – my dad was

very abusive and really probably more than physical but a lot of abuse, yelling,

screaming y'know that was how my mother interacted with me was to hit me" (Landry

interview, 2003). The second exception was an event that caused a significant change in

her appearance. "…my uncle that was only four years older had broken out my front

tooth when I was six. So, I had to live without a front tooth all the way through high

school." (Landry interview, 2003) Certainly an obvious physical difference throughout

her school experience contributed to sense of insecurity in her personal appearance.

Olympia had no idea of the economic condition of her family as a young child.

However, her perception changed dramatically upon entering school.

> I had a great childhood up to that point, and I think when school started it
> changed… I didn't realize how poor I was until I started school…I just
> remember the first treat day, it was on Tuesday and everybody got
> brownies but me because I didn't have any money.   It was one of those
> things that really made a turning point in my life. (Landry interview,
> 2003)

Olympia points to this incident and later as a parent she sought to rectify this with her

own children by making sure they always had pocket change for themselves and another

child that may be in need. The school years were dotted with events that reinforced a

strong sense of insecurity however this was tempered with a strong determination to

succeed. Her father was a contractor who ran several businesses. He pressed Olympia

into service with him at a young age.

> …he was a builder but he also had a monument shop so I had to sand
> blast monuments and I poured concrete curbs cause – and he had the
> cement plant so I helped him do cellars and septics and swimming
> pools…during summer he would have me up at 7 o'clock I would go
> mow the cemetery. Pushing the lawnmower from 7 till 5 everyday all
> summer. And if we got through before the week was over he'd make us
> chop cotton. (Landry interview, 2003)

Olympia clearly recognized the value of the work she had to perform for her father. "It was probably good for me in a lot of ways because I did find work ethics… I guess it was almost one of those things that I didn't know it at the time but it's really influenced who I am now" (Landry interview, 2003). Although the tasks were difficult and quite unusual for young lady to perform, Olympia applied herself and sought to complete each assignment with quality. Her determination to succeed despite the hardship has clearly contributed to her character as an adult.

Upon graduation from high school Olympia was informed that she was no longer welcome to stay in her childhood home. "about a week after I graduated my mother had one of her fits and yelled and screamed and said she had given me everything she was going to give me and I needed to get out" (Landry interview, 2003). Olympia promptly contacted her boyfriend for support and the two were married in short order. The young married couple set up housekeeping in Pampa, Texas where Olympia took a job at a local newspaper. "I liked Pampa. It was um – it had some really great friends and Randy worked for the bank so we had [our] own little circle and we had a cute little house and I got to buy all new furniture…" (Landry interview, 2003) Unfortunately, the young couple encountered a life-changing event within a few months of moving to Pampa. Olympia became aware that her husband of just three years had strayed from the bonds of matrimony. The relationship ended badly and Olympia returned to her childhood home. Her stay at home was brief as she moved to Austin, Texas and shared an apartment with a friend from her hometown. The move was prompted because she met her soon to be second husband. James was a college student and a football player

for the state university. However, this second marriage was ill-fated as was the first, and Olympia found her self playing the role of the victim of spousal abuse. "…anyway we got married…[and] came back down to the Cotton Bowl and cause he played football at UT and got home and he beat the crap out of me! I mean like, sit on me, choke me, dragged me – it was horrible. It was horrible" (Landry interview, 2003). Olympia again encountered hardship and a character building experience. James apologized and Olympia worked to maintain the relationship. However, the abuse continued through one pregnancy and birth and into a second pregnancy.

> I lived with this abusive relationship and in the middle of all of it within a month I was pregnant with Rob because then the next day he called, I am so sorry he never touched me I'm so sorry I don't know what happened – blah, blah, blah and um – sent me flowers. It was the typical abused women syndrome that you can't believe that you – that I was so intelligent that I would stay there but I did and especially after Rob was born, but and he beat me probably until Rob was about – I was about 3 or 4 months pregnant and then he y'know he was either hitting me in the stomach with me being pregnant, but then he just stopped and I think its because he finally saw the baby and he finally saw a baby and he could and he was going to State University full time and I was working and just quit and so Rob was born and within about probably a month it started back up again….(Landry interview, 2003)

Olympia eventually realized the abuse was not going to stop and she sought to divorce her second husband. The divorce was ultimately completed however Olympia was now pregnant with her second child.

> …I got pregnant, I filed for divorce and um I guess it was June and then I
> found out I was pregnant again but I can't – you can't get a divorce if you
> are pregnant in Texas – So I filed for divorce, and the doctor said you can
> have an abortion and I thought no I'm going to keep him so I was a single
> mother with a 6 month old, and pregnant – a single parent. (Landry
> interview, 2003)

Olympia persevered and was eventually granted a divorce from her violent husband and now with the divorce behind her, she sought to bring stability to her life and had the responsibility of caring for two small children. Maintaining a well paying job and staying focused on her priorities were key elements during this phase of her life.

> …I worked with – um I for a company they were called Mechanical
> Systems and I sold commercial heating and air conditioning equipment
> and they were very, very successful I started out as basically their
> assistant and they let me move into sales and I had my own car, they
> provided me with a car and of course I had insurance because I had them
> in private Lutheran school and um I was never going to get married
> again. Because I was doing – I did just fine and didn't ever really want to
> get married again. (Landry interview, 2003)

Her desire to remain single was understandable considering what had happened with two failed marriages. However, this was to be a short-lived pledge. "…my sister came down and I remember when she left, I remember praying so hard saying, 'God, I just want to be married – I really do.' And then the next weekend I met Dave….we were married within three months and its been almost 19 years" (Landry interview, 2003). Dave brought a whole new dimension into her life. He treated her two boys as his own children, and infused Olympia with a new level of confidence. Dave brought Olympia

into his home remodeling business a full partner and he encouraged Olympia to reach out and become an active member of the community through his business contacts. His background was significantly different as several members of his extended family were involved in community affairs, which was totally foreign to Olympia. "He comes more from a family that did community service. His uncle was a county judge and his mother was a teacher and they were always in church, they were always doing things and um my family didn't do that. I mean no one in my family" (Landry interview, 2003). Olympia embraced this aspect of her new family and began to venture out into the community though the family business (home remodeling) and the schools her children attended.

"I was always volunteering. Randall [the elementary school principal] whatever he needed, y'know, spring games – um, um I was up there…" (Landry interview, 2003). Her involvement with community and school groups was noticed by various community leaders including the former superintendent of the Suburbia Independent School District, which consequently led to her introduction to the school board.

People

      While Olympia referred to quite a few people that have contributed to her development there are only two key individuals that have played significant roles; her grandmother and her current husband. Her grandmother appeared to be a stabilizing influence in Olympia's early development as her mother and father served a less important role. "I lived just about a block away from my mother's parents, so my grandmother and grandfather were a tremendous influence in my life…" (Landry

123

interview, 2003). The relationship with her grandmother continued as Olympia

transformed from childhood to an adult. It is interesting to note that Olympia spent more

time describing her grandmother in appearance and demeanor than any other individual

during the three taped interviews. The following passage describing her grandmother is

particularly rich and provides insight into Olympia's perception of her grandmother.

> But um she was um a funny looking woman. She was real big, like I
> kind of am, and she had, she had some Indian, so she had this black hair
> that was always long and I always got to brush. She always had it way
> long and I would put it up for her. And she would wear plaid pants and
> flowered shirts, and she always cut them off at the ankle y'know so
> they would always be up here, and big old ugly feet like I do and she
> would wear these old shoes and her hair would be everywhere and she
> never wore make-up, and she had a stray eye, so one eye would always
> go and she just – you just looked at her and you'd laugh y'know cause
> she just had that glow about her but one of my sisters was taking her to
> the store and she said she looked over at her and she had that outfit and
> she said, y'know grandma, you're just plumb pretty. (Landry interview,
> 2003)

The relationship Olympia had with her grandmother appeared to one of the few

stabilizing factors as she made several key transitions in her life. This held true during

two painful marriages that included infidelity and spousal abuse. Their relationship

appeared to be one of kindred spirits. "I say that my grandmother always told me how

pretty I was and how smart I was and in some ways even though you are still looking for

that from your parents… So I would say out of all the people in my life she's probably

124

the most influential." (Landry interview, 2003) When her grandmother died, the

experience was traumatic and pivotal in her personal development.

> I used to be, you know someone to the church and I had a life changing
> experience when my grandmother died and just haven't gotten back into
> – and it was not life changing bad it was life changing like so spiritual
> that I just didn't feel like church was even reverent enough… (Landry
> interview, 2003)

Clearly, watching her grandmother die caused Olympia to reevaluate her life in great

detail. A later near death experience may have also contributed to the decisions she has

made about the direction she has taken with her own life.

Dave Landry is the second individual that influenced the direction taken with

respect to public service. "Dave has been, he's a great, (*pause*) he's not a leader, he's

my supporter. He's always been one of those that will take, always has taken a back seat

and is so proud of what I do…. I feel like I am very fortunate" (Landry interview, 2003).

Her relationship with Dave was the springboard that launched her into public service.

Their relationship appears to be symbiotic in nature as his character is the strong silent

type in contrast to her active persona.

> …my mind's y'know always working and um it's like I was up at 3 this
> morning, and cleaning house and sort of – it's just – um that's just who I
> am. And um Dave just looks at me – it used to drive me crazy because he
> wouldn't get up like I did and now I know it's just his personality…
> (Landry interview, 2003)

Dave sought Olympia out following their introduction and eventually convinced

her to join him in marriage. Clearly he had a need that Olympia filled to the extent that

he has entrusted her to run his business as a full partner. "Dave is wanting to go into semi-retirement. He's wanting to turn in fact he said we are going to do it soon- turn the company over to me completely and that is a big responsibility" (Landry interview, 2003). Olympia found the anchor she needed. Dave is the man behind this woman. Clearly he contributed to her decision to seek public office. "I have probably gotten much more outspoken through out the years, but not because of the board, but mostly because of Dave. Giving me the confidence, that you do have worth, what you say – if you feel it, say it" (Landry interview, 2003). Dave continues to be a stabilizing influence in her life and in respects serves as a counterbalance to her active personality.

How Olympia is seen by others

Olympia appears to be perceived as a fairly one dimensional character by the participating school board members and the superintendent in spite of her long period of service and current position as the board president. Lynne Lender characterized Olympia as an individual with a desire to achieve a high level of performance in her role as the board president. "Olympia would want to know more um because she really does have a desire to do a good job. Um but without support from others she, she needs to feel supported and I think y'know she probably does" (Lender interview, 2003). This sense of insecurity in her role is a theme perceived by another board member. Henry Elkins provided the following insight, "Olympia, our president, um is a very nice lady, can be direct on some issues but not as boisterous and I think a president should be. I think time has promoted her to president….I have always thought that she was insecure in her role…" (Elkins interview, 2004). The remainder of the SBMPs made no

126

comments regarding Olympia. However, the Superintendent realized Olympia has

undergone a transformation as a board member. "…the old Suburbia kind of dominated.

Olympia, uh, like I said, Olympia is a lot stronger now than she was then. She was

pretty docile and quiet and didn't say anything…Olympia, is just doing a good job as

board president" (Ivory interview, 2003). The sense of insecurity and desire for support

seems to be an element that contributes to Olympia's character.

The Path to the School Board

The literature related to school board membership describes the multiple paths

individuals take to attain board membership. Some board members are elected, some

are appointed by the board or the school district administration and other individuals

purposefully ascend to board membership through manipulation of their relationships

with community leaders. In the first and third case the individual actively pursues the

place on the board and in the second case the individual is sought to fulfill some

perceived need. In this specific instance, Olympia was initially appointed and then

sought to remain on the board through election.

Olympia describes herself as a community volunteer with ties to many different

groups situated in Suburbia. She involved herself in these groups initially at the urging

of her husband however, she found enjoyment in community participation. This was an

area in which she could shine.

> I was on the church committees, soccer leagues, baseball leagues, I was
> always – I was always one of those that stepped forward and say I can do
> that. And it was like, I said it was never for recognition it was just I knew
> somebody - that it needed to be done and I can organize. I mean I would

always be the one – the parent rep that would take care of all the teams and getting names and all of that and did the concession stand up there like for two years….(Landry interview, 2003)

Olympia was noticed through her participation in community and school activities. She describes the circumstances that led to her appointment in the following passage.

It was December or November 93, I think I can't remember, and Osnebee called me and he said that they had had a board member that needed to retire because he was having chronic back pain. His name was Tad, and that they were going to appoint a board member and that he was very interested in me and that they were. That my name had come up. I think there were actually three names that came up. They wanted a woman, they had decided that they wanted a woman as their token female, that was how it was put, because (*laughs*) I am serious because he was wanting school board of the year and felt like he needed a minority. And that is basically how it was put. That is was he knew me, he had seen me in the community, he knew that I was non-controversial, he said the board was a little concerned about Dave because he was so vocal and that would be my only negative, I'm being very blunt here, and that actually Odell was the one that brought my name up, but Osnebee had said he had kind of threw my name out there. He knew that Odell would, because Odell knew me, Arvin knew me and then Osnebee and I guess that was it. The other, and Erwin, Ulrich wanted, there was a woman that he was interested in so they interviewed, I went up and interviewed with both, interviewed with Ulrich and Osnebee one day and they interviewed with the other female one day. And I don't remember what happened to the other person I think she decided not to, she didn't want it or something. After that they called me, I guess it was right after that like within two or three days and said that the board had decided that I was the one that they

wanted to appoint…That was the year, the year before I think I had been

chair of the chamber, president of the chamber and I had always been

very involved with the chamber. One of the things Osnebee said to me

was that (*pause*) at one point I had heard, and was involved some, I was

involved with PTA quite a bit at middle school and high school I had

gotten into the freshman PTA group helping with that PTO and Osnebee

had made some comment. I had heard that there was going to be, there

was a horrible reaction to something that was going on and I had just

called Osnebee and said I just thought that you might be interested in this.

That I always felt that, here again I don't like uproar and I don't like

behind the backstabbing thing, I don't like that. So I was trying to

circumvent that to let the board know what was going on and that's how I

do things. I don't get out in your face; I normally get not behind the

scenes but at least as quite as possible. I don't want to draw attention to

myself and so that was my way of trying to defuse a situation that I felt

was unnecessary and so he said that when, later on he said that meant a

lot to me that you cared enough about the district and about the board that

you called and I guess that was maybe the turning point or why he

thought of me. (Landry interview, 2003)

While Olympia did not actively seek board membership initially, she viewed the

invitation to join the board as an opportunity on two levels. First, board membership

would be beneficial to her children. "… I knew that I wanted to be there, I wanted to

give him [her son] his diploma. That was very important. It sounds silly but I wanted to

be there, because I got to give both of the boys their diploma" (Landry interview, 2003).

Second, board membership in Suburbia would benefit other women in the community.

I had always heard that Suburbia, the old white German men had said

over my dead body will there ever be a woman on the board. I mean I

129

had heard all these horror stories and um – and I did it for women. And, I

am not a women's libber at all. I just thought this is a great opportunity

for a woman to step forward and – and to be – or to be appointed and that

it would be good for the community. (Landry interview, 2003)

Certainly Olympia viewed her board membership as a positive development for many

reasons, and thus when the period of appointment ended she wanted to maintain her

membership which required active pursuit of the seat through a process of election. She

characterized the election process as somewhat distasteful as she has a spoken desire to

be a behind the scenes sort of person. Running for election requires the participant to be

out in front of the group at various events and create controversy in some cases.

Olympia appears to abhor controversy and has a desire to preserve a sense of

equilibrium as a board member and board president. Since her initial appointment,

Olympia has endured three campaigns. The first election was against a young man who

Olympia describes as a genius. The second election was against a retired school

administrator and she ran unopposed in the third election. The motivation for each term

appeared to vary dependant on the events perceived by Olympia.

The reason cited for the first election was a sense of commitment to the

community. She was appointed to the board in December 1993 and her term was

scheduled to end in May of 1994. Olympia appears to have a strong sense of loyalty,

"…if you are going to appoint me then I knew that, I was not going to make a

commitment and go into it for three months and then be gone" (Landry interview, 2003).

The strong sense of commitment appeared to contribute to her desire to seek another

term as a board member. The district was in the initial stages of replacing a

superintendent with a long tenure. "I feel like after Suburbia ISD had one
superintendent for so many years to make a transition to a completely different style that
they needed to have someone on the board that had been around for a while. Because
we had so many new board members…" (Landry interview, 2003). She characterizes
the desire to seek a third term as a sense of guilt. She was toying with the idea of
stepping off the board at the end of her second elected term. "I said I know I'm not
running again then this guilt starts in on me again, I need to be there and that would be
the only reason I would stay…" (Landry interview, 2003). Commitment appears to be a
dominant thread for Olympia however the focus has changed with each election.

The Unbroken Line of Motivation

There are many threads that when woven together illustrate the motives
contributing to Olympia's decision to seek and retain a seat on the board. Some strands
are partial in nature and terminate at various points while others appear to be consistent
and connect the past with the present and the future. The evidence that emerges through
analysis of the text suggests the unbroken line of motivation starts with a deep seated
sense of inadequacy and rejection which has been transformed into achievement and
care for others. Olympia displays behaviors as the board president that suggest she has a
strong desire to ensure all the board members have an opportunity to participate during
the meetings.

Olympia presents an intriguing paring of two conflicting character traits that are
linked to the past and serve to motivate her behavior as a board member and the
president of the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. She has molded a strong sense of

personal inadequacy and a fierce determination into a combination that has creates

stability in her life. The initial rejection inadequacy by her parents "…mom basically

did that to me her entire life…I realized she never hugged me, she never said I love you"

which further reinforced by two failed marriages created a deep seated sense of

insecurity and inadequacy (Landry interview, 2003). The perception of insecurity and

inadequacy grew into a self-conceived fear that others would perceive her as stupid or

unable to be an equal participant. "I think my biggest fear is growing up the way I did I

don't want someone to think I'm stupid. I don't want them to think how could she be on

the board" (Landry interview, 2003). Fortunately her sense of inadequacy has been

tempered with what appears to be an unbelievable determination to overcome obstacles.

Olympia realized at an early age that she was going to have to work harder than

others to be an equal player and achieve success. She first encountered this when she

started school and discovered that she was a member of a poor family in a fairly poor

community. She worked hard at her school work to overcome this initial obstacle and

excelled in her studies while finding a niche in athletic competition despite the

disapproval of her father. It is interesting to note that Olympia is the oldest child in her

family and apparently is the only member of her immediate family that has escaped the

poverty of her youth. While life presented a series of barriers such as parental rejection,

spousal abuse, failed marriages and raising two boys as a single mother, Olympia

discovered inner strength and created a life of significance and responsibility, which her

service on the board played a major part.

Is to see the support that I have from people that you never would have

thought would have supported a woman as the president of the school

board…it was just rewarding to me (d*eep breath*) it made me feel like I

have accomplished something in life by having that support, that I am

part of something, I'm part of the community now. I've made a life here

that is a good life and stable life and it's not the conflict and upheaval that

I had growing up. And so it is a realization that you've done, you were

able to accomplish something. You were able to make something of your

life and you are finally at peace. (Landry interview, 2003)

Parental rejection combined with a strong desire to garner acceptance often leads to what

could be described as unusual behavior and Olympia is a self-described perfectionist, "I

was always such a perfectionist about everything. Even as a child my room had to be

perfectly clean…" (Landry interview, 2003). The perfectionist behavior emerges as

Olympia prepares for the monthly board meeting as she spends a considerable amount of

time meeting with Dr. Ivory and setting the stage for each board meeting. Clearly she

takes the job as the board president very seriously as she meets with the superintendent

to build the agenda and personally contacts each board member prior to each meeting.

"…what I'll try to do is before each board meeting, before I do that meeting is to call

each board member and see if there is something specific that they want on the

agenda…" (Landry interview, 2003). Clearly the desire to perform her role as the board

president serves as motivation for Olympia.

Serving as a mentor in the community is another dimension of the inadequacy to

achievement line of motivation. Olympia seeks opportunities to mentor individuals in

the community that display a desire to provide service. She serves as a conduit to recruit the people she deems appropriate to positions of service in the community.

> I am involved with a women's council for homebuilders and we do a lot of service, community service. We donate, we give scholarships and I'm always in charge of the scholarships. We do give a lot to Safe Place. So we have to work the concession stand for Parade of Homes and we, I just did a style show for them so I bring in, I see these young girls that have the energy. It was so cute, I had one little girl that helped me and she just got out of A&M, her first job…she was sitting with her mother and I called her because she did a lot for me and I put her on the list and I heard her stand up and say but I didn't really do anything, but she did. You see she's not realizing her worth and that is what I try. I went up to her afterward and said I heard what you said and I said you did so much and I couldn't have done this without you. And so that's what I try to do, is encourage them and see that it doesn't take much to give. I mean you can give in whatever way you can but that's, I encourage that and I think it is very important. (Landry interview, 2003)

Olympia experienced the power of mentorship as she has been on the receiving end in several instances. Olympia's first mentor was her grandmother. Then she connected with Louise in Pampa during her first marriage. The most recent mentor Olympia points to has having a significant effect is her current husband, Dave. These individuals provided an important foundation for Olympia as she fought to overcome the devastating effect of rejection. Serving as a mentor for others provides Olympia with a sense of achievement as she is providing what she sees as a significant contribution to certain individuals, which allows them to elevate their status and become drivers in the community.

134

A final element of motivation tied to the inadequacy/achievement line appears to be deeply personal and directly connected to Olympia's two children. Olympia discussed this dimension during her third interview.

> Well the first time I felt like I just had to because I had made that commitment, if you are going to appoint me then I knew that, I was not going to make a commitment and go into it for three months and then be gone. I knew definitely on the first commitment. The second commitment I still had, Ted was still in school, he was I guess he was a senior, a junior or a senior, so I knew that I wanted to be there, I wanted to give him his diploma. That was very important. It sounds silly but I wanted to be there, because I got to give both of the boys their diploma and that was to me that was the most rewarding thing in the world to stand there and see them look at me and I get teary about other kids.
> (Landry interview, 2003)

The commitment to the community combined with the commitment to her own children provides a very powerful sense of motivation particularly when viewed through the inadequacy/achievement lens.

The unbroken line of motivation in this specific case is grounded in a sense of insecurity and inadequacy which has been overcome by determination and a desire to achieve. There are three elements that contribute to this finding, a desire for acceptance, a desire to serve as a mentor, and finally a strong degree of commitment to her children and her community. The unbroken line is seen in the actions Olympia takes as the board president, which will be explored later in the present study.

135

Scene v: Lynne – The Self-Proclaimed Expert

Historical Narrative

Growing up as the only child of parents that were high school dropouts could have led to a poorly educated adult. However, Lynne Lender defied the odds and became the woman her father urged her to become as a child. Lynne is a rare entity as a native of Austin, Texas. She grew up living on the north side of a city in a home with her parents on what was then the outskirts of town. "Then my parents moved way out of town right off of Steck and Burnet Road. That was way out, it was so far that my parent's friends – they moved out there in 1961 and nobody would go that far" (Lender interview, 2003). Her earliest remembrance is associated with disappointment at not learning how to read on the first day of school. "…when the first day I started school I came home and my father asked me he said, 'How was school?' I said, 'Well, it was all right, but I didn't learn to read'" (Lender interview, 2003). The inability to read easily served as an obstacle during her early school years. "…reading came kind of hard to me…" While reading was difficult for Lynne, it did not stop her from creating the illusion that she was a great reader, "I can remember I would go check out books, real fat, thick books so people would think I was reading, but I really couldn't do it" (Lender interview, 2003). The desire to create the illusion of being a great reader is an initial glimpse into a line of motivation that seems to drive Lynne. Eventually she learned to read proficiently and progressed through elementary school with a minimum of difficulty despite having what she characterized as poor teachers. "In elementary school I did not have very good teachers. They were not very kind or nurturing…" (Lender

interview, 2003). Her perception of school began to change when she entered fifth

grade where she started to become noticed by her teachers, and she liked the attention.

"…in 5th grade I started having teachers who liked me who would I'm the kind of person

who likes to get responsibility and so if you would say Oh would you take this new

person down to the office or something, I would – I really turned on to that" (Lender

interview, 2003). The desire for recognition appears to be a strong driver for Lynne and

is seen later. The discovery of Social Studies as a school subject was another factor that

caused Lynne to view school in a positive light. Lynne made the transition to middle

school however these few years appear to be less than memorable. "…I had a real good

teacher 5th and 6th grade and then middle school, y'know middle school you have some

good teachers and some not. But that it sort of grows from there" (Lender interview,

2003). Lynne really started to excel as she reached high school and came into contact

with teachers that she perceived as excellent role models and people that eventually

influenced her when she became a teacher.

Lynne discussed two events that were significant to her during her school years.

The first was the Kennedy assassination that took place in Dallas, Texas on November

22, 1963 and the second was the Whitman incident that took place in her hometown of

Austin, Texas on August 1, 1966.   The Kennedy assassination caused Lynne to examine

historical events using a different lens.

> …when I was in 6th grade, Kennedy was shot and I was flabbergasted that
> first of all I didn't imagine anything could happen but that he couldn't be
> fixed. That, I always had thought that America was so great, so
> wonderful and that within America things could be fixed. And so it was

kind of shocking to me to find out that things couldn't always be fixed
and the more I studied history the more (*pause*) I don't want to use the
word disillusioned because but maybe but more realistic I began to think
about things like World War II was one of those portrayed as a brave
event. Everybody working hard to beat Hitler but then when you really
looked at it, it was y'know this primadonna general and that prima donna
general, how are you going to do this and what's the political and so uh it
really began – I think it started with the Kennedy assassination (Lender
interview, 2003)

While the Kennedy assassination opened her eyes and allowed her to see the world from

a different perspective. The second event seemed to leave an indelible mark on her

psyche as it was much closer to home.

Well it was in our neighborhood. There was a college student who lived
one block away that was one of the ones that was killed on the mall and
several of my friends had that teacher, his wife was a teacher and so it
was kind of shocking that someone would go up and kill people. I mean
you're walking along and in normal life and then something happens and
its not normal. And it's severe! I think it was on a mini scale to
Austinites probably what 911 was to um the nation. Just very shocking
what would happen. …he killed his mother and his wife before he went
up in the Tower…. (Lender interview, 2003)

Clearly the event had a traumatic effect on Lynne as she compared it to the events that

occurred on September 11, 2001 in which the World Trade Center and the Pentagon

were attacked by terrorists and thousands of American civilians were killed. The

Whitman event has been described as pivotal in the minds of many Americans.

"Until Whitman undertook his shooting spree in Austin, Texas, public
space felt safe and most citizens were utterly convinced they were

138

comfortably removed from brutality and terror. After August 1, 1966,

things would never be the same." (McLeod, 2005,

http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/mass/whitman/index_1.

html)

McLeod clearly echoes the response Lynne had regarding the Whitman slayings and

validates her statement. The Whitman event happened at about the time Lynne was

entering high school and was during this time that she began to solidify her career path.

The future began to unfold for Lynne as she entered high school and was

introduced to teachers with what she describes as exceptional skills and abilities. "…she

was just fantastic the way all the different methods that she used in teaching … and so

for her to use all these new teaching methods really was very, very exciting and we

learned a lot" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne began to appreciate her interactions with

teachers and where initially she found distinction in recognition as a volunteer now she

began to excel scholastically, eventually achieving induction into the National Honor

Society. Lynne still sought acceptance and recognition of her intellect despite attaining

entrance into a prestigious academically oriented organization. "…when I made

National Honor Society I had to go in [to her Algebra teacher] and say, 'Look, I'm not

dumb in every class.' (*laughs*) And he said, 'Aww, I already knew that'" (Lender

interview, 2003). The desire for acceptance continued as Lynne graduated from high

school and initially made a decision to forgo college for a career in the workplace. Her

hopes were high as she made the transition however, this was to be short-lived. "I had

decided that I wasn't going to go to college, so, I presented myself to IBM as a high

school graduate…the guy across from me said, 'I'm sorry, I just can't use you… You

need to go to college'" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne quickly made a decision to change her mind and pursue a college education following a job offer. "…I was stunned that all I could do was work on the assembly line and I went back and changed my mind and went to college" (Lender interview, 2003). College was to bring more adventures and the characteristic acceptance behavior began to become more pronounced.

College courses presented new academic challenges when Lynne entered the University of Texas. The course work was more difficult and she discovered that she needed to learn time management skills. The first semester of college represented a learning opportunity on many different fronts. "…when I first came to Texas it just seemed so easy and oh my goodness and the next thing I knew I was failing everything and I had to make A's on all my exams to make a C in the class" (Lender interview, 2003). Eventually, Lynne learned to exert control over her own destiny.

> I then learned the value of time management and study and not waiting
> until the last minute…it was about that time that I felt like I could walk
> into a class and say I'm going to make an A in this class or I'm not going
> to have the time, I'll take a B, but mainly I wanted to make As. (Lender
> interview, 2003)

While Lynne learned to achieve in her college courses she also explored relationships with several men, finally meeting her first husband, Larry. Their initial encounter was rather inauspicious, but Lynne had a sense that Larry was going places. "When I was introduced to [Larry] I was thinking this guy is going to be governor someday" (Lender interview, 2003). The young couple married and moved to Waco where Larry attended law school at Baylor University. Lynne transferred her credits from the University of Texas and received her undergraduate degree in education from Baylor. Baylor while it is only 100 miles north of Austin was a world away culturally and politically. "So I then

transferred, which was very odd to from the University of Texas to Baylor in 1972. We were the only McGovern people, I think, on campus…actually it was a culture shock but I really didn't have to integrate culturally with the people at Baylor" (Lender interview, 2003).   Obviously, Lynne and her husband did not fit the typical pattern of Baylor law school student and spouse.   Following graduation, the couple moved to the town where Larry was raised and he began to pursue a career in politics. Moving to this small east Texas community represented a noteworthy experience to Lynne.

> The significant event is really living in a small town. That was so
> different to me because the people are very, everybody's cliquish, you,
> everybody knows you've go to go to this church, or this church, or this
> church. You gotta have this friend, or this friend, and this friend. What
> group you, what group you're allowed to be in depends on how much
> money you have and the jobs you have and that was always very
> surprising to me and very, very hard for me. (Lender interview, 2003)

Lynne secured a teaching position as her husband sought to nurture his fledging career in local politics. While Larry was a known member of the community and his father had participated in the local political scene, Larry found the world of small town politics difficult. The political machine was well entrenched and philosophically at an opposite end of the political spectrum. Deals were offered that would have provided entrance into the political scene however, Larry spurned the initial offering and decided to campaign for a state office.

> Larry ran for state representative. And Larry's from a family who had
> been in [small town] a long time, he was old time [small town] and his
> father had been on the school board, had been president of the school
> board, so he was it was a power to contend with and the conservative
> group went to him and asked him if he would not run and run for county
> judge instead. They would support him for that but [Larry] just didn't

want to do that and was very idealistic and so they, we spent, this was in

1980, we spent 33 thousand dollars and his opponent spent a hundred in a

two county race and he lost by a few votes and they really hurt him and

then he waited another, he waited a year and then ran for the county

judgeship and of course they just, they just killed him on that. (Lender

interview, 2003)

Following the disastrous defeat, Larry and Lynne made the decision to take a different

path. They said goodbye to the small town and returned to live in Austin where Larry

secured a position with the State Bar Association and Lynne accepted a position

teaching English at one of the local high schools. While was able to teach English at the

high school level, her goal was to find a position teaching History or another Social

Studies course. Therefore she began to look for a teaching position more to her liking in

the Austin area. The opportunities were few and Lynne was somewhat discouraged after

unsuccessful interviews at quite a few schools. Finally, a door opened as her father-in-

law had an acquaintance serving as a superintendent and he connected Lynne with the

superintendent in Suburbia ISD where she presented herself as a viable candidate for an

open position in the Social Studies department at Suburbia High School. During the

interview process, Lynne found herself in a quandary as she was pregnant with her first

child and faced somewhat of a moral dilemma. "…when the interview was at its end I

said, see I was three months pregnant, and I knew I could either tell them or not tell

them and I figured if I told them that would be a disaster, but on the other hand I just

couldn't take a job knowing that I would have a baby in January…" (Lender interview,

2003).   The campus administrators made the decision despite the upcoming pregnancy to offer the position to Lynne and she accepted.

Lynne spent the next seventeen years teaching Social Studies at Suburbia High School and eventually ascended to the position as the Social Studies Department Chair. While she had a desire to participate in the advancement of Suburbia ISD she made a conscious decision to remain in the classroom as opposed to becoming a counselor or administrator. "I'm a teacher. That's what I am. I don't want to be a principal I don't want to be a counselor. That's where I fit, that's the talent I have, that's the piece I can give…" (Lender interview, 2003). She also served the district outside of the classroom on various committees. "…one of the biggest things I really did was to be on the um insurance committee when we were self insured. And so we had to make a lot of really hard decisions, good decisions and I always felt that I was elected to represent a certain group and I always wanted to be sure that group was protected" (Lender interview, 2003). Participating on committees allowed Lynne to see the district from a macro perspective and eventually played a role in her decision to pursue board membership.

Lynne experienced a career change in the summer of 2001. The Dean from one of the local colleges contacted Lynne and offered her a position with a new department.

> I got a call from this associate dean here and I didn't know who it was
> and I didn't really call back and she called again and then I called her
> back couldn't get her, and so I don't know, I don't care, it's an associate
> dean, it doesn't matter to me. And so finally she got a hold of me and
> what had happened is that she had asked around the [college], who are
> the good local history teachers and she had heard from different

143

professors and advisors, Lynne was the name that she heard. So she called me and wanted me to come interview and so I came and interviewed and she liked me and then I came and interviewed with the group and they offered me a job and it was a lot more money and um so I said sure. And I was kind of mad and disgusted with [her principal at Suburbia] at the end…. (Lender interview, 2003)

The new position provided an opportunity for Lynne to explore new territory in her chosen field. It also opened the door for her to pursue school board membership, which she could not do as an employee of Suburbia.

People

Significant people play a role in the development of the individual and Lynne identified just a few during her three interviews. The first important person is her father. Her parents were high school dropouts as was stated earlier in the present report. Lynne referred to her father in particular as the person that set the tone for her future development. When Lynne was young her father urged her to become self-sufficient so that as an adult she would be an independent person. "That was very different then the way my father would talk to me. *Not* [emphasis on tape] to depend on somebody, but to depend upon yourself" (Lender interview, 2003). The ability to be independent appears to be important in her behavior however this is tempered by what appears to be a strong desire for acceptance. Perhaps her upbringing as an only child may have had some influence in this characteristic.

Another belief embedded by her father was the importance of school and acquiring a quality education. "…the people who were most important in my thinking in

144

this were my parents, primarily my father. An education was the absolute key that

nobody could take that away from you" (Lender interview, 2003). This belief was

foundational in her development and most likely drove her to attend college. Certainly

this drive coupled with her emerging observation contributed to her desire to pursue a

degree in education. As Lynne began to see her teachers in a positive perspective and

individuals that played a significant role in society, the thought of becoming a teacher

started to become appealing. "…school was that important then what I must want to be

is a teacher and that came to me …" (Lender interview, 2003). While her father saw

teaching as an honorable profession this was not the case with the rest of her family.

> I can remember my grandmother, my aunts and uncles saying things like,
> 'What you need to do is be a stewardess.' Because stewardesses meet
> rich men who fly, because back then only wealthy people would fly and
> if you could only meet a rich man then everything would be fine.
> (Lender interview, 2003)

Lynne rejected the advice of her extended family and followed the counsel of her father

and earned a degree and the credentials to become a teacher and served in that capacity

for seventeen years in Suburbia ISD.

As Lynne moved from elementary to middle to high school the seed planted by

her father was nurtured by an influential History teacher. Lynne found Cynthia Edwards

to be inspiring and she encouraged Lynne to achieve at the highest level. "In high

school the very best (*pause*) model I had of what a Social Studies teacher would be like

or any teacher could hope to be was Cynthia Edwards who was teaching honors

American History…" (Lender interview, 2003). Ms. Edwards served as a role model for

145

the exemplary teacher that Lynne aspired to become as she completed college and began her teaching career.

The third and fourth people that appeared to have a significant influence on Lynne are her two children. It is interesting to note that she spoke very little of Angela, her daughter, and Andy, her son, during the portion of the interview that explored her life history. Lynne brought them up at the end of the first interview almost as an afterthought. "Yeah, I'd like to say something about my kids. To me it was very, very, very hard being a mother of both of my kids. Angela when she reached middle school, I mean high school really had of trouble and then Andy of course with his illness and so it was very hard for me to do everything" (Lender interview, 2003). Angela had quite a bit of difficulty in high school. However, she eventually went on to college and is currently pursuing her Master's degree. Andy represented a challenge for Lynne as he had a significant number of disabilities brought on by a bout with cancer at a very young age. "Andy had brain cancer he was diagnosed when he was 16 months old and he was not expected to live so they did very aggressive surgery which left him with many handicaps…." (Lender interview, 2003). Andy graduated from high school and is advancing his education through the junior college system despite his handicapping condition.

Lynne appears to have become what her father encouraged her to become, an independent woman, and thus served as a positive influence in her development. Cynthia Edwards, her high school History teacher served to inspire Lynne to become a teacher and unknowingly acted as a role model as Lynne joined the ranks of the

146

education profession. Ms. Edwards was a positive influence. Angela and Andy appeared much later in the script and appeared to be a negative influence. "To me it was very, very, very hard being a mother of both of my kids…Angela resented me working, she resented public school and so it's always been a contention between us (Lender interview, 2003). Clearly, Lynne did not enjoy her role as a mother and believed her children caused her grief.

An analysis of the scripts/text reveal Lynne spent very little time discussing the people that influenced her as she has progressed through her life. While it would appear that she has the desire to be an independent person, she contradicts this in her actions that suggest a strong need for acceptance. Perhaps this is part of the reason she sought membership on the board, but this will be explored when I discuss her path to the school board.

How Lynne is seen by others

Lynne appears to be perceived by the Superintendent and her fellow board members as fairly one dimensional. Her extensive background as a teacher in the Suburbia ISD clearly influences their thinking. The Superintendent appears to value the perspective Lynne and another former teacher/current board member bring to the table. "Our two former teachers will really step up to the pipe. They realize when if we are dealing with a serious issue with a teacher or with some type of an employee I mean they really understand it, and they do well..." However Dr. Ivory understands that Lynne is going to look at each situation from this perspective and apply her special knowledge to resolving problems, and each board member has an agenda. "But they are

always going to have their um special interest regardless of whether they are teachers or not" (Ivory interview, 2003). The agenda Lynne brings to the board is tempered by her years in the classroom.

Henry Elkins, a fellow Suburbia ISD board member, also recognizes the perspective Lynne brings to her work on the board however, he perceives her teaching history with the district as a liability.

> Lynne bless her heart, um, um I think she's had the toughest time on the board because she was a teacher for so long that all of the teachers will call her and kind of pin her down on issues that she doesn't really want. You know what I'm saying. And so she's had a tough time being on the board, and also she's had a tough time with the fact that hey, some of us don't see the world through her eyes in terms of hey all those teachers are your buddies been over there for 20 years, that's great, hey some of us don't see them as being as great as you think at all. (Elkins interview, 2004)

The ability to transcend her role as a teacher has been a challenge and Elkins believes she has been successful. "But I think she has grown and this doesn't seem to be as much as a burden any longer" (2004). Dr. Ivory agrees with Mr. Elkins and understands that Lynne has made progress as a board member. "Even though they came on most recently as teachers, definitely have evolved into looking at the whole thing…. And you have to change your whole perspective and they have done that" (Ivory interview, 2003).

While Lynne is perceived as fairly one dimensional and interested in teacher issues exclusively, other board members recognize she has a high degree of passion for her work as a board member. "Lynne of course is always on her Social Studies or

148

teachers she does a lot on teachers…I see the enthusiasm that Dr. Abbott and Isaac Anderson and Lynne Lender they just have, they love it" (Landry interview, 2003). Enthusiasm and passion for work is an important attribute for any school board member. However, the fervor is often mitigated by other factors faced by the individual.

A board member with a one dimensional perspective presents a challenge for the superintendent. The success of the board member in this instance can be influenced by the superintendent that understands the perspective and actively seeks to engage the board member in meaningful work. The danger often lurks below the surface when the board member comes to the table with a hidden agenda and is either unwilling or unable to participate openly.

The Path to the School Board

The Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees election in May 2001 led to a series of events that shook the foundations of the community and challenged the sensibilities of the individuals that held board seats when it happened, as well as the superintendent. An overt political power-play resulted in a fit of anger and the subsequent very public resignation of a then current member which created an opportunity shortly after Lynne left her role as a teacher at Suburbia High School. Lynne made her decision to pursue board membership at a time when the board was experiencing division and upheaval. The incident was discussed by the Superintendent and several of the school board member participants which provides multiple perspectives into the affair.

The conflict emerged when the board members came together to elect officers for the upcoming year. The board had developed a practice of selecting new officers

149

each year after the spring general election however, the presidency had long been held by a school board member that did not seek re-election. A long time board member, Oakley Ingram, had designs on the position of the board presidency and actively campaigned for the position with the active board members. However, his efforts were not rewarded as the board ultimately selected another member to serve as the president. Apparently Ingram was furious with the decision of the board to appoint Lawn. Dr. Ivory, the Superintendent believed, "Oakley Ingham resigned because Arvin…was elected board president" (Ivory interview, 2003). Certainly Dr. Ivory was privy to other information and greatly simplified the circumstances. However, another insight came from Olympia Landry who was an active board member when the incident occurred. "Oakley Ingham was upset because we elected Arvin as president because he felt Arvin wasn't… I shouldn't say capable… Oakley really wanted to be president…" (Landry interview, 2003). Landry suggested that selecting Lawn as board president over Ingram was going to be problematic as Lawn may not have been capable of serving in the role. However, the choice of Lawn as board president even with potential problems was superior to selecting an individual with a strong connection to the previous administration. The conflict was exacerbated as Ingram sought to mobilize the community by going public with his resignation. "He e-mailed the Suburbia Sentinel and e-mailed the City Daily News. And I guess that he e-mailed Adele, I guess that is the way he did it. Well, so he kind of broke the routine as far as resignations are concerned" (Lawn interview, 2004). The community reaction to the conflict was discussed by Lender. "…they elected Arvin and Oakley Ingham was on the side with

150

Ulrich Evans and that group and of course they were all gone except for Oakley and he was so angry that…he wrote a letter to the editor, a letter to the newspaper explaining that Arvin was just too stupid to be board president and quit" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne became aware of the conflict through the media exposure and realized an emerging window of opportunity was opening. "Well what had happened is that I had just resigned and…Oakley Ingham had resigned in sort of a fit because he didn't think Arvin was smart enough to be president of the board and regardless I think he shouldn't have done that but it played into my hands" (Lender interview, 2003). The conflict was indicative of the change that was occurring in the community. The old inner circle was being pushed out and being replaced with members that were either rejected by the previous régime or recently elected board members who represented the newer faces arriving in Suburbia. "Oakley Ingham and Ulrich…were closely aligned with the superintendent at the time" (Ivory interview, 2003). Clearly, Ingram represented the group aligned to the previous superintendent and the rest of the board members made a statement that they wanted to put the past behind and move forward by rejecting Ingram, a member of the old inner circle and selecting Lawn, a member of the outer circle, as the new board president.

While Lynne had expressed an interest in board membership to her confidants and the opening created by the exit of Oakley Ingram represented an opportunity, she needed the prodding of a few close friends to make the leap. "I was sitting in Suburbia High School and Irene Adkins and Edith Anderson were saying, 'You know, you've always wanted to be on the school board' and they said, 'Well you've got this chance.' I

151

said, 'Well the filing date's already passed.' [And they said], 'No it hasn't, no it hasn't.' So I went over and filed" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne was also encouraged by other educators in the Suburbia district, educators with questionable motives. "Different people had different reasons. Some people were just my friends, some people didn't like Adele…One of the people uh was an assistant principal and he thought, I mean he really thought I could go in there and fire her" (Lender interview, 2003). Thus, Lynne began her active pursuit to board membership. While the action leading up to the election is interesting, the story is not complete as the superintendent was faced with a decision to either appoint a new member with the help of the elected board or call an election to fill the position vacated when Ingram resigned. Lynne wondered what contributed to the decision on how to fill the position. "And so that created a position. Now Adele could have um appointed somebody, or she could a call for an election. Now why she called an election, I don't know" (Lender interview, 2003). The decision to call an election was connected to a successful campaign waged by another board member and will be told with their story.

Lynne filed and jumped into the campaign with both feet. She met with groups in the district, went door to door and enlisted the help of her friends in the community. The day of the election was particularly memorable. "I was surprised at how much it suddenly mattered to me. I thought I was a little more, well if I lose, but remember I had never lost anything…I was just a zombie that day and it was (*deep breath*) it was horrible, it was so horrible. I thought I would never run again… we had this election in November and I won by four or five votes" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne narrowly

survived the initial campaign winning by a margin of five votes, and joined the board in November 2001 taking the place held by Oakley Ingram. Any euphoria Lynne experienced was short lived. "…pretty soon after I got elected in November we had to start talking about the budget and it made me physically ill to realize how little the state was giving to us compared to what I thought it was" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne was then faced with a decision to seek a second term as the seat she held was on the schedule for election in May 2003. While the realization that board membership was not all that she expected, Lynne felt obligated to seek a second term.

> …the reason why I decided to run because I felt like the district, for another term, I felt like the district had um, had um paid for me. And being on the board for a year and a half so they might and I was just now getting the hang of it to have to go through that again they wouldn't get their money's worth. And when I say that I mean the board's, y'know the district sends you places…Yeah, you get all this training and um, you don't get any money but y'know of course all of that is paid for, and um (*pause*) I just felt like I needed to sort of complete, so that is why I decided to run the next time. (Lender interview, 2003)

Evidently, Lynne, a long time Suburbia teacher and community member believed she just couldn't walk away from her role as a board member. Commitment and a desire to participate in the community coupled with a sense of obligation seem to have contributed to her decision to seek a second term. However, her desire seems to be waning as she confided that she was not going to run for a third term. "I'm not going to tell anybody this but I, I, I can't imagine that I would run again. I have some things I need to do and I will feel like then I will have given what I need to" (Lender interview,

153

2003). It would appear that Lynne has found her self in a position to let go of the board membership and move on with the next phase of her life. The motives that sustained her desire to seek and retain board membership continue to exist; however, she has decided to focus her time and energy in a different direction when her term is complete. The intentions that drive Lynne appear in her unbroken line of motivation, the next section of the present report.

The Unbroken Line of Motivation

So, the question of what motivated Lynne to seek and retain membership on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees remains to be addressed. Three dominant strands or themes appear to emerge from the present analysis. First, a theme of power and control couched in the language of equity; second, a strong desire to gain acceptance from peers and a broader audience; and third, an observation that Lynne, a political animal, has a need to create a persona that shifts dependant on the situation or the people. All three themes are enmeshed with the meta-theme of playing the role of the expert.

Lynne discussed a sense of duty to the community in her role as a school board member however the under the surface power dimension seems to overwhelm this stated goal. She came from the ranks as a classroom teacher and worked her way up through the system on her way to her seat on the school board, however, she made a deliberate decision to stay in the classroom during her career in public education, which was an interesting choice. Certainly serving the community as a classroom teacher is an honorable option. However, Lynne had a clear desire to participate in power roles, which took shape in participating on district committees and serving as a content

154

department chair. The other side of the power picture was not visible to many members of the school community. Lynne perceived that she had a position of power, legitimate or not, based on her relationship with the principal of Suburbia High School. While Lynne perceived she was in a power relationship with the principal, the legitimate leader in the school, perhaps she was being used to accomplish certain tasks that the principal did not want to tackle. She stated that the principal asked her to deal with touchy discipline problems, thus keeping these situations hidden to the population of the school and the community. Eventually, her confidence in the ability of the principal to serve as a source of power eroded and she sought new players to support her need for control and power. Some of these were people within the school community that appealed to her desire and encouraged her to pursue board membership. These individuals were teachers and administrators that served under the Suburbia High School principal. Again we find a situation where Lynne was being used to accomplish hidden objectives defined by others. In both of these cases the individuals appealed to her sense of expertise and that she could make a difference because of this characteristic.

Certainly the concept of the expert is wrapped up in the ego that Lynne discusses in the subtext of her script. Yukl (1998) provides an extensive discussion extending the work of French and Raven (1959) regarding the dimensions of the expert form of power. The argument presented by Yukl suggests, "In the short run, perceived expertise is more important than real expertise…" (p. 185). Lynne projects herself as an expert in the field of education among her peers on the board of trustees. Her power in this context will exist as long as the other board members believe she is an expert. Yukl extends the

155

discussion with the following, "…an agent may be able to 'fake it' for a time by acting confident and pretending to be an expert. However, over time, as the agent's knowledge is put to the test, target perceptions of the agent's expertise are likely to become more accurate" (p. 185). Perhaps this explains why Lynne is going to step off the dais and relinquish her seat at the end of her current term. She seems to understand her expertise is only as good as those that believe she is an expert and as an illusionist she knows the image of her expertise will only last for a relatively short while.

The second theme, a desire for acceptance, is a strong force motivating Lynne toward board membership. She openly discusses the relationships she has had over the years in which she worked for acceptance. Again, the relationship with teachers and administrators in Suburbia coupled with the literature on acceptance is a point of departure for this portion of the discussion. Acceptance is viewed by many as an essential component of social life. Maslow (1943) posited the need for acceptance is an essential component of social and psychological sense of belonging for most humans. Maslow categorized the need for acceptance and belonging as a "deficiency need" and theorized individuals had to achieve a sense of belonging before reaching the level of self-actualization. Certainly there are detractors that argue against the validity of stage models and the lines between the stages are blurred and inconsistent. As a young child Lynne displayed behaviors early in school that were designed to direct attention to her and result in acceptance. It would appear that she was a child that could easily have been labeled as a "teacher's pet" based on her dialogue about her elementary school days. This behavior demonstrating a strong need for acceptance continued as Lynne

156

moved through public school, into college and during her career as an educator. She sought the approval of her peers while a teacher and even though she had talked about serving on the school board, it took a bit of prodding. The push came from her peers and then Lynne seeking the approval of this group made the leap. However, it would appear that the people that gave her the shove toward board membership were seeking a person that could be manipulated to achieve certain unstated goals not unlike the behavior employed by the principal at Suburbia High School.

The third theme, a shifting persona dictated by surrounding people and circumstances is intricately woven into the fabric of motivators serving as the underpinning for her role as a member of the board of trustees, and intimately connected to her desire to be perceived as an expert in her field by the other board members. Lynne discussed her desire to be a part of the team and it would appear that she modifies her behavior to fit into each group. The only non-exemplar that seems to exist in her text is the tale of playing the role of the liberal attending conservative Baylor University. However, her husband and in all likelihood many of his law school classmates were probably very liberal and acted in response to the conservatism they perceived in their surroundings. Therefore, it would be highly likely that Lynne, seeking to be a part of the group would modify her behavior to blend into this small group. To this end she was rewarded as was recounted in her story about the Nixon/McGovern election in 1972. Her professor gave her a pat on the back for bucking the norm embraced by her classmates. The text she provided is replete with examples where Lynne adjusted her behavior to fit the situation. Certainly this is strongly correlated to the acceptance

behavior discussed earlier. However, the chameleon-like behavior Lynne displays is strongly political. Lynne is a self-described politician playing in a soft-core political arena, which is about what she can handle as it doubtful that she will continue to pursue any role in the political landscape in the future

In conclusion, Lynne displays behavior suggesting she has a strong need for legitimate power to control the perceived outcomes she or members of her sphere of influence, desires. She also has a strong desire for acceptance and will adjust her actions and language to assimilate into the group as long as the group will acknowledge her role as the expert. Lynne is somewhat idealistic and hopes by her actions to make a difference however, this is often thwarted by others that either intentionally or accidentally fails to acknowledge her expertise. Lynne is an active board member and has been observed participating frequently and openly during the open session of the board. In a sense she is in her environment serving as a board member and is able to use her extensive knowledge base and experience to sway others to her view points. She uses language to convince others to adopt her beliefs and point of view. On the other hand, she is a considerate member of the board and will yield to those whom she perceives have greater expert power, particularly in situations where she has little referent knowledge such as finance or construction. As she said, she will continue to serve as an active board member until her term is complete and will then make her exit. Based on her text, there is some sense that she is disappointed with board service and the reality of a political position, albeit a soft-core political environment, is really not her cup of tea and she has other mountains to climb.

Scene vi: Leann – The Pot Stirrer

Historical Narrative

A series of fortunate events linked from birth to the present appear as distinct threads in the tapestry illustrating the life of Dr. Leann Abbott. She describes her childhood in terms of an idyllic image. "I always say that I had kind of a Norman Rockwell upbringing. Everything that my parents did was really focused on what's good for the family and what's good for their children and that was very clear growing up" (Abbott interview, 2003). While the image was pleasant, a darker background predated her early memories and in her words has had an effect on her perceptions of the world. "I was actually adopted when I was two weeks old and that probably has influenced my outlook on life – my whole life" (Abbott interview, 2003). While Leann apparently does not know her birthmother, she was thankful that she was adopted by two parents that had a genuine desire to care for her. The event of her birth and the circumstances that led her to her family are described as fortunate. "…that probably has had an influence y'know to some degree always feeling fortunate that I had a birthmother that acknowledged that she wasn't going to be able to care for me…" (Abbott interview, 2003). The early years (birth to age five) were spent in transition as her father, an insurance broker, was transferred around the country. Leann perceived her childhood as a Norman Rockwell image where all the pieces of the puzzle were in perfect order. "…the adults that my parents chose to have as a part of our lives were very good influences. And y'know I was never really around dysfunctional y'know um home life or adults or any thing like that. So it was very kind of a sheltered upbringing in

159

many ways" (Abbott interview, 2003). The family unit was perfectly enmeshed and her parents took great pains to protect her and her sister from the seamy side of life. The sheltered existence continued as Leann made the transition into school.

Leann had very few memories of her early childhood and the first few grades in school were not mentioned. Her school narrative really started when she was in the fourth grade where she described herself as somewhat of a disruptive student. "… I was one of those kids, I was respectful but a handful I say – in 4th grade I got Ns in shows self-control every single 6 weeks on my report card… (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann discovered she had athletic skills while she was in elementary school. "I was a big, big tomboy y'know that was a big thing for me. I hated wearing dresses and everything that I did was based on playing sports and y'know I was always one of the first people picked, boy or girl for a team" (Abbott interview, 2003). Elementary school teachers while remembered were insignificant. "I can remember my teacher's names but there aren't any particular teachers at that young age that had any necessarily profound influence on me" (Abbott interview, 2003). The significant observance regarding elementary school was the development of the initial concept of differentiation. "…that was kind of that stage where y'know you really start getting a differentiation I assume in ability level with kids and I was pretty much y'know it wasn't challenging in the least at that stage… (Abbott interview, 2003). School served as a vehicle to sort and select students based on their ability level and Leann exhibited strong intellectual skills as she transitioned from elementary to middle school; however these transitional phases were memorable. "I always had positive school experiences. The transitions sometimes were

160

a little hard y'know between 5th and 6th grade of course I was new and then moving in the middle of the year – in 8th grade so that was a little bit of a struggle…" (Abbott interview, 2003). School transitions teach children how to overcome obstacles and Leann was able to transcend despite the extant barriers.

The earliest years were spent in Atlanta, Georgia; and Richmond, Virginia, with the family finally settling down in Plano, Texas when Leann was in eighth grade. During the moves the family would return to Texas in the summer to spend time with relatives and while they were residing in other states they always considered themselves Texans. "…we always kind of considered ourselves Texans we were just kind of elsewhere as I said every year we would come back every summer…" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann continued to make progress in school however she viewed her experience as a social event and found little intellectual challenge until she reached high school. Her parents continued to serve as her life rudder. "I would say in high school um y'know once again my parents just had very high expectations and they said there is no reason for you to not do well y'know you have no reason not to do well" (Abbott interview, 2003). High school came with very high expectations and Leann performed well academically in Advanced Placement courses where she found an intellectual challenge and other children with similar abilities. "I never really thought of us as that particularly bright. I knew I was of above average intelligence … I was always in advanced courses and um so there were always people that were smarter than me so I never really thought I was all that particularly bright" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann

161

may have found herself amongst her intellectual peers and her protected environment

did not completely shield her from interactions with those who possessed lesser ability.

> I had such a sheltered upbringing y'know in high school I'd been in these
> honors classes and I remember in government class it was like one of the
> few classes that I took that wasn't a sequestered kind of with only honors
> people and I remember being very surprised y'know we had a map of the
> Mediterranean or something and some girl asked if this is Texas and I
> thought, "Oh, my God!" Y'know I just didn't know there were people
> that were out there that just didn't that were y'know didn't get it and so
> that was a little bit of an eye opening experience for me y'know always
> having been kind of a school girl and always being around people that
> were like that, that was a little bit of an eye opening and parents who
> having grown up with parents who were very involved in my
> education…. (Abbott interview, 2003).

The experience in Government class reinforced the concept of sorting and selecting and

Leann gravitated toward the "haves" as opposed to the "have nots" as she made her way

through high school. The force and direction provided by her parents yeilded positive

results as Leann made the transition from high school to college. She began her college

years with twelve hours of credit due to her performance in the Advanced Placement

classes and subsequent exams. Leann faced an important decision as she neared the end

of her years in high school. Selecting a college to attend presented a challenge and

Leann again turned to her parents to assist and participate in the decision making

process. College selection involved visits to the schools and communities as Leann

narrowed her choices. While Leann applied her intellectual ability to the process, in the

end, she relied on her intuition to make the final selection. "We drove down to Texas

162

A&M and I fell in love with it, it just walking around the campus how friendly people were the whole, the traditions, a lot of it really was just the atmosphere the culture of the campus" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann jumped into college at Texas A&M University (TAMU) with both feet and she had a fortunate surprise as she made the transition. "I basically decided that A&M was the only university I applied for and um I ended up getting surprisingly a full scholarship to A&M which I didn't expect at all. I didn't even apply for it my counselor in Plano had applied me for it" (Abbott interview, 2003). Good fortune continued to have a positive effect as she matriculated and began her freshman year at TAMU.

The positive and negative college experiences caused Leann to sharpen her career focus and learn new skills. Her father convinced her to declare her major in Chemical Engineering due to her interest and aptitude in science and there were very few women in the field. Leann discovered the field of study did not interest her however, she found through the course work and interaction with her peers, another desire. "I got into A&M that working in study groups I could help my friends a lot y'know we would be in these science classes with professors who could barely speak intelligible English that were simply incredibly bad teachers…" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann continued to explore the sciences after she made her decision to drop Chemical Engineering as a major and she had a particularly poor experience during her junior year that caused her to make a significant life changing decision.

> I walked into my Biochem course my junior year about half way through
> my junior year, still 300 something people in an upper level y'know

science class um I had taken organic the semester before that, I had made an A in it…but I walked into this class and I was sitting there and the professor walked in and y'know it was a huge class and I think he was Hungary um so he didn't speak English very well and it was just, just, he was the biggest geek in the world and y'know I had taken like a philosophy class the semester before that or something and that was my favorite class in college was philosophy…So, he walked in and he was just a goober and y'know I thought I am not going to do this anymore and I walked out, switched my major to education to C&I…Yeah so I majored in C&I and then ended up getting another scholarship, the Paul Douglas teacher scholarship which was like what they are talking about what they are doing now where they give you assistance on the stipulation that you will go teach in a high need area so I got a year and a half worth of support for that and so I was required to teach for three years to kind of pay off the loan. So that was good as well so um I was real fortunate in that respect that I kind of fell into these kind of things once again it wasn't me looking for it. Somebody called me in at A&M and said we've got this scholarship then can we apply you for it. It was very interesting how good Karma I guess. All those kind of things worked out. So that's how I got into teaching. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann was able to find the nexus between her interest in science and education as she graduated from TAMU and earned a teaching certificate in secondary science education.

Defining moments were not limited to her career choice as Leann also discovered she had leadership skills and found a vehicle to enhance these attributes. Texas A&M University provides a unique pre-college experience to incoming freshman. Fish Camp serves as a form of indoctrination designed to transform high school

164

graduates into Aggies. Leann attended the event prior to her freshman year and the

event had a profound effect.

> The other thing I would say that was kind of influential as far as my
> leader, building my leadership skills and my willingness to kind of get
> out in front of people at A&M – Are you familiar with Fish Camp?
> …Well, I went as a freshman and it was just boy it worked on me. I was
> totally indoctrinated, I mean I was the most y'know bleed maroon Aggie
> um y'know the minute I went to A&M I didn't come home until after
> Thanksgiving….I became involved in Fish Camp when I was a freshman
> and then I went as a counselor for um a couple of years and then I went as
> a camp director and then I applied to be one of the directors which is one
> of like the seven people that run the program. And it is almost
> completely student run program. For as enormous as the program is, it is
> really amazing that how much it is student run. There's an advisor and
> then there's like a secretary at least that time there were was. Y'know it's
> a three thousand freshmen are run through this every year and training for
> a thousand counselors and these other things. It was a great leadership
> experience, kind of going back to that a group of people kind of
> committed to this goal and really just working their tails off to do what
> ever it takes to make that happen…I actually did it for six years but um it
> was a wonderful experience y'know at A&M they call it the other
> education the leadership aspects that are promoted at the university and
> um it was really much more important to me than any of the academic
> experiences that I had…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leadership skills continued to be honed as Leann completed college and began her

teaching career. The skills learned as a Fish Camp leader were transferred when Leann

165

entered into politics and mounted her campaign to become a Suburbia ISD school board member.

Leann, college degree and teaching certificate in hand, joined the ranks as a public school science teacher with a bit of practical experience under her belt. While her student teaching experience was less than desirable, it was memorable and served to broaden her world view and solidify the value of the sort and select model she experienced as a student.

> I had student taught in a school in Bryan that was 7th grade…and it was very, very challenging population of kids…really low SES for so many of the students and they very much partitioned, I found, I discovered as I was there for a while it seems like the vast majority of the white kids were in these honors classes, the professors children…and these other all the rest of the classes were you know the expectations were just much lower…I got along well with the kids they liked me a lot I uh y'know it wasn't disillusioning, actually the teacher that was next door to my teacher ended up leaving like y'know I guess she was quitting at the mid year. And she had taught at a Catholic school previously and it just wasn't, it was very different atmosphere for her and they offered me a position and it was y'know, my teacher said Leann, y'know I think of any student teacher I've ever had you could handle it but I don't think it's a good place for a first year teacher, which you are going to be y'know. Um so and I was moving anyway so um y'know I think it was good because I learned a lot from it and I learned y'know the value of y'know having an atmosphere in which parents are supportive and everything like that y'know so it wasn't a bad experience it was just a learning experience. (Abbott interview, 2003)

While the student teaching experience did not dissuade her to join the profession, Leann decided she needed a change and moved for a short while to Colorado where she served as a substitute for a short period of time. However, this was truncated when her husband to be who was working for a high tech company in central Texas convinced Leann to move to the area. He facilitated the move by gathering applications for the surrounding school districts. "But my husband, who was not my husband at the time…really wanted me to move out here so he went around and got applications for Suburbia, Austin, Leander y'know all just to y'know to attract me to come down here" (Abbott interview, 2003). The tug of love was the prevailing force and Leann made the move to central Texas where she found a position teaching sixth and seventh grade science at Suburbia Middle School.

Suburbia ISD provided an opportunity for Leann to apply her skills as a professional educator, and she quickly found out she needed to depend on the support and guidance of the veteran teachers. "I took a long term sub position…The other science teachers were wonderful y'know…the 7th grade teacher Hanna Anderson, y'know. She gave me her lesson plan, so I never had to plan for that y'know, just a real supportive group of teachers" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann spent the next few years perfecting her skills with the help of her colleagues at Suburbia Middle School. She was rewarded during her public school teaching years by being voted as the campus teacher of the year. However, this was tempered with some ill will.

> I was voted teacher of the year by my peers. Favorite 6th grade teacher by
> students and none of that really made any difference as far as career

advancement, and I found that very frustrating…when I won teacher of the year we had a banquet kind of thing at the high school cafeteria y'know and I had to pay for my husband's ticket. (Abbott interview, 2006)

The teaching experience which started with such enthusiasm eventually became an area of contention as Leann began to perceive inequities between teachers and administrators. Teaching school was hard enough without perceived indignities that seemed to be associated with the role. The intrinsic rewards such as seeing the light of understanding turn on in the eyes of a child began to wear thin. Actions taken by district administrator began to take their toll with Leann and there were no tangible rewards associated with doing a good job.

Yeah, and they would turn off the air conditioner at 3:30 and school didn't let out till 3:45 to save money. Well it was still hot in the room, y'know and you've got 20, 25 sweaty middle school kids, then they start opening all the doors in and out. Well I knew they weren't turning off the air conditioner at 3:30 at the administration building. So to me that was another little insult and what I always say, and I say this continuously as a board member, we are fortunate to have two teachers on the board, but I try and remind people that its not the big things that drive people out of the class room, it's, I call it "death by a thousand paper cuts." It's the little daily insults and signals that your not appreciated that make people say, y'know I'm smart enough to do something else… and um there are other incidents where I basically said, this is not, I'm not going to put up with being kind of treated like this. Even though I though I worked in a great school, I knew I worked in a great district, I and a wonderful principal. But there were just little things y'know and it really they were more from beyond the school administration. Y'know central office kind

168

of decisions and attitudes that I saw, that I found just kind of insulting to my professionalism. (Abbott interview, 2003)

An activity associated with teaching is the ongoing pursuit of knowledge and Leann believed she had an obligation to improve her content knowledge as well as pedagogical skills. Thus, she entered graduate school while teaching and her interest in research coupled with what she believed was an insulting environment caused her to make the decision to quit her job at Suburbia Middle School and become a full time student at the university.

> I guess my 2nd year of teaching I started taking some classes at UT Austin in Science Ed. and most of them were offered through grants so I didn't have to pay for them, they were subsidized somehow and Dr. Elklaund my professor who ended up being the chair on my Ph.D. committee y'know after I took one or two I think he said, 'Y'know, Leann you really' I think it was after the first class, he said, 'Leann you need to apply to graduate school and get, make these things start counting towards graduate school.' So, I said ok, that's a good idea. So I applied and began working on my Masters degree and um y'know basically found that um I wasn't able to take the time I needed to finish the research on my Masters degree. Y'know if I had to decide between working on my teaching, y'know spending time being a better teacher, or spending time on getting a Masters degree as far as the research and writing then it was always I wanted to spend my time being a better teacher and so I said if I'm ever y'know going to finish this, and I discovered after having taken several of these courses and working with Dr. Elklaund who was a big influence on me, very supportive, very encouraging always positive and upbeat and saying y'know just positive strokes all the time that was I wanted to do. I wanted to get my Ph.D. and

169

I wanted to do what he did, I wanted his job one day. And so I left, I

decided in 1995 that I would quit and um finish on my Masters and go for

my Ph.D. because I wanted to do that before I had children because once

again I knew that once I had kids it would probably change the dynamics

quite a bit.

The transition from teacher to graduate student took a slight detour as Leann and her

husband decided to take a lengthy expedition to Australia.

After I quit my husband and I. He took kind of a long vacation and built

up some vacation time. We went to Australia for 6 weeks, my whole life

I wanted to go to Australia. I've always been obsessed with kind of

Australian farm animals and stuff like that and we volunteered on an

Earthwatch expedition, which is um a program where it brings volunteers

in for 2 week stints and you help out with either scientific or cultural

research. Basically a research expedition and volunteers help out on it.

And this professor had been studying the Spiny Achnicida on Kangaroo

Island in South Australia for years and so we went and did that for 2

weeks and that was a really good experience and then traveled around the

rest of the country, scuba dived and stuff like that…A total of 6 weeks,

yeah, and so. When we got married we said, we will probably be ready to

have kids in about 5 years and but I still wasn't ready to have kids

y'know so we went to Australia and then we came back and I said ok,

I'm ready to have kids. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The lengthy trip allowed Leann to realize a life-long dream and she returned and

dedicated herself to completing her graduate work earning a Masters degree as well as a

Doctorate in Science Education. Her past experience a public school teacher coupled

with her graduate work lead Leann to the realization she was not going to return to the

classroom. She parlayed her graduate work into a position with the university as a grant

evaluator. Her personal life had seen quite a few changes as she and her husband were responsible for two children.

> Well then once I left Suburbia Middle School my friends and peers had always encouraged me um the people I worked with, etc. Mr. Atkins said you should become a principal um my other friends said you ought to run for school board now that you're not teaching anymore and um basically when I finished my Ph.D., I had between May of '95 and December of '98, I finished my Masters degree, had my first child, finished my Ph.D. and had my second child. And so I was working um, I was kind of taking a break for a while at that point and just consulting, doing some consulting work, I started that like in February or March was doing some consulting work for the organization I work for now um helping them with project evaluation, they got a big grant from NSF and they needed some help just kind of organizing the project evaluation…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann was busy with her work with the university when a new opportunity appeared on the horizon. Suburbia ISD was expanding and created a position at the central office to coordinate the science program.   The decision to seek board election started to take shape as Leann unsuccessfully sought to land the position.

> I had applied when they had a; there was a; when they decided to hire a science curriculum coordinator um I had applied for the position and interviewed for it, but the person they hired was more qualified than me. He had done the job in Austin before and when I knew that he was applying for it, I wasn't surprised that they hired him, or y'know. I think I could have done a good job, but it wasn't like I thought oh, he shouldn't have got it and I should have, y'know. Because he was eminently

171

qualified and having the experience having done it before…. (Abbott

interview, 2003)

While Leann developed a rationale for her failure to successfully obtain the position, the

superintendent saw the circumstances quite differently.

> I had three candidates, and one of them was this person, and one of them
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> was a former teacher in our district who taught science who had gone
>
> back to get her doctorate and then another candidate from outside. Three
>
> excellent candidates and I used a committee and the committee
>
> legitimately, even though I wanted this fellow who was president of the
>
> national science uh, I wanted him. The committee selected him as well.
>
> And um, then (*pause*) he came on board, and then one of the candidates
>
> who was local came down and signed up and ran for the board…. (Ivory
>
> interview, 2003)

Leann somewhat upset at losing the bid for the science coordinator position licked her

wounds and continued her work with the university. However, she subtly began to build

a political machine designed to propel her into a seat on the school board at some point

in the future. Her path and design contributing to a successful political campaign will be

examined later in the present study.

Her work as a scholar continued as Leann was contacted by a staff member at the

Harvard Graduate School of Education to publish research she had participated with

during her graduate work at the university. The call and letter were a pleasant surprise

and spurred Leann into action designed to enhance her scholarly work and motivate her

to publish in the future. The contact constitutes another fortunate event contributing to

her future professional development in the scholarly dimension, which is likely to affect

her board service.

The historical narrative provides a glimpse into the events that shaped Leann and caused her to make decisions leading toward board membership. Adopted at birth into what seems to be a stable family influence free from visible dysfunction appears to be a fortunate accident. It is interesting to note during the creation of the text that Leann did not provide depth and complexity associated with a life. Many of the events were glossed over and simply stated without much detail. This behavior was particularly evident during the third session. Leann responded to the questions however there was little extension and attempts to explore the depth and complexities of the events were thwarted and the dialogue diverted to a new direction. The behavior suggests an unwillingness to trust and become open during the three interviews. While events are important in understanding the individual, the role played by important people identified by the participant provides a second dimension and contributes to understanding the person more fully.

People

Independence is a word that may be used to describe Leann particularly with respect to the perceived effect she believes people have had upon her development. As a result, there is very little discussion in her text about the role of individuals as she has moved through the stages of her life. Certainly there are the references to her father and mother who adopted her at birth along with her older sister and the role her immediate and extended family created the environment leading to an independent individual. There are a few other non-family individuals referred to in her text. The present analysis

will commence with an exploration of the family and then progress to the role of other people instrumental in her development as an independent actor.

The immediate family consisting of Leann's father, mother and adopted older sister relocated several times during her early years however, they eventually settled in the Dallas, Texas area. Leann spent a considerable amount of the early portion of her text describing her father and their relationship. Leann formed a strong bond with her father who challenged her to achieve academically at a young age.

> I worshiped the ground my dad walked on. He was um a um y'know a
> very lifelong learner um reading was very important in our family
> y'know when I was young what we did as a family outing was we went to
> the public library. We didn't go to the movies we didn't go to y'know
> these places where you would spend money. We went to the public
> library as a family and that's kind of and I can remember doing that on a
> regular basis um as a kid and so that kind of shaped, I guess what I saw
> and valued and whenever I had questions about things it was always lets
> go look it up together in an encyclopedia. So this valuing of education,
> valuing being a life long learner was instituted by my parents and
> particularly by my dad. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Her father planted the seed of independence in Leann, which is evident in her actions as she sought to be self-reliant and learned to care for herself. Leann validated the desire held by her father for her to become autonomous.

> But my father's philosophy was y'know don't ever rely on a husband to
> take care of you. Y'know you make sure you have a he used the term
> trade but y'know you have a career that you can support yourself that you
> never have to y'know rely on someone else to support you. He was
> always for as fairly conservative as my family, my father was very

174

> progressive in his attitudes in the way he brought me up and y'know
> women in general, things like that. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Her father clearly was the primary influence as Leann grew to adulthood. Perkins (2001) suggested the relationship between fathers and daughters is a significant determining factor in the development of self perception. The study analyzed the interdependence between women and their fathers in terms of six distinctive father-daughter relationships. While the text created by Leann is sparse there is sufficient evidence to suggest her father played a significant role in her development. An analysis of the rubric created by Perkins suggests the relationship between Leann and her father nests within the Demanding/Support Father dimension. The study indicates the woman with a Demanding/Supportive relationship identifies closely with her father and has created the space to differentiate herself from her father. Leann clearly has strong ties to her father and has evolved to create her own self image with his support and permission. While her father is a key individual instrumental in her development there are other family members mentioned in her text.

Her mother is mentioned in her text as the link to Texas and Leann recalled spending summers with an aunt and uncle in the eastern part of the state who played a role in her development.

> …I would say other influential people. My mother is from east Texas a
> very large family, nine brothers and sisters um from east Texas and so we
> would spend every summer going back to my aunt and uncle's farm in
> east Texas and my Aunt Annie and my Uncle Lou are basically like my
> grandparents. And they have always been a kind of grounding force in
> my life…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The only other reference to a family member is the minor role played by her husband whom Leann met when they attended Texas A&M University.

> … my husband was very encouraging, very supportive of that. Yes! Go get it. Y'know he never y'know had any issues with me y'know wanting to do that…My husband was very supportive once again, yes you need to do it, y'know. He always says y'know I want, you need to run for Senate, he's just constantly, always saying Leann you can do so much so he's always very, been very encouraging and pushing me and stuff like that. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Family members seem to serve as a foundation for Leann and allow her to create space and the conditions she needed to venture into the soft-core political environment that constitutes a campaign leading to election to the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. There are a few non-family members that had a similar effect.

The text created by Leann is parsimonious in referring to non-family members that she acknowledged in playing a role in her development. Elementary and middle school teachers were dismissed by Leann. "…there aren't any necessarily any particular teachers. I can remember my teacher's names but there aren't any particular teachers at that young age that had any necessarily profound influence on me" (Abbott interview, 2003). While these individuals are discounted in her text, there was one teacher in high school that was mentioned by name.

> I did have one teacher in particular in high school, Mr. Borowitz who was a junior English teacher. And he was very intelligent, very professorial kind of, y'know he looked like an English professor with a beard and everything and um really a good teacher. He also moonlighted, I worked at a department store and he moonlighted as the manager of the

176

department store also. And y'know that made me really admire him so much cause he was obviously so intelligent, so capable that what he wanted to do was teach. So, made the sacrifices he had to make in order to be a high school teacher. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Mr. Borowitz served as a role model for Leann as she was beginning the transition from child to adult. She saw this particular teacher playing dual roles and she rationalized this by deciding he was working two jobs to support his desire to be a professional educator. Later in the text Leann discussed the relationship between the salary paid for teaching and the lack of opportunity to advance as a public school teacher.

> ...he [Leann's husband] was basically hiring people out of college at salaries that I would have to spend 30 years in the classroom to make and I said this is *crazy*. I knew I wasn't going to make a lot of money as a teacher but um I was; I was frustrated with the inability to advance. (Abbott interview, 2003)

While Mr. Borowitz provided a somewhat romantic and cinematic view of the role of the public school teacher reminiscent of the part performed by Peter O'Toole in the film *Goodbye Mr. Chips,* and Leann pointed to this example as having a minor influence in her decision to become a teacher; there was another influential character that contributed to her desire to enter politics.

> An unnamed neighbor is responsible for awakening the politician residing within

Leann.

> When I started in, in – actually a funny thing is this is reflective of it – the first really paying job I had was a political campaign. And Plano was dry for packaged liquor all we had were beer and wine sales and the people that lived behind us owned like a beer and wine store they were having an

177

election to try and bring in packaged liquor sales and stuff like that I just, and of course they didn't think it was a good idea cause that would have competed with them so they were basically kind of funding the opposition effort for that. So I started working on that campaign and by the time we got a couple of weeks into it we were doing telephone stuff and door to door – I was probably 16 at the time. Within a couple of weeks into it they had me training all of the other volunteers coming in and stuff like. It was a really good – it was a real fun experience. I really liked that whole – y'know we're all on this team to work together to accomplish this task I really like that kind of feeling of lets all kind of pitch in and kind of go for broke on this task. And then later when I was in college the man who had helped kind of coordinate that um hired me as a receptionist in the summer for a company that he worked for because of the experience we had had then. Because even for a long time after that we would – I kept in touch with him as well because we had really kind of hit it off well at that time. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The situation Leann described, a group of people focused on accomplishing a clear goal was reinforced when she attended and then contributed to the Fish Camp experience in college. The activity stimulated her desire to participate in the political process as a worker and Leann would attempt to replicate this condition when she initiated her campaign for board membership.

The final influential individual that played a memorable and significant role in the text she created was her doctoral committee chairperson, Dr Elklaund. The decision to pursue a terminal degree is fraught with a multitude of obstacles. Leann pointed to Dr. Elklaund as the person that served as her guide throughout the process.

I discovered after having taken several of these courses and working with Dr. Elklaund who was a big influence on me, very supportive, very encouraging always positive and upbeat and saying y'know just positive strokes all the time that was I wanted to do. I wanted to get my Ph.D. and I wanted to do what he did, I wanted his job one day. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The role of the doctoral committee chairperson is well documented among those individuals filled with the courage and perseverance required to complete the task. The terminal degree is aptly named and there are many actors that never finish the undertaking. The chairperson serves in a dual role as a guide and tormenter as the graduate student defines, refines, conducts the research and eventually creates the dissertation leading to a defense of the research and hopefully the awarding of the degree. Haight (1988) provided his impressions of the relationship he had with his committee chair.

Robert O. Stripling (Bob) is a prince of a person. This I first learned as a beginning doctoral student. It was then, also, that I first became aware of the impact of this man as a professional and as a human being. Bob was my doctoral committee chairperson, and he was a taskmaster. I never worked so hard on anything as I did on my dissertation, and completing it was a painful experience. Yet, as I rewrote each chapter several times, Bob was patient, frequently encouraging and supporting me. (p. 317)

Leann and Dr. Elklaund seemed to have a similar relationship, which eventually propelled her into her present professional role as a member of the Academy.

Leann was somewhat unforthcoming about the role people played in her development. Perhaps this is a result of her desire to be an independent woman, or is

179

just a part of her persona. Or perhaps Leann may be purposefully concealing this aspect

of her character development in an attempt to create a self-stylized version of her

personality. Uncovering motives is difficult when the participant is unwilling or

intentionally downplaying the influences performed by others. However, it is clear that

persons named and unnamed contributed to her growth and eventually made her the

woman she wishes to be and the person she presents to the public. Most significant

among the people are her father and the unnamed neighbor. Her father provided the

foundation for development and the neighbor unknowingly exposed her interest in

politics. Leann may in fact be more motivated by the act of campaigning as opposed to

the holding of the office however she is not an absent board member as observed by the

author of this report.

Understanding the events and people that contribute to the motives to seek board

membership are critical. The picture is incomplete without an awareness of the

perception others have regarding the participant. The next section of the present report

will explore this dimension of Dr. Leann Abbott and hopefully develop a better

understanding of her motives and work on the board.

How Leann is seen by others

An intellectual that uses language to overwhelm and accomplish predetermined

objectives during board meetings is the impression Leann projected to her colleagues on

the Board of Trustees as well as the superintendent who provides a deeper perspective of

the character and behavior displayed by Leann on and off the dais. Olympia, Henry and

Lynne provided insights into the behavior displayed by Leann.

Olympia, the board president, views Leann as a significant and verbal participant in the work of the board. Olympia also understands Leann comes to the board table with a defined agenda.

> Dr. Abbott, she talks a lot and she's very, she has a great ability to use words and to speak…I don't have the fluent speech for instance that Dr. Abbott has. Dr. Abbott's is normally on occupational health and teachers and specifically science…. (Landry interview, 2003)

Olympia perceives Leann to be rather aggressive in her approach to her work on the board and this perception is shared by Henry.

> Dr. Abbott is uh, uh (*pause*) highly inquisitive about everything! And I think, I think at times uh uh and she has slowed down, cause I think at times she was trying to show us how smart she was. And she wasn't really impressing us. But I mean some of us because trying to show us how smart she was, was keeping us here till midnight. (Elkins interview, 2004)

However, Henry quickly saw through her act and understood her as an individual with visible insecurities. In his case, her actions belied her words and he sought to overcome this tactic by forcing the conversation in his self proclaimed role as the unofficial Sergeant-at-Arms. The behavior was annoying and perceived as counterproductive to the work of the board. Henry perceived the behavior as self promoting and designed to slow the work of the board. Lynne, the other former teacher on the board, provided a different perspective to the behavior displayed by Leann.

> Leann knows a lot about bonds and things like that so I might talk to Leann um y'know so that, so that by the time I vote I do kind of

understand it but it was not something that I came to naturally. (Lender interview, 2003)

Lynne brings her orientation and a desire to identify each board member in terms of the expertise they bring to the work of the board, as this is how she perceives herself. The perspectives provided by the other board members are shallow and one-dimensional as essentially they see each other through the eyes of a fellow politician or in Lynne's case a comrade-in-arms serving the community as a former teacher. A more in-depth perspective into Leann and her motives is provided by the superintendent, Dr. Ivory.

The interview with Dr. Ivory that explored a critical incident faced by the board, the behavior displayed by the participants, and the result of the incident trailed off on a tangent when she addressed the role played by Dr. Abbott. Dr. Ivory perceived Leann's motive to seek board membership as a counter to her failure to hire her for the science coordinator position. Dr. Ivory was in the second year of her tenure as the superintendent and had worked diligently to overcome the discord created when a board member resigned in a very public and particularly venomous manner. Meeting with prospective board members is a strategy utilized by Dr. Ivory and she discusses her meeting with Leann in the following passage.

> …So here I'm just getting to the point where I've got the board functioning and then again the board is functioning because they are busy on issues, alright. And you try to skirt away from personalities. So I thought, oh my God! And so I always meet with board candidates ahead of time and ask them, get them information if they want information. Discuss issues, etc., I say the same thing to everybody and uh when she came in I did the same thing, and she said, well good! Y'know, thank

you for all this information and I said well I have a question for you. I
said are you running for the board because you want to legitimately make
a difference for Suburbia ISD students, or are you running for the board
because I did not select you for the science position? Waaaaaaaa (*a
noise*)…. And so and her response was no I really y'know want to make a
difference and she was pretty gracious. She said you know I do know
that the person that you hired did have a lot more experience than I so, I
mean that was good. But awkward? And I'm thinking ok, here's another
situation. So, but I just think you function on all of those just kind of like
I was here. Keep, keep it, try to keep it focused on business and not
personalities, because the personalities will destroy it. (Ivory interview,
2003)

The meeting was characterized as awkward and somewhat tenuous. Dr. Ivory saw

Leann as a formidable adversary who appeared to be motivated to join the board to exact

revenge for the failure of the district to hire for the science position. The board had just

become stable and was focused on tasks designed to move the school district forward

and Dr. Ivory did not want to retreat to the bickering and personality driven board she

had inherited. Single agenda board members are often destabilizing forces and can

create havoc as they attempt to accomplish the task they are elected to do. The initial

opinion held by Dr. Ivory has been modified as Leann began her work as a board

member. However, Dr. Ivory understands Leann views the work of the board from the

perspective as a former teacher in the district.

Our two former teachers [Leann and Lynne] will really step up the pipe.
They realize when if we are dealing with a serious issue with a teacher or
with some type of an employee I mean they really understand it, and they

do well. But they are always going to have their um special interest

regardless of whether they are teachers or not. (Ivory interview, 2003)

While Dr. Ivory verbalizes the belief that people modify their perspectives as time

passes, she understands that each board member will bring a consistent agenda to the

table, and very often this does not become alleviated as they continue their work on the

board. Her observations of Leann's behavior suggest there is an underlying agenda and

Leann is simply waiting for the right time to accomplish what she set out to do in the

first place. In a very real sense, Dr. Ivory is cautious and is careful to keep Leann at

arm's length.

Using language to intimidate others and direct outcomes are common

characteristics displayed by an individual who is so motivated to achieve she will take

advantage of colleagues to accomplish the goal. Leann's contemporaries on the board

and the superintendent have observed self-serving behavior consistently displayed by

Leann and trust appears to be a major obstacle that must be overcome. In this context,

power begins to emerge as a motivating force. Additionally, Leann has tremendous

perseverance and appears to understand the political process and the role and power of

the incumbency. There is no doubt that she will eventually accomplish her agenda.

The Path to the School Board

Leann was introduced to politics as a teenager when her neighbor asked her to

participate in a local campaign. The experience was memorable and Leann connects the

experience to her eventual decision to seek board membership twenty years later. The

following dialogue illustrates the political ambition that emerged from this initial experience.

RICK

Do you remember ever as a child thinking about political office? I mean you mentioned one time that there was a defining moment, there's a question here, as a teenager that you worked on a political campaign. Did that have um an influence in terms of your desire to seek political office?

LEANN

Oh, I would say so. Yeah, always, I've always kind of entertained that thought of y'know seeking political office. I try and tend to be a person that doesn't keep their opinions to themselves (*laughs*) very much. So, y'know, participating in that political campaign um I was politically active in college. I worked on um, um Phil Gramm's campaign, Joe Burton's campaign um I went to the Republican National Convention in 1984. In high school I painted posters a picture of one of the posters that I painted with my boyfriend appeared on the Washington Post, the front page of the Washington Post. So I was actually very politically active. Um, I'm not a Republican anymore by any stretch….That was when I was young and naïve. But I was actually very politically active throughout high school, throughout college um y'know and then in college I um participated in Fish Camp program which I really gained a lot of leadership skills, a lot of public speaking, a lot of y'know working with movers and shakers kind of thing um and that was kind of my first taste of being in a position of power. I guess is a good way of putting it. That's, um y'know, at A&M Fish Camp Director is next to Yell Leader as far as y'know those kind of levels of influence, I guess. So that was, that was nice and then working with a group of people. We're all

185

intelligent, like minded and devoted to a cause and those kinds of things

were appealing through that. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The excitement of the campaign Leann participated with in high school is clearly linked

to a second experience in college where she became deeply embroiled in a more formal

political process. She suggests the attraction in both instances was the activity where a

group of individuals converge to work together toward a clearly defined goal. The

behavior described in the passage clearly provides motivation for Leann and serves as a

driver in much of her work as a board member. A budding sense of political activism

surfacing in high school and continued through college had a profound effect on her

decision to seek board membership. A second element in the passage is an

acknowledgement that she had her first taste of power over people as a Fish Camp

counselor which resulted in a positive outcome. These initial experiences clearly

contributed to her interest in politics and her desire to become an active participant in the

political process.

The events contributing to a decision to seek board membership are related to the

behavior described in the previous passage. Leann found a cadre of support after she

made the decision to resign from her teaching position at Suburbia Middle School.

Well then once I left my friends and peers had always encouraged me um

the people I worked with, etc. Mr. Atkins said you should become a

principal um my other friends said you ought to run for school board now

that you're not teaching anymore…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

While the idea of running for the school board was intriguing, Leann was busy

advancing her academic career by completing her Masters and Doctorate degrees and

the notion was put on hold. However, an announcement by the school district that an election was going to be conducted to select two board members and one seat was open as the incumbent had decided not to run served as a triggering event. The announcement generated interest with people in the community, particularly teachers in the district with whom Leann had maintained contact. She explains what happened after the district made the announcement. "…an opening came up on the school board and a number of people called me saying, 'Leann, you really need to run for the school board.' People with whom I had taught with previously in the district" (Abbott interview, 2003). A second contributor to the decision was her husband.

> My husband was very supportive once again yes you need to do it,
> y'know. He always says y'know I want, you need to run for Senate, he's
> just constantly, always saying Leann you can do so much so he's always
> very, been very encouraging and pushing me and stuff like that. And he
> said go for it and so I decided to run…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

When Leann went to file with the district to announce her candidacy she discovered the field for the open seat was quite full which caused her to reconsider her decision. However a conversation with a friend lead to a new direction and Leann filed to run against the incumbent.

> [I] was talking with a friend of mine and she was saying, y'know that all
> you have to get is a plurality. I thought you had to get a majority, and I
> didn't want to get into a run off um, um, one of the other people that had
> filed for the open seat was um a minority and I personally felt like it was
> good that we needed more minorities on the board so and I also felt like
> the kinds of people that, we would be going for the same kinds of voters
> um y'know attracting the same kinds of people to vote. But there was a

187

person the board who had been on the board for about 12 years, he didn't

have any kids in the district anymore and um he was up for re-election

and I though y'know when you really think about it if I want to

distinguish myself from someone this is really the kind of person that I

can really separate myself from saying look at your two choices….

(Abbott interview, 2003)

The decision run against the incumbent ultimately proved to be a positive direction for

Leann, however, the campaign presented interesting challenges. First, running against

an incumbent in a local direction is notoriously difficult and Leann recognized this

obstacle as she made her decision to seek board membership. "So, but he had been on

the board for 12 years, it was a serious, serious uphill climb…" (Abbott interview,

2003). The second challenge came from inside the district as individuals sought to link

Leann with the former superintendent in an attempt to discredit her with the school staff,

a major voting block in the community. "Yeah, basically just saying I was a crony of

the former superintendent… it was said to stir up people who didn't know me, who

didn't like him, y'know associate me with him…" (Abbott interview, 2003). The third

obstacle Leann encountered was the political machine her opponent had constructed.

"…the person that I was running against kind of had a nice little political machine that

was as far as Suburbia goes and I think the assumption was that I wasn't going to win"

(Abbott interview, 2003). Once Leann made her decision to seek board membership she

sought to eliminate or mitigate the challenges.

Her first tactic in the campaign was to find a way to differentiate herself from her

opponent. The second task was to distance herself from the former superintendent and

attempt to discover who and why this argument was emerging in the political process. The third step in the campaign was to create a machine that would use communication content and channels to accomplish the first two objectives.

> We had a team of people that worked very hard. I belong to a mom's group at a local church, Mothers of Munchkins, when like the children were born I was very involved with socially um we would meet once a month and we would also do a lot of social things, play dates and all this other stuff. And they were mainly college educated professional that were choosing to stay home with their kids…when I asked for help, they were more than willing to help…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann tapped into the aspect of the political process that she had experienced in high school and college; a group of individuals committed to a clearly defined outcome working toward accomplishing the goal. In this case, the goal was to achieve victory at the polling place. Leann was not interested in seeking a place on the board and mounting a campaign unless she was going to win. "…if I'm going to do things I do them to do them well, and once I decided to do that I planned on winning" (Abbott interview, 2003). Winning the seat on the board was the goal and Leann and her team of supports from various camps worked diligently to making this vision become a reality.

> …so we had, we partitioned out for instance the names of e-mail addresses, you could figure out people's e-mail address by their name, you would put their name @ middle school and I wanted to send an e-mail to every employee explaining who I was and why I was doing this. But I didn't want to do it through the school district. I knew I couldn't ask my friends to forward these kinds of things that worked for the district. So, they physically typed in every single e-mail address for over

189

a thousand people, y'know we kind of partitioned it out and all of my

friends helped do that. And they would send those e-mail address, and I

would copy and paste them and then send it personally from me, but they

did the physical. And I had friends that went to as kind of like Hanna that

went for me to a Band Boosters meeting at SHS because I was going to a

PTA meeting at Brisco that night and I knew that my opponent would be

at the band boosters thing and I needed somebody to kind of counter that

stuff, and so it was just a total team effort…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann witnessed the machine her opponent constructed the day of the election.

…the day of the election you sit in the parking lot um as people are

coming through, that had been the tradition, this guy had a camper, sit in

the parking lot with the Hope Lutheran directory making sure that

everybody at Hope Lutheran had come and voted and that is the 130 year

old church here. People that go to that church tend to vote especially the

old timers…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Witnessing the parade of voters on Election Day left Leann with a sense of doubt

regarding the outcome of the election. "…the day of the election I was very not

confident at all, because he was shaking hands with every person that came through

there other board members that were over there with him…" (Abbott interview, 2003).

The weather also played a role in the election. "It had poured down rain on us at one

time in the middle of the day and we had gone home and I just, I didn't have kind of the

emotional energy to get back out there…" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann sincerely

believed she had lost her bid for the board and was sitting at home licking her wounds

when a phone call caused her to take hope.

…my friend Bella, a teacher called and says Rod Andrews is out there

with your sign at the high school and where are you? And my neighbor

190

that lived up the street he had been very helping and sort of he was out

there y'know representing me so I went out there and basically I ended up

winning by five votes. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann realized the goal she and her team set out to accomplish and with this came a

sense of euphoria as the group gathered at her house to celebrate the outcome. "And it

was just, I mean it was just overwhelming y'know a wonderful feeling to have won.

Once again, that thing of all of these people, it wasn't me, it was my team" (Abbott

interview, 2003). With the election secure, Leann set out to rectify the venom she

experienced at the hands of the district administration and members of the staff during

the campaign.

> I was very ticked off at some of the things that some school employees
> said that simply were not true in an effort to keep me from being on the
> board and um I was going to do *something about it* y'know this kind of
> thing. And a friend of mine said, Leann you hold all the cards why play
> them now. Save them and when you need to, then you play your cards.
> And that was the best advice, political advice, I ever got. (Abbott
> interview, 2003)

Thus, Leann made the transition from citizen to Suburbia ISD school board member and

began her work. Clearly there was a desire to punish those individuals that had served

as detractors during the campaign, particularly the Superintendent, Dr. Ivory. However,

Leann acted on the advice offered by a friend and took her time to exact her reprisals.

The path Leann took to board membership started when she participated with a

local campaign as a high school student, matured as she took part in formal elections

with state and national movements in college, and eventually emerged when she took the

plunge and entered the sphere of local politics in the guise of a school board member.

Power over others began to emerge as a theme and seems to contribute to the unbroken

line of motivation in this case.

The Unbroken Line of Motivation

The unbroken line of motivation is a device selected to tease out and illustrate

the sources of motivation leading to school board membership in the present study.

Stanislavski (1936) theorized the existence of a clear line of cause and effect extant in

each character of a play and the task presented to the actor is to ferret out the links in the

text and sub-text to better understand and then play the role. School board members

play a role in the local politics of every community in the United States of America and

the ability to understand the motives that support and drive each member are keys to

predicting the behavior of the individual. The analysis of the text created by Dr. Abbott

points to three lines of motivation emerging from a central leitmotiv that serves as the

foundational support to identify and predict her behavior. In this portion of the study, I

will discuss each link independently and then make a case for a primary determinant and

why it serves as the source of motivation for Leann as she performs her role as a school

board member.

Playing a role in the political process appears to serve as a powerful source of

motivation for Leann as she wrestled with her decision to seek board membership. Her

awareness of politics started as a child and emerged as a dimension of her relationship

with her father.

192

I would just say that um (*pause*) y'know I feel, I feel like and this

probably comes from my dad in that y'know he was always, not real

politically active but politically aware. Y'know the kind of person that

was always aware of what's going on, he and I would discuss politics all

the time growing up…That kind of an obligation to be aware of what's

going on in the world and to, to make informed decisions. That's part of

what makes me politically active. (Abbott interview, 2003)

While her father was not politically active, he seems to have taken action to mold her

thinking and caused Leann to become aware of politics and the political process through

their interactions. Clearly her father was the most influential person in Leann's early life

and their conversations about politics appeared to have had a lasting effect. The interest

in participating in the political process was expanded through her involvement with a

political campaign when Leann was a high school student, and she continued to seek out

similar opportunities after she graduated and entered college at Texas A&M University.

Yeah, always, I've always kind of entertained that thought of y'know

seeking political office. I try and tend to be a person that doesn't keep

their opinions to themselves (*laughs*) very much. So, y'know,

participating in that political campaign um I was politically active in

college. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The concept of participating in the political process and serving the community as a

politician that emerged when Leann was a child became a desirable goal as Leann

entered the education profession. She began to investigate the possibility of becoming

more politically active, particularly with the school district as her own children grew old

enough to enter the public school system.

…it's important to me that my children have a really good education, so, the best way to ensure that aside from me being their teacher is um to monitor what's going on in the school district in which we live and um make sure that I can um provide some positive direction for that as well. (Abbott interview, 2003)

As her interest in politics expanded, Leann began to exam the formal political process through the eyes of a practicing politician by identifying individuals immersed in the act and understanding how they conceptualized the work of a politician. Leann sought to align her thinking with Rep. Barbara Jordan, a powerful state and national politician as she made her decision to enter the political arena.

…one of my kind of idols has always been Barbara Jordan. Um, I always felt like she was the kind of citizen that I would like to emulate, and um two things that she has said to summarize, democracy is not a spectator sport, and I firmly believe that and that is what, y'know. (*pause*) I get very frustrated when I see it portrayed in the media as a horserace or basically it's portrayed in the media as a spectator sport. People are not given the kind of information they need to really make *decisions*. They are just told who's winning, who's losing. I find that very frustrating, y'know. She also says that she has what she called an ethic of efficacy, which means you do what you have to do to get the job done…And so that is very, that's in the back of my mind also. Whenever, um there have been certain issues, things have come up and other board members have said things like y'know, I guess been a bit little more ready to take it on, head on. And my attitude is, how can I get done what I want to get done. Y'know, this isn't a personal thing with me. I want "X" accomplished, how do I get it done, and if that means that I have to go like this, to get it done then I will. I don't feel the need to plow through and assert my

194

authority, I mean there have been very limited situations which I thought like I've had to do that. But for the most part I feel that ethic of efficacy as well but um, do what needs to be done in order to reach that goal. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Seeking membership on the school board has served as an entry vehicle for a number of individuals with the desire to achieve higher office at some point in the future. (Cartisano, 1987) Leann has political aspirations beyond school board membership.

I have to say that I have had a number of people calling me trying to encourage me to run for um the Texas Legislature. We have a new district that is just formed last year. A lot of people don't like our representative; I'm not particularly fond of him either. And so I'm getting, I've gotten a lot encouragement, y'know to run…So um I do have other political aspirations because I do enjoy it. Once again, the deeper you get into it, y'know when I was younger, I always kind of thought the people that made decisions had some (*pause*) different level of knowledge or expertise or they were smarter or some reason they were in a position of power. And the older I've gotten the more I realize that very often is *not* the case. That those people down there can't do any better job than I could do if I were there. And so, um that motivates me. When I see, I go to hearings, like the joint committee, select committee on school finance and I see the behavior of certain congress people and senators and I think what a buffoon, to be honest with you. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The previous passage clearly illustrates the desire Leann has to participate in the political process and how this interest serves as a strong motivator leading to school board membership. The following statements seem to sum up this dimension and serve as the first link in Leann's unbroken line of motivation. "So um I do have other political

195

aspirations because I do enjoy it" and "That those people down there can't do any better job than I could do if I were there. And so, um that motivates me." The second source of motivation is involvement with a group of people as they come together to accomplish a goal.

An activity closely associated with the political process consists of a group of people coming together to form a team with the purpose of accomplishing a specific goal and this behavior serves as the second link in the unbroken line of motivation. The political campaign to defeat a local referendum to modify the liquor ordinance Leann participated with as a high school student introduced Leann to the synergy and exhilaration that occasionally emerges during this sort of event.

> It was a really good – it was a real fun experience. I really liked that
> whole – y'know we're all on this team to work together to accomplish
> this task I really like that kind of feeling of lets all kind of pitch in and
> kind of go for broke on this task. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann sought to replicate the sensation she encountered when she was a part of the campaign and she found an opportunity when she entered college at TAMU. Fish Camp is an introductory event designed to help incoming freshman make the transition from high school to college. Leann gravitated toward the event and her Fish Camp experience reinforced the feeling first experienced in high school. "It was a great leadership experience, kind of going back to that a group of people kind of committed to this goal and really just working their tails off to do what ever it takes to make that happen…" (Abbott interview, 2003). Fish Camp also provided Leann with an opportunity to experience the sensation of power as she rose through the ranks and became a camp

196

director. Leann continued to work with Fish Camp after graduation as the event filled a

basic need and motivated her to continue to search for similar opportunities. With the

Fish Camp experience behind her, Leann continued to search for similar opportunities as

she made the transition from college to career. When the opportunity to teach at

Suburbia Middle School became apparent, Leann discovered kindred spirits with similar

philosophies.

> The other science teachers were wonderful y'know. I had to teach 8th
> grade, I think it was just 8th grade, maybe I also had one 7th grade class. It
> seemed like the 7th grade teacher Hanna Anderson, y'know. She gave me
> her lesson plan, so I never had to plan for that y'know, just a real
> supportive group of teachers… Wonderful people, my mentor was um
> Mary Ives she was the 6th grade teacher that taught right next to me.
> Fantastic teacher she – her and Hanna and Olivia Adams she's an 8th
> grade teacher that still teaches at SMS and Linda Abney they all kind of
> took me under their wing and kind of treated me as a younger sister
> y'know and um, uh y'know it was just we could go if I had problems I
> could go to them how to do this, do you know, I need a lesson on this….
> (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann worked with a team of teachers however the link between the members was rather

loose-coupled and somehow failed to satisfy the need she found when participating in

the political process or in a leadership role. A growing dissatisfaction with teaching

coupled with a desire to achieve in the arena of higher education resulted in a career

change when Leann left Suburbia Middle School and began her graduate work. The

transition created an open window and Leann followed the path of many individuals

with a desire to participate in politics; she was recruited. The recruitment literature

suggests the existence of individuals with a desire to bring like-minded people into the

process. (Dahl, 1961; et.al.) The literature exploring school board members and their

motives validates the recruitment literature as the theorists (Goldhammer, 1955; et. al.)

found the existence of recruitment behavior in the environment. Leann had a similar

experience as her colleagues in the school district urged her to pursue board

membership. "…then an opening came up on the school board and a number of people

called me saying, 'Leann, you really need to run for the school board.' People with

whom I had taught with previously in the district" (Abbott interview, 2003).

Recruitment, an external source of motivation coupled with her desire to replicate the

process Leann discovered as a teenager simultaneously pushed and pulled her onto the

stage. Her search for personal validation through the efforts of a team working toward a

common goal was found as the campaign took shape.

> I had so many people that y'know they just kind of took over and said
> we're going to do all of this and um it was just a total team effort and I
> don't do things, if I'm going to do things I do them to do them well, and
> once I decided to do that I planned on winning. And so I did everything
> that I had to as far as the leg work and often in a school board election
> y'know they are basically never contested y'know, practically, and there
> was a lock on them and things like that but um y'know the energy and
> enthusiasm of my friends who were encouraging me and my husband,
> and etc. We had a team of people that worked very hard. (Abbott
> interview, 2003)

With the team effort feeling reaffirmed, Leann took her place as a member of the

Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. The desire to participate in the political process clearly

takes shape as a source of internal stimulus leading to board membership and serves as Leann's second link in her line of unbroken motivation. The third link in the chain of motivation in this case is the belief Leann has regarding the purpose of board membership and the stated role of the individual board member.

School board membership takes a different shape for each participant and for some individuals serving on a school board or similar body serves as an internal source of motivation. The experience Leann had as a teacher provides substance to the argument that her perceived role as a board member is a source of motivation that compelled her to seek a seat on the Suburbia ISD school board. Her years as a classroom teacher were punctuated by a series of events that she described as "…death by a thousand paper cuts" which contributed to her decision to leave. Teaching became a series of indignities heaped upon her and her colleagues by the district administration. As Leann constructed her campaign to defeat an incumbent board member with many years of history, she also created her role as a board member.

> I would say that my experience as a teacher certainly influences my what the knowledge base that I bring to my work on the board, and as well as kind of the affective understanding of uh of what it's really like in classrooms and working with parents, working with children and working with the administrators. I think that has a profound effect on how I participate as a board member and what I see the role of the school board is as far as creating an atmosphere in which teachers can do their job. That's our ultimate responsibility. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann came to the board with the perspective of a teacher with a less than perfect experience and an individual with a powerful perception regarding the district

199

administration. Some board members serve as a prop for the superintendent however

Leann's experience as a classroom teacher caused her to place herself in an adversarial

posture with respect to the administration.

> I think of myself as a watchdog. I think of myself as (*pause*) I
> continually endeavor to bring a variety of viewpoints that might not be
> represented adequately in my opinion by the administration…So it's
> mainly the watchdog role and then this bringing other viewpoints, other
> pieces of data to the table when we make decisions. And not just relying
> on what's fed to us. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Serving the community as a monitor and ensuring the district administrators do what

they need to do to create an atmosphere that is conducive to teachers and the work they

perform emerges as the third link in the line of unbroken motivation in this specific case.

The three links participating in the political process, being a part of a team focused on a

common goal and the perceived role of the board member are underpinned by the

concepts of power and Leann's desire to place herself in a position of control over the

superintendent.

The concept of power to achieve predetermined results finally emerges as the

central source of motivation for Leann as she sough to fulfill her desire to be on the

Suburbia ISD board of trustees. Leann discovered she liked being in a position of power

when she served as a Fish Camp counselor.

> I um participated in Fish Camp program which I really gained a lot of
> leadership skills, a lot of public speaking, a lot of y'know working with
> movers and shakers kind of thing um and that was kind of my first taste
> of being in a position of power. I guess is a good way of putting it.

That's, um y'know, at A&M Fish Camp Director is next to Yell Leader
as far as y'know those kind of levels of influence, I guess. (Abbott
interview, 2003)

The use of power to achieve a predetermined goal is a central part of the story in this
case and the sequence of events that underpins the three previously discussed links.
Leann sought a seat on the board to have power over Dr. Ivory, the superintendent for
perceived insults which equates to dimension of revenge. They both related the story
from their unique perspectives.

Dr. Ivory sought to improve the academic performance of students by creating
position at the central office to coordinate the science program. Leann had recently
completed her graduate work and actively sought to acquire the position. "I had applied
when they had a there was a when they decided to hire a science curriculum coordinator
um I had applied for the position and interviewed for it…" (Abbott interview, 2003).
The superintendent made a recommendation to hire what she perceived as a more
qualified candidate. Dr. Ivory provides the following narrative which illustrates her
initial perception of the motivation that contributed to Leann's decision to seek board
membership.

I'll give you as an example you probably won't include it, but this is
again a board relation uh. I had a science position open. Uh I was adding
coordinators in the various areas, and so I wanted a science coordinator
because we weren't teaching science in elementary and we needed to be
teaching science in elementary…And so I did, I will tell you it was the
second year I was here and I did have a resume uh, that had been given to
me by a former science coordinator in another district. And I knew this

201

guy walked on water as far as he was president of the national science
organization, etc., and he had worked in a large school district not far
from here and really didn't feel like he was getting a lot done. It was in
Austin, obviously. So I had his resume, but it wasn't a position that I was
going to add right away. So I went to the board and said we need a
science coordinator, because we need to implement ta da, ta da, ta da. So,
I had three candidates, and one of them was this person, and one of them
was a former teacher in our district who taught science who had gone
back to get her doctorate and then another candidate from outside. Three
excellent candidates and I used a committee and the committee
legitimately, even though I wanted this fellow who was president of the
national science uh, I wanted him. The committee selected him as well.
And um, then (*pause*) he came on board, and then one of the candidates
who was local came down and signed up and ran for the board. (Ivory
interview, 2003)

Leann acknowledged portions of the event as told by Dr. Ivory however, Leann believed

Dr. Ivory and other members of the administration took action to mitigate her efficacy

and reduce the probability of a successful campaign. The first notice that caused Leann

to be suspicious was a series of rumors linking her to the former superintendent that

surfaced shortly after she filed for election.

Yeah, basically just saying I was a crony of the former superintendent
who I didn't even. It turns out he lived a street over from me. I didn't
even know that. I didn't know if the former superintendent knew who I
was, y'know. Um and um just things like that, that were just completely
erroneous and anyone who knew me would have known our former
superintendent, y'know I would have been the first to criticize, y'know. I
mean he did many good things, but there were a lot of things that I didn't

202

like about him. And I often did criticize him as a teacher. So, but it was said to stir up people who didn't know me, who didn't like him, y'know associate me with him…. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann was surprised at the behavior and the venom that emerged during this phase of the campaign. However, she was determined to win and her supporters continued to work on her behalf. The next obstacle came from Dr. Ivory.

Well, I had flyers, of course, and we put flyers out in practically every neighborhood. I passed them out um at sock hops that were going on at the elementary school, at after school. That was the other thing, the superintendent by fiat decided that no one could campaign on campuses. Which that had never been a policy, it had never been a policy for the incumbents but all of a sudden it was a policy for me. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann realized she was becoming a perceived threat to the superintendent and continued to push on with the campaign. The day of the election came and she won by a mere five votes. Leann expected a congratulatory phone call and an acknowledgement from Dr. Ivory. A call did come from the superintendent however it was not what Leann anticipated. "Um she didn't call to congratulate me, she just called to tell me that I had won by five votes but it wasn't final and they were going to do a recount" (Abbott interview, 2003). Leann was concerned and perceived the behavior displayed by the superintendent as insulting and this was reinforced when she went to the central office the next day.

When I came up there to sign she didn't come out to shake my hand. She sent someone else out there, y'know. So just little things like that, that made it, y'know um well those were little things, bigger things, made it

203

incredibly obvious that I would not have been her choice to be on the

board. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The pas de deux between Leann and the superintendent started when Leann was

unsuccessful in her pursuit to join the district as an administrator and culminated in her

successful election to the board of trustees. Dr. Ivory acted as if Leann was a threat to

her authority and overtly snubbed Leann immediately following the election, which

reinforced the desire Leann had to exert power over the superintendent and the

administration of the school district.

Leann, the former Suburbia ISD teacher and now serving as the pot stirrer on the

board of trustees had what some would characterize an axe to grind. Her sources of

motivation include a strong interest in active participation as a politician, a desire to

locate and participate in activities that strongly resemble political campaigns, and she

has a belief that she is serving on the board as a watchdog of the administration with the

express desire to improve the quality of life for teachers. All of these motives are

apparently very strong and surface in her text. However, the most powerful motivation

is her strong desire to situate her in a position of power, and in this case to be able to use

this power to respond to the superintendent.

<div align="center">Scene vii: Henry – The Co-opted Trailblazer</div>

Historical Narrative

Emerging from a family self-described as dysfunctional and from an

environment that seemingly was constructed to encourage failure are features of the

childhood experience Henry Elkins provides as the foundation of his historical narrative.

Henry is an African American male that grew up in poor neighborhoods in a city in central Texas. Henry's earliest and most constant influence was his mother. "Well the most important person was mother. Y'know a single parent, I know who my father was and had some relationship with him, but I would say my mother… she is the most giving person that I've ever, that I've ever known. And I really have got to know her as I've gotten older" (Elkins interview, 2003). Henry had a number of siblings and they took very divergent paths as they transitioned from children to adults.

> I have seven brothers and sisters um from my mother, and my father also through his additional I think I also have another four or five that I didn't find out until his death… But yeah, what is interesting about that process in my family which is really interesting is uh I'm the second oldest, my first brother is I guess when I look at the Shawshank Redemption, when they talk about institutionalized I have a brother that is institutionalized. I mean what I mean by that is uh he can not function for a very long time in outside society without doing something crazy and going back in…I have my younger brother uh also my younger brother, he is a year under me, my older brother is three, uh two years older than I am and he's institutionalized, he's an alcoholic um I think he's, the first time he went to prison he was 17. Um in and out of prison now everyday…after the three boys then it is all girls. Uh Vera, which is the oldest, she lives in Fort Worth, she graduated from high school and she's trying to uh to survive. Then I have a set of twin sisters, one works the other is strung out on crack where we keep her children as a matter of fact, one year I had one of her kids living with me for a year. Whoa, that was an interesting experience. And then I have a baby, my baby sister has two kids and she works for the IRS and she's doing very well. But yeah, we have a fully dysfunctional family, man. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The family unit was also supplemented by a variety of uncles and aunts as Henry's

mother had 14 siblings scattered across the city.

> …my mother comes from a family of 15…I had a couple of uncles and
> they vary in ages, I mean they vary in ages probably there may be 30, 35
> years difference in the oldest child to the youngest one. By the way, the
> youngest died in 1968 uh that was Isaac. He was one of those ones that
> we admired as kids because he graduated from high school…and then I
> had another uncle, Ian, but I remember once at his commencement at the
> University of Houston when he graduated from college…. (Elkins
> interview, 2003)

The community also provided a number of individuals that contributed to his

development. The community was almost exclusively Black with respect to ethnicity.

Henry and his friends seemingly had free run of the community however there were

parameters long established that caused the group of boys to regulate their behavior.

> I lived in a neighborhood where any adult had the right to whup your ass.
> I mean any respectable adult I mean so that covered 10 blocks…but I'm
> going to tell you the thing you didn't want to happen though. You didn't
> want that to happen because when that got back to your mother, then you
> mother was going to whup your ass. I mean and that's the thing that you
> don't have in those neighborhoods today. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The all-Black community had a variety of folks residing within the boundaries and

Henry and his friends knew who to trust and who to stay away from as they traversed the

community on their bicycles.

> We would wander, y'know. Until we start intersecting with the White
> community we never had any issues. You could go – we knew who the
> bums were in the neighborhood y'know, they all had names! Y'know

206

> Mr. Charlie, they all had names. They weren't vagrants, they were just
> bums. They all had names and we knew who they were, but we could
> walk anywhere. Walk or ride bicycles. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The neighborhood was safe as far as Henry and his buddies were concerned even though

there were some unsavory characters circling on the edges of the playing field. The

rules of the game were few. "The only rule that we had was that when the streetlights

came on, and your mother called your name you better be able to call it back. That was

the only rule that we had" (Elkins interview, 2003). The presumed safety was

punctuated by acts of violence. "…the average person can't say that when you walked

home, you walked over a dead person" (Elkins interview, 2003). The acts of violence

seemed to be taken in stride by the residents. All this was about to change as Henry

moved during his childhood from a home on the east side of the city to a housing project

named Northside Estates, however he was not happy about having to leave his childhood

home and took action to eliminate the threat to his domicile.

> Now there is a parking lot because Missionary Baptist church expanded
> and so they bought the property (*laughs*). I was so frustrated when we
> was told that we would have to move and as they were building the
> church I used to bust out every window in the church. Because I was
> thinking that if I busted out the windows in the church they would stop
> building the building, and we wouldn't have to move. (Elkins interview,
> 2003)

Life in the housing project presented new challenges for Henry as the change in

domicile did not come without a cost. Northside Estates was an ethnically diverse

community, which differed from the east side exclusively Black neighborhood. "…that

was some of the roughest experiences in my life. We walked to school um from the neighborhood. It was a project…and then I can remember seeing a sign that said, 'Go Home Nigger!'" (Elkins interview, 2003). The new community presented significant new tests for Henry, which included the introduction of negative peer pressure as a decision making element.

> Middle school was the first time I started smoking, I smoked marijuana.
> Uh we had two choices when we was walking home from school … we
> had a group of kids that was already had decided to drop out right and so
> they thought we was the smart little preppy kids in the neighborhood.
> Y'know, hey man they were physically, physically beating the shit out of
> us almost every day because we wouldn't smoke marijuana with them
> and so we would stay after basketball practice, go a different way.
> (Elkins interview, 2003)

The world had changed for Henry and while he wanted to return to his old neighborhood, the reality was that his home had been razed and a parking lot was constructed on the site.

African-American children and teachers populated the schools Henry attended in his east side neighborhood however the new school located near Northside Estates had a significantly diverse ethnic consistency. Ethnic transformation was a significant issue in the greater urban community of his youth and Henry witnessed the transition as he progressed through school. "…as I look back at my childhood from the first, from kindergarten to third grade, I had all Black teachers…Ms. Amos, uh Ms. Amos had a good left hook! Y'know what I am saying? …Ms. Yancy was a dear teacher to me. Black also, she was a great teacher. Uh and then in 4th grade I had my first white

teacher" (Elkins interview, 2003). Elementary school was relatively placid punctuated

with a few significant events. Certainly the introduction of a white, female teacher into

an exclusively African-American school was memorable. "…in 4th grade I had my first

white teacher. Her name was Ms. Sawyer. And man she was the salt of the earth,

y'know, but we gave her a hard time the first, probably the first two or three months of

school. We had never had a White teacher before" (Elkins interview, 2003). While the

east side of the city was almost exclusively African American there were a few teachers

that were either assigned or chose to work in schools prior to the end of segregation and

Henry and his friends were attending elementary school during the initial push to defeat

segregation.

Bussing as a means to end segregation in schools started in the early 1970's as

Henry entered middle school. The leadership in the urban school district was forced by

the courts to develop a strategy to terminate the previous model of separate but equal

which was struck down when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Brown v. Board of

Education (1954). The status quo of separate but equal was successfully attacked on

several fronts. "Between the 1950s and 1980s ethnic relations in Austin were

transformed. First came a sustained attacked on segregation. Local black leaders and

political-action groups waged campaigns to desegregate city schools and services"

(Humphrey, 2006). The world was changing and Henry was a witness to the

transformation on a very personal level. "I mean, hey you are bussing all these kids in

from and see bussing was just beginning this is 73, 74 in that time frame so bussing had

just started in Austin in 71. So, yeah, we had, oh man, we used to fight almost every

day" (Elkins interview, 2003). Henry started his middle school years with a sense of loss having just moved to Northside Estates however, the decision to enact bussing had positive effects in his eyes. Henry expected to interact with a totally different group of peers however several of his friends from the eastside neighborhood were sent to his new middle school as a result of bussing. The few years spent in middle school were traumatic and full of memorable experiences. Henry perceived a significant difference in the teachers. "…some our teachers were the meanest people in the world. I mean, in middle school I mean being told to sit in the back of the room, y'know I mean, always being accused of cheating and being dishonest" (Elkins interview, 2003). Teachers represented a significant force for Henry "…when you look back on this you realize the impact that adults have" (Elkins interview, 2003). The effects that adults brought to Henry were fairly positive in elementary school however this was not the norm in middle school and this was a difficult insight.

Henry made two significant realizations during middle school. The first related to economics. "…7th grade, was really when I started really drifting, y'know, stealing, uh because also that was when I started to see how poor I was. I didn't know I was poor. I mean we got a lot of hand-me-down things right. Everyone in the neighborhood got hand-me-down things right when I was growing up so therefore y'know we was all the same" (Elkins interview, 2003). Children from fiscally poor situations often discover significant differences when they begin to attend school. Henry was shielded from children of other economic standing when he lived on the eastside however middle school in the north-side neighborhood expanded his worldview. While he discovered he

came from an economically challenged family, Henry came to realize this was not an obstacle to future success. "And you know it's not a legacy that I try to hide I mean I look from where or what I have confronted thus far in life and you know what I am still not, I'm not the best I can be but I am surely not as bad as I could have been also. In those things helped me build character" (Elkins interview, 2003). What was a liability in the beginning evolved into strength as Henry began to understand his circumstances. The second realization was in the area of race. Henry had had limited interactions with people of different races, and most were either neutral or in a few cases positive. Middle school represented a different environment.

> …when I go back to middle school I had a bad experience y'know. It was my best friend and I we was far better than some of the White kids that was on the team and then made it, Coach Young, they made the two of us come down to the one spot….they knew that and what we knew and we walked home everyday and played against each other in practice we were waxing their ass, and so but we know but we start to understand early on about race. I mean it becomes, and we didn't learn it, it became ingrained on us when we hit 7th grade. Because when were in 6th grade, hell, we was the majority. And so if we had problems, we had problems with each other. But we had never fought against a system. And so in that time and they had us doing a race for the last position on the team. I ended up winning but I felt like a loser also. But then to be honest with you, you start losing faith. I lost a lot of respect for White adults at that time, really and truly. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Middle school provided a platform for Henry and his cohort to test a system that appeared to be structured to fail children of color. During this time Henry began to

211

cultivate friendships with other children and create opportunities to measure to effects of

perceived racism in the school system.

> …I went to school with a guy by the name of Hank Edmund. His family
> was the Edmunds [well-known restaurant family]. And he was a long
> hair and he was feeling some of the same things that we was feeling,
> y'know. But he would some things and say watch this. For instance if
> you got up in the middle of a test you was automatically kicked out of the
> room. Hank would say, watch this, and he would get up and he wouldn't
> get kicked out. And we would just sit back and the teacher would turn
> colors, because she knew that we knew….So we started testing the
> system early. And y'know you start realizing that hey all rules do not
> apply equally, y'know. (Elkins interview, 2003)

While Henry was testing the system, the text from his interviews suggests the system

was molding him through a process of sorting and selecting. "And as I look back

because we got categorized early y'know I mean, Urban City junior high was not good

for us especially as I know what I know now how labels can follow you through the

system, y'know it was not good for us, this was not good for us" (Elkins interview,

2003). Henry found himself placed in Special Education classes while he was in middle

school and this followed him to high school. Overrepresentation of children of color for

Special Education services is a well documented phenomenon. Bynoe (1998) cites this

practice in an advocacy article related to teacher preparation.

> The general society is mirrored in the school-age population, and there
> has been an ongoing demographic imbalance that affects the learning
> outcomes for students, especially those in the inner city. "Minority"
> groups are actually the majority in 23 of the 25 largest cities in the nation

212

(Villegas, 1991), and higher percentages of children of color are classified in the mild disabilities categories than their peers who are not of *color* (Harry, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). With the exception of serious emotional disturbance, these children are more frequently assigned to full-time special education placements than are their non-inner-city counterparts (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). (p. 37)

Attending Special Education resource classes that moved slower than the regular education classes has contributed to a group of students ill-equipped to handle the academic challenges associated with higher education and has often forced this group into low-paying jobs following high school. Henry resisted this negative outcome and sought success following high school. Economics and race continued to be major issues for Henry and appear to be significant contributing factors as he moved toward membership on the Suburbia ISD school board.

While middle school was a time of discovery, high school provided an early stage for the development of leadership and political skills. An incident that occurred during his sophomore year illustrates this phenomenon and serves as a precursor of future behavior.

> …at that time I became a little militant. Oh, hell yes! I was the president at that time and uh, uh (pause) in the 10th grade I became the first sophomore in the history of that school to be the president of the African-American Heritage Club. Hey that was a big thing, that was a big thing…I can remember the most significant event of my tenure was uh during Black History Month, they put us in an AV room and then they had a Country Western band in the gym. That shit didn't go over well,

man! I mean I was militant at that time and I knew I had enough militant Black men also to really raise some hell….I remember organizing all the African-American students and we did not go to class. We would come to the uh school and sit out in the courtyard. We would not go to class….It was a protest, absolutely! And also any Black that went to class they was going to get their ass whupped. I mean it was one of those Black Power kind of statements that you know and Mr. Elliott who is deceased and I remember Mr. Elliott you could see the tension after the third day y'know you could see the tension on his face….Mr. Elliot would come through there and everybody kids upstairs calling him Uncle Tom uh and y'know, hell I was a sophomore I mean he don't get the freshman he don't get none of the seniors but football players. And some of these guys were bigger than me but now by this time though we have, our freshman class had a little reputation of being hell raisers and I mean we kind of earned it pretty well. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry discovered he had power to organize a group of people to achieve change and an ability to negotiate with the school administration to reach a settlement to the crisis. He also found he had an elevated status as a result of the incident.

…my sophomore year that racial issue that elevated my status to damn near king. Damn near king, I mean shit because nobody would go to class… Mr. Edwards [assistant principal]…used to say, Elkins, you are quarterbacking these people out here you carry, I mean I was hey we're not doing shit and about this time he got Mr. Anderson a couple other vice principals you got to tell us why! You all have us in this little ass room y'know you don't have to use that language, and you got a country western band down here. You mean you guys got to tell us why. We're not going to class, ever, until you guys change that. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The sit-down strike Henry led was a reaction to perceived racism and caused a change in practice. "And so next year the whole month we had the whole month and there was no country western dance in the gym" (Elkins interview, 2003). Henry learned from this event and sought to replicate it while he was exploring the opportunity afforded by membership on the Suburbia ISD school board.

A desire to play basketball and an overpowering sense of disconnection characterized his experience in 9th and 10th grade. Fortunately Henry found a few sympathetic teachers in high school.

> …in 10th grade, in 9th grade when I was so, if it were not for basketball I would quit school….My 9th grade year I had two teachers at Urban High, this is at Urban High school now. (Pause) Ms. Elton…she taught a course on African studies and she gave again she started giving us again almost a total different mindset. Because like now I am getting teachers again that are saying hey, you have some value…. I mean I went to school for basketball in the morning, came back to school for Ms. Elton's class, right and then went to one other class. Y'know I mean this was almost at the point that I didn't want to have anything to do with school, but it was basketball. It was y'know if you don't go to school you can't play basketball. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry managed to make adequate progress during his first two years in high school despite an overwhelming urge to drop-out. However, his perception of school changed as he entered his junior year. "I did not get serious about school probably till the last, probably till my junior year. I mean that was when I realized damn, you know what, because teachers always told me that I was fairly smart y'know and things have always come to me fairly easy. So I decided that damn, I needed to graduate" (Elkins interview,

215

2003). Once Henry made the decision to graduate, he began to apply himself to his school work and made a few interesting discoveries.

> …I had some teachers that started to challenge me. Mr. Early in anthropology. I loved anthropology. And um so when you was able to be in those classes and you start to recognize that you are just as capable as the white students in there and this mattered. When you get the chance to articulate your point and he comes back and says you're right and you start realizing that if you read and you study, you read and you study you know what? Hey you can comprehend this and it starts feeling good to have something to be a force and my government teacher…Mr. Irving, that was his name, perhaps got me more thinking about government and things of that nature…when I made an A in his government class and I was one of like 3 or 4 students and he said here are my A students and I was one of them, I mean everybody looked at me and said, "Well, what did you do?" But I liked government, I really did like government. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The initial years in high school were characterized by a strong interest in athletics coupled with what could be perceived as anti-establishment behavior. Henry discovered he had a talent in an academic area which garnered the respect of his peers. The classroom now held his interest and served as a motivator which eventually led to graduation from high school.

With high school complete, Henry turned his attention to the job market. He found there was a need to pursue training in a specific area before launching his career and completed a commercial electronics program. Henry was also cultivating an interest in a young lady, Louise, who would after a brief engagement become his wife.

Following the electronics course, Henry attended the local community college but quit to start work with a major international technology company. Henry started on the assembly line, and was quickly promoted into a leadership position where he rekindled his ability to organize people.

> I think I worked there for a year and a half and got promoted off the assembly line. I finally got promoted to what we called the prep room and I was promoted to a leadership position and uh that was when I found out that I'm pretty good at telling people what to do. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry stayed with the company for fourteen years and used the time to hone his leadership and presentation skills.

> I started using [Big Technology Company] as a training mechanism also. I mean I started realizing this is a pretty good place I'm at in terms of taking classes there and reinforcing my technical skills. I started working on my presentation skills. When you start presenting to senior level management you start realizing you are presenting to some very powerful people…. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry continued to receive promotions with the company and eventually moved into management. While most of his experiences with [Big Technology Company] were positive, he found a few weeds in his garden particularly when he moved into a management position. The company, which was extremely prosperous, was experiencing an increase in competition and the profit margin was diminishing. Senior leadership made the decision to implement the first lay-off in the history of the company.

I really enjoyed my experience at [Big Technology Company], I really
did. But I made manager I think I was 26 that was interesting because 6
of us made manager at the same time. And there was a norm that when
you made manager you went to off-shift so therefore you get some time
to get in the meat grinder. I was selected to go to first shift and I was
selected to go in to what in manufacturing what they called the toughest
damn area that they had. I mean it was. They did an opinion survey and
at the time they had an opinion survey of the area like 23% I mean that
was low and the opinion of survey at that time would get you out of
management you know what I am saying. If the people didn't like you,
you know what I am saying, and they would put you over in the penalty
box somewhere. I took an area that was beat up in terms of morale and
one of the toughest assignments that I had. My first assignment, the first
time we started to lay off right, got fucked big time as the manager there,
of an area of our group we had six people be laid off and I had four of
them. I had four of them because I was inexperienced, that's all. I mean,
not four of them that deserved to be, I had four of them because they had
a rookie for a manager who the other managers royally hosed. (Elkins
interview, 2003)

Henry learned he needed to toughen his negotiation skills and advocate for the members

of his team. Despite this setback, Henry was able to help the team turn the corner and

productivity was vastly improved to the point where he was rewarded for his efforts.

From that point on I started flying around the corporation. I was, you
have these ratings, you know, from one being the very best to five being
the very worse. I was one of the few that was rated a one. And at the
time when they had money what they would do with us one performers
for instance they sent us to Miami at the Fountain, the Hilton

Fontainbleau. Whooo man! For five nights and four days everything paid for, you know what I mean. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry continued to learn from the people and experiences he encountered at [Big Technology Company] however, he hit a ceiling and was unable to advance in the company. His decision to pursue a career in lieu of a college degree apparently caught up with him.

Also that was when I started knowing my time was up there anyway. Because based on some of the things I was doing I thought I should have been moved up. I had a department one time that had 65 people reporting to me across two shifts. It was time for me to go. And I had done for my experience and my educational level I probably peaked out. (Elkins interview, 2003)

A buyout was offered and Henry jumped at the opportunity as he recognized his days with [Big Technology Company] were coming to an end. He spent the next few years involved in a variety of entrepreneurial enterprises with very limited success. A telephone call from a former colleague at [Big Technology Company] now employed by an emerging high tech firm led to another foray into the corporate environment. However, Henry believed he was finished with management and pursued a position on the assembly line. The desire to remain in the labor side of the concern was fairly short-lived as his former [Big Technology Company] management colleagues now with the new company recognized Henry and urged and somewhat coerced him into pursuing a position in management once again.

One thing I started understanding that this guy…would come around at certain times and most of the time he would come during off break times

219

when everybody else is on their break, he would come through. So I said, I'm smarter than most people. I'll be here when he comes through here, and also I'm trying to learn this test so therefore it gives me a lot of time to learn this test. So he walked through there and this is about 2 weeks after I am in my other test, and he says to me, "Hey, um I want you to think about this supervisor's job up there." I said ok, but I'm not interested. And so I keep testing, and a week later he comes back...I need you to put your resume in for that job...so I guess about the 4th time he came by he says I am not asking you any longer to put your resume in, I expect it to be on my desk by the end of the day. I swear!...So I ended up being the second finalist cause I knew the guy who worked, that I was working for did not want me as a supervisor. I mean, hey, in three months, you know you come here as an assembler and you come to my test and then you become a peer, Bullshit! (Elkins interview, 2003)

The position was offered to another individual with a lengthier tenure with the company, and Henry was rather happy. He had fulfilled the wishes of his managers and had come up short, which allowed him to stay in the testing position. About two weeks after the interview the individual who recruited Henry to apply for the position came to him with a big smile and a hearty congratulations. The number one candidate decided to forgo the opportunity and the position was offered to Henry. He accepted the position as it came with a significant raise in salary however there was a twist of irony as Henry was slated to serve as the supervisor of the area he worked in as an assembler. This news was not well accepted by the rank and file on the assembly line, fellows Henry had worked with just a few months before.

…I want to introduce you to your supervisor and they all looked around because there was nobody new in there y'know. And he put his hand on

220

my shoulder and said come on up here Henry. Man, you could hear fucks, and shit and folks saying aw shit!…And that was interesting, but what was weird about that whole process was before it was over with I took that area and I guess we became very productive….(Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry thrived in this new position and again members of upper management recognized his skill set and provided him with additional growth opportunities, which eventually led to a position in the company where he was responsible for the development and delivery of a part of the product line.

The high technology industry is cyclical and responds to the expansion and contraction of the marketplace. Eventually the company that inflated with the growing dot.com market reached a plateau and started a process of downsizing to remain competitive.

And then they offered a buy-out package and I said hey, I'll try that also. Now I was going to get that buyout package whether I accepted it or not. And that's the thing that happened out there is that it is such a cyclical industry and so I made it through the first couple of cuts but the last cuts where so deep and I might as well, they were going to pay me to leave. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry recognized the pattern and graciously accepted a buyout when the offer was presented to him. The cash from the buyout created another opportunity to pursue other interests in the community.

Henry discussed two other significant events that occurred after he graduated from high school and launched his career. The first was the birth and college graduation of his son, Henry, Jr. and the second was attending the Million Man March in

Washington DC. Henry sought to build a significant relationship with his son. He wanted to be a force in Junior's life and play a role in his development unlike his own father.

> We had Junior right out of high school in 1980, yeah so we was married in 1980 also. Yeah, yeah, I was married right out of high school probably a year out of high school, October 15th…But yeah, raised him, worked nights, most of the time I was home during the day. It is amazing the stamina that you have when you are young. But good times. I don't think Junior ever went to day care until he was about five years old. He, we talk about it all the time…I used to put him to sleep with Earth, Wind and Fire. I was talking with him today and he can remember the songs. And you know what because my father wasn't active in my life that was the last thing that I was going to do for my son. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry also expressed great joy as Junior had just recently graduated from college.

> My son graduated! That's been great. Just hearing his name called and the fact of the matter is because also when he looks back he's got parents that started out at 19 and so he has been part of a struggle that he don't know and yet he came out of this thing pretty decent. So that's been very rewarding. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Junior is a first generation college graduate. While both of his parents attended college they did not graduate. Junior was afforded more of an equal life chance than Henry and through the urgings and guidance provided by his parents has accomplished a task that his parents were not able to attain. The relationship with Junior was solidified and seemingly contributed to Henry's decision to pursue membership on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees.

222

The Million Man March occurred on October 16, 1995. Henry made a decision

to participate in this event and it seemingly changed the direction of his life.

> Well I would say this, now I am a Million Man Marcher. So in '95,
> Junior and I went to the Million Man March, and now if anything has
> probably got me interested in being more active in the community at
> large it probably was the Million Man March.... (Elkins interview, 2003)

The Million Man March, an event organized by the Rev. Louis Farrakhan, was widely

debated in the national press with more than 4000 articles published in newspapers and

journals following the event. Much of the literature focused on why individuals made

the decision to attend or stay away from the event. (Editor's note, JBHE, 1995/96)   The

event created accolades and criticism on a multitude of levels, which included race,

community involvement and spirituality. The event spawned a body of literature

designed to examine the effects of the event. Gabbidon (2000) examined the effect of

the Million Man March (MMM) three years after the event and found an increase in

community involvement by the participants. "Our study clearly suggests that the MMM

has had some long-lasting effects among our participants. With so many of them

becoming active in their community after the March by either founding or participating

in some organization or activity…" (p. 24). Henry learned of the event and made a

decision to participate. The activities associated with the event clearly had a positive

effect on Henry.

> …of the things that they were asking us to do and some of the things that
> took place that weekend was just absolutely magical. I can recall the
> night that we went up there and how miserable it was but then on the day
> of the march, it was almost like maybe the heavens opened up. Oh, it

was, it was perfect. But was really amazing that day is that I can remember talking to a guy from DC and Junior was with us and the guy held his hands up like this, and [said] my hands are soiled with the blood of our brothers. And I remember putting my arms around him and saying but I love you anyway and this guy cried a river of tears down my back that and so something started. There was something working and then I think we were just challenged to do something bigger and to be involved. When I look at my race I look as an African-American male I see that from my perspective we are the ones that are not really accountable. To often the man is our excuse. Hell, the man's going to be here, the man is here, the man is going to be here. Hey, you need to factor that in and Goddamn keep on living! And so that was probably the most that probably precipitated me to really get involved at this level. Really and truly getting on the school board. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The significance of the Million Man March and the effect it had on Henry should not be ignored. He returned to Suburbia with a different world view, and initiated a process that eventually led to his election to the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees.

People

Life events clearly contribute to shaping the behavior and beliefs of school board members however the people the board members encounters in the context of the events plays an equally important role. Politicians are recruited into the role through the actions of others. (e.g. Dahl, 1961; Prewitt, 1970; Cistone, 1974; Van Hightower, 1974) While board membership falls into the category of soft-core politics the dynamic and role of people serving in the recruitment role is analogous with the practice of party politics. (Goldhammer, 1955) Henry discussed the role important people played in his

development and eventual decision to pursue board membership. In his case, influential people fall into two major categories; family and mentors with the mentor group subdivided into categories of community, school, and work.

The first significant person Henry identified in his text was his mother. She was a single parent responsible for raising Henry and his siblings while trying to hold down several jobs so that the family could remain economically solvent.

> Let me talk about my mother, because she is uh, she is the most giving person that I've ever, that I've ever known. And I really have got to know her as I've gotten older. And as a matter of fact, I will tell you this, early on in my life because she was such a giving person, um, I didn't approve of her, because she would give her time and what little money she had to anyone who would ask her but as I get a chance to look at it now, y'know, perhaps some of my influence, a lot of my influence comes from y'know, watching her and how she cares about things. And the fact that now she cares more about one of my brothers who is locked up in jail for the 30th time then she cares about, hey, going to Las Vegas for her to have some fun. So, she is, she is just an amazing person to me uh, uh, she had a good left hook, I'll tell you that! I mean but she was probably will be and is a very strong influence. (Elkins interview, 2004)

His mother was a member of a large extended family that surrounded Henry and his siblings. There were a multitude of uncles and aunts that seemingly played a role in his development however, his mother appeared to be the primary caregiver. While Henry did acknowledge the role his father played as an absent parent, his mother clearly provided the foundation for his development. Other members of the immediate family include two brothers and four sisters. Henry described his older brother using the term

225

institutionalized. "…the first time he went to prison he was 17. Um in and out of prison now everyday, y'know" (Elkins interview, 2003). While he mentioned his youngest brother Henry did not elaborate on his situation. The rest of the nuclear family consisted of four girls. Apparently two of his sisters live at a minimal survival level with one strung out on crack and the other two are doing well. Henry described his immediate family as "fully dysfunctional" but full of love for each other.

Members of the community have played significant roles throughout Henry's life. Early on these individuals served as coaches on athletic teams that existed in his eastside neighborhood.

> Mr. Brittan was one of those guys uh (*pause*) was a coach, a mentor,
> y'know was very instrumental in developing my character. L.D.
> Washington who now still coaches in the youth organization that I am the
> director of, that I played in when I was a kid…. (Elkins interview, 2003)

These gentlemen appear to have played an ongoing role in his development as Henry transitioned through the phases of his life. In particular, his association with Mr. Washington continued from youth to adult as Henry currently serves in a leadership role in an eastside youth organization created by his mentor. Participation on athletic teams continued to play an important part of his life throughout his years as a student. He clearly understands the importance of this level of participation as he indicated basketball was one of the activities that kept him in school.

> I was on the fringes of dropping out of school. And I think that we was
> on the quarter system, and I think I may have gotten three credits I mean I
> went to school for basketball in the morning, came back to school for Ms.
> Leeman's class, right and then went to one other class. Y'know I mean

this was almost at the point that I didn't want to have anything to do with school, but it was basketball. It was y'know if you don't go to school you can't play basketball. (Elkins interview, 2003)

While coaches were vitally important in Henry's development there was another group of mentors that were equally significant. Henry pointed to the role teachers played as mentors contributing to his development. He categorized this group in terms of race as his first teachers were African American women. Sixth grade ushered in the appearance of his first male teacher, a white man who recognized something special in Henry.

...6th grade, Mr. Bisset, the first white male teacher I ever had...we are talking about the probably the educator that had the most impact on us because he came in uh, uh, high energy y'know I mean, all of us and he, he managed us very well. He knew who the leaders was in the class and he did some shit to us, oh, he did some things to us...I mean for instance if we fought, if we fought in class, shit he would tie us together...back to back. Everywhere that you went for the rest of the day you had somebody with you. Hey I'm going to tell you something, after two or three times of that shit, do you know what doesn't happen at school anymore? Not in your classroom? You don't fight. There is nothing worse than being tied up with somebody you are mad as hell at. You can't get away from him do you know what I am saying? When you go to the restroom, you know what, he goes with you. Oh Man! But he was a good teacher also. I mean he was, he was the one that told us that we could do almost anything. Y'know, I mean, he was the one, among all the ones, but y'know as we are maturing, um and he was the one that we could do anything. Y'know what I am saying. So as I look back at that those first part of my years, uh life was motivational. (Elkins interview, 2003)

227

Henry elaborated on the role Mr. Bisset played during the third interview.

> Bisset was the first white man that wasn't my enemy. I mean that in this
> sense, most times when we grew up, cops was black cops in our
> community. We knew them, but the white cops that came in our
> community they was our enemy I mean they were our enemy. So, he was
> the first uh white male that we had that I had ever bonded with. (Elkins
> interview, 2004)

Henry pointed to other teachers that mentored him such as his government teacher in high school. However, this group of mentors waned in influence as Henry completed school and moved into the world of work.

The third mentor group existed in the work environments Henry pursued. He pointed to two gentlemen that played a significant role in his development. The first was an African American that opened the door for Henry to enter the management side of the equation at [Big Technology Company].

> …Mel gave me my first um management job, and he took a chance on
> me, because at the time we had this other brother…when he got promoted
> to manager it just went right to his head. He kind of killed the
> momentum for all the other things that was going around in the area for
> minorities…so uh Mel promoted me to management and so uh uh and the
> only thing he said to me was…if you ever get a chance to help somebody
> do it. And that's another thing that I use, if I do something for anybody I
> don't want anything back. If I help you and if you are ever in a position
> to help someone that's the only thing I ask. So Mel was significant.
> (Elkins interview, 2003)

While Mel created a path for Henry a second individual, a white supervisor pushed him to a much higher level, and this was surprising for Henry as he perceived this individual as a hard-core racist.

> Mike Hoffman I thought was a racist son of a bitch…But that's the son of a bitch that rated me a one performer…He taught me something, he taught me this, cause Mike was racist but he taught me this and I value what he taught me. You don't have to like me, but god damn it if you are good at what you do, I can reward you for that. I tell you I have incorporated that from him and in the way I operate. (Elkins interview, 2003)

With his interaction with Mr. Hoffman, Henry experienced a phenomenon that other African American males have encountered. The Rev. Sterling Lands, a community activist working in Austin, Texas had a similar experience as he maneuvered up the ladder in a corporate environment.

Unpublished research conducted while the author of this dissertation was actively engaged in graduate work at the University of Texas at Austin led to the development of an oral history analysis that emerged from an interview with Rev. Lands. Henry and Rev. Lands appeared to have had a shared experience as they progressed in their career. The learning came at the hands of what appeared to both men to be a racist, white supervisor. Prior to accepting the call to become an ordained minister, Rev. Lands pursued a career in control systems engineering. One of his first supervisors was an older white gentleman that appeared to behave in a racist manner. He drove Sterling relentlessly which caused great anxiety in the young engineer and a major crisis in his confidence.

This individual pushed Sterling to achieve beyond what he thought were his limits, which caused much anxiety for the young protégé. He described the relationship as almost unbearable due to the extreme tension that existed between the two men. This individual singled Sterling out from the rest of the young engineers and proceeded to make his life miserable by constantly questioning his decisions and interrogating him on various procedures and methods. Eventually Sterling detested going to work, as he knew that he would be subject to some form of mental cruelty. Apparently, this sub-human treatment went on for quite some time and began to create genuine performance anxiety in the young engineer's mind. He began to question his training, ability and desire to continue as a control systems engineer. Sterling persisted despite the abhorrent treatment and began to understand what was happening. The lead engineer had sensed something special in Sterling, and presented him with a gift that he learned later was of great value. (Bentley, 2002)

While Rev. Lands and Henry have had similar experiences, there is insufficient evidence to draw the conclusion that all African American males have had a racist individual in their past that presented them with a significant challenge which eventually turned into a great gift. The parallel is presented to show that others have shared a similar experience with Henry.

Mentors in the community continued to influence Henry as he was making a decision to pursue board membership. Dr. Jay Cummings who served as an Associate Commissioner at the Texas Education Agency was a member of the church Henry attended. The church had formed a focus group called the Friends of Suburbia and

230

Henry and Dr. Cummings were members of this committee. Henry points to this relationship as key in his decision to pursue board membership.

> I would say the most significant individual had to probably be Dr. Jay Cummings. Because um he was part of the Friends of Suburia and he was also the commissioner of education. And so, he sat, we sat down and talked a couple of days…. (Elkins interview, 2004)

Henry profited from the relationship and used the knowledge he garnered from Dr. Cummings as he ascended to board membership.

Clearly people have played a significant role and contributed mightily to Henry's development, and eventually in his decision to pursue board membership. Some of the relationships he discussed are fairly predictable while others were somewhat surprising. However, Henry has learned from each individual and has sought to apply the knowledge and experience in his role as a board member.

How Henry is seen by others

Henry appears to be perceived as a community activist on a mission to ensure that African Americans have an equal opportunity in the Suburbia community and while this theme is important, they also believe that Henry has undergone a significant transition since he was initially elected. The other board members and superintendent recognize that Henry came to the board with a different agenda and he was a visible sign of the change that was underway in the community. The superintendent, an outsider from the Houston area, commented on the change that was occurring in the community. "I saw a district that wasn't old Suburbia. I didn't see that at all. I saw a diverse population…" (Ivory interview, 2003). Dr. Ivory was acutely aware of the racial tension

that existed when she accepted the board's offer to serve as the superintendent of schools and she saw this play out in the interactions between board members. "Henry has a strong personality. And I think he knew there was some uh prejudice there. Quite frankly, he did, in fact he addressed it one night… (Ivory interview, 2003). The interaction observed by Dr. Ivory was brought about as a result of the clash between the more established white board members and Henry, the first African American elected to the Suburbia ISD board of trustees. Many of the board members did not like Henry and what he represented, and they openly resisted his agenda. "Henry ran on, I think, because it was before I came but, on that kind of an African-American platform… (Ivory interview, 2003). Henry was on a mission that had deep roots. He was an agent of change and resisted the status quo at every opportunity. Henry discussed the implementation of his strategy during the second interview. At his very first board meeting the administration presented an argument to remove a teacher. Henry resisted the action and voted against it in open session. The former superintendent, Pat Osnebee told Henry, "…that was the first time that the school board had ever went against his recommendation. I said well, hey there is a first time for everything!" (Elkins interview, 2004). Henry continued to take action to thwart the administration when they were acting in a manner that negated the growing minority population. Olympia, the board member that broke the gender barrier, recognized the behavior as a necessity in the community. "When Henry Elkins moved in, he took a completely different perspective and I think that it is um – y'know it's an important part of our community…" (Landry

interview, 2003). The behavior continued until Osnebee finally retired and the board

hired Dr. Ivory to replace him.

Henry was part of the committee that brought Dr. Ivory to Suburbia ISD and

while she acknowledges the change agent role he played when he was initially elected to

the board she has seen him undergo a transformation. Henry took on the goal of forcing

the district to hire more minority teachers when his first term commenced. Dr. Ivory

commented on the subtle change in his attitude.

> His banner has changed in that although his still interested in hiring
> minorities and getting quality principals in all of our positions, he does
> not feel that we have not paid attention to hiring minorities. Because we
> have gone out to hire minorities to try and reflect our population as much
> as we can. (Ivory interview, 2003)

Other board members have noticed a difference in Henry's behavior however the change

is not as faint. Lynne, a recent addition to the board and a self-perceived change agent

sees Henry as a member of the status quo and somewhat of an enforcer of protocol.

> …Henry goes along with Adele. So, um that makes it difficult when,
> when to even ask a question means you will be told, y'know you will be
> put down or you shouldn't do this or you shouldn't do that uh it doesn't
> stop, stop those of us who are asking questions. (Lender interview, 2003)

Henry sees this behavior as a necessary aspect of the board protocol and appears to

enjoy this role as a school board member.

> I am the unofficial sergeant at arms of the board also. And what I mean
> by that is if you see us getting carried off on a tangent, right, I am the one
> that kind of taps to my president and I do it just like that, hey y'know, we
> are, let's keep rolling. (Elkins interview, 2004)

233

Henry is seen by his peers as a complex individual that came to the board with a single agenda but he has seemingly transformed and has transcended his original intent.

The Path to the School Board

The path Henry took to school board membership can be traced back to his childhood through his experiences in school. The jagged line begins in elementary school when his teachers labeled him as a leader and appointed him to monitor the class. "…even when I think about in the 4th grade and we used to read in the afternoons and how some of us finally started and stepping up to writing our friends names down so, um, so all of those things. So, I think I have been an activist by nature" (Elkins interview, 2004). The opportunities continued through school with another peak occurring during high school. Henry found himself serving as an elected officer of a school club during turbulent times. It was through the experience of creating a walkout in protest to actions taken by the school that caused him to understand his ability to organize, command and control a group of people. "I remember organizing all the African-American students and we did not go to class" (Elkins interview, 2003). The event was precipitated by the failure of the school to organize any activities associated with Black History Month. The protest finally came to a close when the school administration conceded to the demands of the group. "And so next year the whole month we had the whole month and there was no country western dance in the gym" (Elkins interview, 2003). Learning how to organize and lead people continued as Henry transcended from school to work. The experiences he had at both high tech companies contributed to his capacity to perform as a leader in a variety of settings. While this

thread is rather thin, there are more current events that clearly propelled him into his seat on the Suburbia ISD Board.

Henry and his family are members of Missionary Baptist Church, a predominately Black church located within the Suburbia ISD boundaries. The members of the church formed a committee with the purpose of initiating change in the community including the schools. Children of color were clearly at a disadvantage to their white counterparts and the members of the church committee set out to remedy this situation. The members of the committee actively sought to bring about the change in a peaceful manner through advancing a slate of candidates for election to local offices including the school board. After Henry and his son attended the Million Man March the church group attended a Suburbia ISD board meeting.

> Well, what happened was at my church, Missionary Baptist Church, we had a group called Friends of the Community that I had started. Uh and we were just trying to figure out how do we become more active in the community um and so one night we decided you know what, let's go to a school board meeting. And I can tell you there was 25 people uh and the reason why I remember that there was 25 is that I got a call the next morning from a vice principal of the high school that told us where we sat in the board meeting. I mean, how many sat on the left side of the aisle way how many sat on the right side of the aisle way. That just how many they counted. But there was 25 of us that came from the church and spoke and our concern was, hey, is this place open to make, insure that our kids have a quality education. And one of the things that we had noticed was that this place had a very high drop-out rate and really minorities was really being affected. And so uh and we had done a little

research and at that time I think we had 28 credits and things of that nature. And then also have the kids in the district and that was also another impetus to say hey, let's do something for the – and from my perspective not only was I running for the school board, I was running also to engage the entire Suburbia community. So, that was one of the visions that I had when I decided to run for the school board. (Elkins interview, 2004)

Attending the Suburbia ISD school board meeting was the first step leading to the decision to seek board membership. The group had an agenda and they decided the next step was to meet with Superintendent Osnebee. "Y'know, shit, the first time I talked to Osnebee about that hey man he started cleaning his boots off, man" (Elkins interview, 2004). Henry and his companions were not impressed with the reception provided by Superintendent Osnebee. Essentially he came across as a bigot and disinterested in even understanding the perspective the group was bringing to the table. Henry was teetering on the edge of his decision to seek board membership and a second meeting with the superintendent cemented his decision. "I probably would have never ran for the school board I mean I went to the March and everything, but when we came, and Osnebee said to us, what do you all want…when he said, what do you all want in a derogatory, like what the <u>fuck</u> are you all doing?" (Elkins interview, 2004) The event galvanized the group into taking action and Henry mounted a campaign which resulted in his election to the board. Apparently Superintendent Osnebee was surprised when Henry was successful in his election bid for the board. After he was sworn in and joined the Suburbia ISD board, Arvin Lawn, a long time board member told Henry, "…that he talked to Osnebee and he said, I didn't think that there were that many black people out

236

in Suburbia. Y'know well Arvin told him, well there's not, but some white people voted for him too" (Elkins interview, 2004). Board membership in Henry's case was an outcome of a mission that can be traced back to a variety of learning and triggering incidents that when reviewed and understood clearly suggest a strong line of motivation.

The Unbroken Line of Motivation

The unbroken line of motivation is used to summarize the themes that emerge from deep analysis of the text provided by each participant in the present study. Henry is an African-American male approximately forty-two years old at the time his texts were created. His childhood can be characterized as economically poor and somewhat fractured. The nuclear family structure consisted of a mother working multiple jobs, an absent father and a multitude of siblings existing in a community that included a wide variety of character types. Henry suggests he did not realize how poor his family was until he started middle school and this finding is consistent with others in similar circumstances. (See Olympia and Arvin) Henry experienced a wide variety of events during childhood that shaped his world view and clearly contributed to the development of his character, which points to the motives that contribute to his decision to seek board membership. The dominant theme that emerges from the analysis is one of power however the focus of the control has shifted as Henry has moved from an outer circle orientation to a member of the inner circle on the board of trustees.

Henry experienced observed the overt use of power to achieved outcomes at an early age. The initial experience was at home when his mother would use physical means to punish or control her offspring. He talks about his mother as having "a good

237

left hook" and shared experiences where his mother would return home after a long day of work and exact punishment on Henry and his siblings. Henry learned to manipulate the circumstances with a visible display of tears, "I would out-cry all of them! I was the biggest baby I would out-cry all of them" (Elkins interview, 2003). As Henry explored the community of his childhood he quickly learned the adults were authorized to redirect any perceived behavior that was deemed inappropriate. "I lived in a neighborhood where any adult had the right to whup your ass" (Elkins interview, 2003). Henry observed and began to learn how to use power when he started school. His teachers discovered he was a person that could be used to control the behavior of others in the classroom by assigning Henry as a classroom monitor. While the assignment led to conflict among his peers, Henry conceptualized this opportunity as his first experience with accountability. Power as a means to an end was continually reinforced as Henry progressed into middle school as he and his peers were subjects of physical harassment as they traversed the route from school to home. "…they were physically, physically beating the shit out of us almost every day because we wouldn't smoke marijuana with them…" (Elkins interview, 2003). The neighborhood bullies had their way with Henry and he either was forced to submit to their will or find a way to circumvent the conflict which ultimately was unavoidable. The lessons continue into high school where the most notable experience was the engineered protest during Black History month. In this instance, Henry was the architect of the event as he and his friends discovered power could be used to accomplish a predetermined goal. The students exercised their learned power over the administration in this case and were able to achieve their ends. The

238

ability to use power to achieve a goal continued to be reinforced in the workplace in a variety of circumstances. Henry better understood he was able to organize a group of people to accomplish the goals of an organization. Eventually, Henry was involved through his association with the church with the local political scene in Suburbia. The organized group desired to transform the behavior of the community so that their children would be afforded an equal life chance in the educational arena. The church group understood the community was in transition and the status quo behavior that either ignored or pushed children of color to the back of the group had to change if the members of the next generation were going to be viable participants in the community. Power over the superintendent quickly became the focus of the group as they perceived him as an obstacle to change. Henry and his cohort soon to become constituents created the circumstances leading to his election on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees with the stated agenda of removing the superintendent. Henry commented on the purpose, "And then I tell you having a fucker like Osnebee as the superintendent gives you a reason to run…" (Elkins interview, 2003). Henry served as the point of the spear and the group achieved the goal and was able to successfully replace the superintendent. Power was used to accomplish this objective as Henry applied the strategy developed by the church group and started the process to transform the community. Superintendent Osnebee made his exit and was replaced by Dr. Adele Ivory, an outsider who had the capacity to perceive the needed change and the ability to make it happen.

Henry clearly changed as a result of his board service and he addressed this during the third interview.

I am more mindful of the way I carry myself, y'know because I recognize that I am not just, it's just not for me now it's an entire constituency y'know, it's changed me in the way I answer questions. Y'know, I mean, uh, uh, I try to think them out to some degree um so in those senses it's changed me, y'know. I try to be respectful of what the community has given me, has ordained me to do y'know, someone has went out and voted for you and so therefore I want to hold up to that standard. I don't want to lower the standard for any board member. So, it has changed me in that way...but y'know other things have changed, in that you stay up later after board meetings, I mean I can't go to sleep after board meetings for some reason. But I tell you what, it makes me uh being on the board also, it makes me, I think it makes you uh considerate of other political leaders, y'know, of any elected official. Y'know you want to make sure that y'know, that hey there's two sides to every coin. You are surely not from my perspective in a rush to judge. I am lot slower to speak and I would say this, if I knew what I know now probably some of the things that I said about the previous superintendent that I have grown to have a fond respect for. Uh, so uh, it just makes you mature. (Elkins interview, 2004)

While Henry acknowledged that he has changed in some manner, there is another transition that has taken place with or without his understanding and the change has a basis in the power theme. When Henry joined the board he gained entrance through successfully campaigning as the first African-American able to win any political office in the community. "I'm the first African-American elected in Suburbia" (Elkins interview, 2004). Henry started his stint on the board as a person on the outside looking in at an entrenched status quo. He performed a variety of acts designed to break down the perceived barriers and create space for in his perception the little guy. "...the guy

240

with the small voice has a voice with me on the board. So, I am, because I am thinking

most times as I recall growing up uh the little man never really had a voice" (Elkins

interview, 2004). Serving as voice for a neglected or intentionally ignored segment of

the community has risks and rewards. While Henry was busy making inroads into the

social structures of the school district and the community by advancing the agenda

developed by the church group as well as his own, he gradually transformed from an

outsider to an insider.

The Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees appeared to have two circles of influence.

Board members moved from one circle to the other as power shifted. When Henry

joined the board he was a member of the outside group. This group had little influence

with the superintendent, and they used power to further their agendas and accomplish

goals sometimes at great cost. As an African-American, Henry was unwelcome by some

board members and tolerated by others. He used overt power, the tool he knew how to

use the best to advance the agenda. His behavior was perceived by some as outlandish

and outside of the boundaries of acceptable practice. One documented behavior

involved showing up unannounced at Suburbia High School and attempting to enter

classrooms. The campus administration attempted to dissuade this behavior. "…when I

went to visit Suburbia ISD, I mean Suburbia high school, the principal told me that I

couldn't come in there. It shocked me" (Elkins interview, 2004). Henry sought

assistance through his connections in the church and the then State Commissioner of

Education, Dr. Mike Moses. "Well I said this is what we need to do, we need to call

Mike Moses…We can call Mike Moses, and I need to ask him, y'know, hey if what you

said is law in terms of can I visit the school or shouldn't I" (Elkins interview, 2004)?
The end result was Henry was able to visit the schools at his direction. After
Superintendent Osnebee left the district and Dr. Ivory was hired, Henry found he was
now a part of the inner circle. He was now responsible for maintaining the new status
quo framed by the board. Again, he used overt power to accomplish his goals. "I am
the unofficial sergeant at arms of the board also. And what I mean by that is if you see
us getting carried off on a tangent, right, I am the one that kind of taps to my
president…let's keep rolling" (Elkins interview, 2004). The inner circle behavior was
not appreciated by members of the new outer circle. Lynne Lender, currently a member
of the outer circle perceives the behavior displayed by Henry as reprehensible. "…when
to even ask a question means you will be told, y'know you will be put down or you
shouldn't do this or you shouldn't do that uh it doesn't stop, stop those of us who are
asking questions" (Lender interview, 2003). Henry has continued to use power in each
of these instances and it would appear to be the only tool in his tool box.

<div align="center">Scene viii: Arvin – The Harmonizer</div>

Historical Narrative

Humble beginnings in a small town in South Texas describe the circumstances
Arvin Lawn was introduced to as he entered the world on January 27th 1941. Arvin was
born in the town of Harlingen however he grew up in a home situated at the crossroads
of two dirt roads in Lyford, Texas. His father, a World War I veteran was diagnosed
with a debilitating disease when Arvin was a very young child.

> …we lived in Lyford about 15 miles north of Harlingen out on a farm.
> Dirt roads and the nearest neighbor was about a quarter mile away I
> guess. And so that's where it all started, and we were farmers but we
> didn't get very far…So anyway my dad was a farmer as I said, but I
> remember when I was about possibly four years old he came, he came
> down with an illness… and his health deteriorated from there on out from
> the time I was four until he finally died when I was 16 in high school.
> (Lawn interview, 2003)

His mother attempted to maintain the farm and keep the family together however the

situation eventually became unbearable and Arvin, his parents and two older brothers

were forced to move in with his grandparents.

> …we finally had to move in with my grandparents, my mother's parents
> uh and there were of course two of those and then my parents was two
> and then my two siblings, my two brothers and myself, that's three so
> that's two, two, uh seven. There was seven of us living in a one, two,
> three, four, five room house. With no running water, no telephone, no
> running water and no telephone. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin understood his family was poor at a very young age and although they were not

well off financially, the family maintained their dignity within the community.

> We became very poor people um we were, we called ourselves, we didn't
> call ourselves poor white trash, we just called ourselves poor white,
> because we still maintained the respect of the other farmers around
> y'know that, and they helped us out and I think that's the beginnings of
> where I learned that it pays to help each other out. (Lawn interview,
> 2003)

The experience of having to depend on others and then repaying the kindness at a later

date had a significant effect on young Arvin and contributed significantly to a construct

243

he created long after his days in Lyford that defines his board service: caring, sharing, and serving.

The family was nearly destitute and the physically capable members had to find ways to contribute to put food on the table. Arvin's mother took a job in the school cafeteria which she maintained until he and his brothers graduated from high school. There were not that many jobs available for young boys in south Texas and picking cotton by hand was one of the few ways Arvin could earn money to share with his family.

> I would pick cotton in the summer time. This was with the sack not with
> the, this was with the cotton sacks dragging behind, not the mechanical
> picker…And that was from sun-up to sun-down and my friends in
> elementary school, I could see them in their father's pick-ups driving
> along the dirt roads. (Lawn interview, 2003)

After a few years Arvin was able to move from picking to ginning cotton, which was a step up in the community. However, he started to see his life as a part of a cycle and began to think of ways to change what he perceived as a predestined existence. "And we knew we were poor and we um (*pause*) there were sometimes when I wondered how in the world am I going to get out of this cycle" (Lawn interview, 2003). The cycle of poverty is well documented in social science research and the old expression, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer was a very real concept to Arvin and his family. Despite the obstacles, Arvin and his family continued to survive. Help and comfort came from many directions and mostly from within as the family had a strong foundation in the Lutheran Church. "…my grandfather was a Lutheran minister um he

had a church in Iowa and in Nebraska, primarily Swedish, Swedish settlements and it was part of the Swedish Synod…" (Lawn interview, 2003). The family had difficulty attending church on a regular basis due to his father's illness however this did not deter them from finding a way to engage in some form of religious practice.

> …we were very active in the church and I remember that, I never saw my dad go to church because he wasn't able to, but he was a tremendous bass singer when he could go before I was born. And uh my mother played the piano and we would gather around…the piano and we would sing primarily religious hymns and a few little gospel hymns, but we would sing, and sing, and sing and sing. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Aide and comfort also came from outside the family in the form of donations from charitable institutions.

> So, uh but to point out how poor we were, um it was kind of embarrassing. In high school um we received the VFW Christmas basket (*laughs nervously*). I mean y'know, it showed you how much the people cared for you. It showed how much the community of Lyford at that time it was Lyford, I don't know if I mentioned that or not, but I never will forget that day, when they came and presented that Christmas basket. Well, come to find, I knew immediately that they just looked around the community and find someone who is very poor and in need, so from that type of beginning, now the start of school uh uh, before I started school I knew that people were a caring, sharing, serving type of people out there. Not everybody but they certainly shared with us and cared for us and they served us and we did the best we could in return, y'know with limited resources. (Lawn interview, 2003)

A spate of obstacles seemingly with no end prepared Arvin for the future and he used the lessons he learned from his childhood experiences to cultivate a sense of humility

and eventually turned this to service in an effort to repay individually and collectively those who provided for him. Arvin points to his background as a factor contributing to his desire to give back to his community.

Arvin progressed through school and upon graduation he enrolled in college at Texas Lutheran College (TLC) in Seguin, Texas. Arvin realized he needed to get a college education if he was to break the cycle of poverty that encircled his family.

> This is the only way out to break the cycle that I mentioned earlier. I had to get out of the cycle some kind of way. And I know I can't be a doctor and I know I can't be this and I know that I can't be that, but there's something, someone told me that if you get a college degree you could do something y'know. (Lawn interview, 2003)

While Arvin knew earning a college degree would be important to his future, he was not interested in attending TLC and spending the money he had earned ginning cotton in Lyford. College life in Sequin did not serve as an attraction and Arvin intentionally withdrew from active participation. "…no one at TLC influenced me because I didn't allow them to…I never became a campus, a campus uh, mixed up with the campus people, the students" (Lawn interview, 2003). Someone was drawing him back to south Texas.

> …I saved a lot of money working 12 hours a day um seven days a week so I went to TLC, as it was called then. And I never will forget, the morning that I left we were in a carpool. This one guy from Lyford was going to the University of Texas so he just dropped us off in Seguin on the way up (*deep breath*). I never will forget that feeling, why am I going? I worked all this time and worked real hard for this money and I'm going to spend it on something I don't want spend it on. (*Laughs*)

246

And, but the biggest thing was my wife to be was still in Raymondville, five miles away. Sue was in Raymondville. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin left TLC and transferred to Pan-American University in Edinburg, lived at home and found a job as a cameraman at a local television station in Harlingen.

I worked at night and started off as a camera man. Really I started and went to work at five and worked till sign off which then was around midnight…And I worked my way into the control room and projectionist and all that other stuff, and then into where I became the director of the night time programs including the 6 o'clock news and the 10 o'clock news. And I really loved it and it was really good, but it was a means to an end. It allowed me to study it allowed me to go to school. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin and Sue continued with their courtship which led to their marriage and set up a home in Harlingen. Arvin continued to work for the television station and finally reached a point where after seven years graduation from college was looming in the near future.

And then when I finished college, I got a, oh, I didn't even know what I was going major in. They finally came to me in my Junior year, I think it was, (*laughs*) …And I still thought that I was not the chosen one to be this or that or that because that is reserved for the more intelligent people or somebody y'know like that. So I said well, shoot, I'm doing pretty good in history and sociology and they said that kind of fits into a social science, so I said, well, that's what it is! (*laughs*) So I have a major in Social Science which is probably worthless y'know you might get a social services somewhere y'know or something like that. But I got that degree and I said, well, by golly, I did it! (Lawn interview, 2003)

247

Arvin continued to work at the television station however Hurricane Beulah in 1967 destroyed the studio and he lost his job. He and Sue decided to move to an area with greater opportunity so Arvin purchased a van from the owner of the television station and they moved to Houston. He spent the day driving the van about in Houston looking for work and one evening good fortune made an appearance.

> Well, one night I was driving around Houston in this Volkswagen bus with the call letters of the TV station on it, y'know. And somebody started following me and um I would make a turn deliberately and that car would turn deliberately, and I make another turn and that car would turn. So finally I got back to the apartments, and uh where my sister in law lived, where we were staying. Uh, it turned out to be a guy that I worked with at that television station. He said, what in the world are you doing in Houston? Are you, are you televising something special here in Houston? And I said no Steve I'm out of a job. I just bought this thing (*laughs*). It was transportation. And he said make a long story short, he said well, I'm with the American Cancer Society. Why don't you come by tomorrow and we need a director of public information for Houston. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin followed up on the advice of his friend and found himself employed with the American Cancer Society, an organization with a stated purpose of service in the mission statement.

> The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. (Mission Statement, American Cancer Society website)

Landing the position with the American Cancer Society was the result of good fortune

which continued as he and Sue were approved for adoption and their first child, a girl,

joined the family at Christmas 1967. His stint with the American Cancer Society ended

and Arvin successfully acquired employment with the American Heart Association

which opened more doors as he was able to attend communication and management

courses at Columbia University, the University of Chicago and the University of Texas

at Austin.

> …from there I went on to the American Heart association and um really
> loved the volunteer work. I really enjoyed after I went to school, they
> sent me to Columbia University in New York for a course on
> Communication. They sent me to University of Chicago for a course on
> um Communication. The University of Texas on management by
> objectives. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin continued his work with volunteers as a fundraiser at the American Heart

Association in Houston and a few years later the family expanded with the birth of a son.

The work with the American Heart Association involved quite a bit of travel and Arvin

made many connections across the state. One of these connections influenced his

decision to move to Suburbia when he was transferred to the state office in Austin.

Arvin and Sue made a decision to move into what was then a rural community when

they moved. "Anyway, then we moved here in '74. And we moved here you asked why,

because I wanted, I had enough of Houston, I wanted to get back to the environment that

I knew and that was small town" (Lawn interview, 2003). Arvin and Sue wanted their

children to have the opportunity to mature in a community they perceived with values

similar to what they had known as children growing up in south Texas. The opportunity with the American Heart Association and the connections he had made led to employment with St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and a long term association with the entertainer, Danny Thomas. "…But then in '78 I switched over to St. Jude's (*pause*) and as I said I ran across many, many interesting people and because I just happened to be in the right place at the right time…" (Lawn interview, 2003). Arvin continued to serve as a fundraiser in his capacity with St. Jude's and his major activity was working with Danny Thomas to organize special dinner and entertainment engagements in the southern tier of the United States designed to raise money for cancer research for children.

> St. Jude's Research hospital was founded by Danny Thomas so I got to know him extremely well and he and I did shows together. I was not in the show, but I would organize the dinner and show, like a Las Vegas show. But I was if it was in my seven state region, I was in charge of it. The first one I had I was scared to death. Ohhh man a little old cotton guy here I am in the grand ball room of the Shamrock Hilton Hotel in Houston…. (Lawn interview, 2003)

The association with Danny Thomas resulted in a lasting impression on Arvin. "Danny Thomas always said that each child on earth is a child of us all. Y'know, so let's do what we can uh for everybody and I have kind of stuck with that motto, I guess that he taught me" (Lawn interview, 2003). The concepts of service to others were reinforced during his employment with St. Jude's and the opportunity to belong to a caring, sharing, and serving community became an overriding theme as Arvin moved closer to his decision to seek membership on the school board.

Arvin found himself in the company of great and well known individuals as a part of his work with St. Jude's and he performed a variety of tasks as he served in this capacity. One of the people he met also had a profound effect on Arvin's perception of the world and further cemented his desire to serve the community. Tom Landry, the former coach of the Dallas Cowboys, a professional football team, connected with Arvin while he was fundraising for St. Jude's.

> Yeah and um also at that time I got to know Tom Landry quite well. And I, you learn to be, this business of volunteer management you learn to connect people to people to people. You want to get to this person over here but you're here and you say how do I get to that guy. But you put some other people in here who can get to them. (Lawn interview, 2003)

The concept of connecting one person to another to achieve a specific fundraising goal emerged as a standard of practice for Arvin. This strategy served Arvin well as he expanded his repertoire and increased his capacity for fundraising. He worked for St. Jude's for twelve years and then changed jobs and served Concordia University as a fundraiser. Coach Landry continued to work with Arvin as he produced fundraising events such as golf tournaments. Arvin stayed with Concordia and it was at this time he had a mild stroke. The position at Concordia ended and Arvin finished his professional career working for the Arthritis Foundation.

The addition of children coupled with the move to Suburbia represented an opportunity for Arvin to participate in the community and he now had the means to give something back. When Arvin and Sue moved to Suburbia they found a predominately rural community with an economic foundation constructed on farming. However this

251

was already changing with the introduction of planned residential developments. Arvin exercised his desire to be an active member of the community by serving in a variety of capacities. The majority of these opportunities were closely tied to his children, Denise and Eric.

> Anyway, that was when it was, this thing about paying back, this was when, help others, I had been helped, y'know and uh then we got involved in the church and taught Sunday school…And then sometime along that time, and I enjoyed all that, and this again was know how people helped me maybe I can do something. But all the while too, I was helping out in Little League, extensively. Uh both Denise and Eric. I couched Little League until they got out of it, y'know, Uh, fire department, Sunday school, church council I became the church council president in the 80s. Then we started the day school. And then after the council I went on the day school board and became president of the day school. But all this is helping young people. Little League, and what have you . Um 4-H, all that stuff, it was something like a repeat of my youth but this I was on the giving end instead of on the receiving end, y'know. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin successfully built a dimension to his life centered on volunteerism and contributing to the community. This dimension was realized in a variety of opportunities that included serving as a volunteer fireman, Little League coach, 4H sponsor, band and athletic booster and involvement in the Lutheran Church. Participation in the community contributed to a decision to seek board membership which will be explored in greater depth in the present analysis.

Recently health concerns have emerged as a significant dimension of Arvin's daily routine as he suffered a stroke in 1998. Learning to live with diminished capacity has caused Arvin to look at the world with slightly different eyes.

> In terms of motivation, my organizational skills, the organizational skills, I could not, y'know I was really good at putting on six, seven, eight Tom Landry golf tournaments…They're gone, yeah they're gone and the people who tell me, well I don't work with my family practitioner anymore, family doctor anymore. It's a psychiatrist and a neurophysiologist. A psychiatrist and a neurophysiologist, that's the two. And so the neurophysiologist primarily for testing purposes y'know. And he tells me (*pause*) in two days of testing he tells me what I can still, what I am still good at and what I'm not good at anymore, y'know. And math is just totally, almost wiped out. And organizational skills are almost wiped out, y'know…And so uh as far as functioning, I can function on a daily basis. (Lawn interview, 2003)

The stroke caused Arvin to examine his priorities and he decided it was time to withdraw from extensive service. He retired from fundraising and derives his income from a retirement fund and disability payments. Arvin also made a decision to relinquish his involvement in the community and focus his attention on his family which now includes several grandchildren.

Events identified by the participant as significant in their development and motivation reveal part of the picture and allow the researcher to glean specific information related to the motives contributing to school board membership. Motives contributing to a decision to seek school board membership may also be teased out of an analysis of the people identified by the participant and the analysis is not complete

without this dimension. Therefore in the next section of the present analysis the researcher will conduct a careful examination of the individuals judged to be significant in the narrative provided by the participant.

People

Arvin identified several individuals that played a role in his development and it may be argued these individuals contributed to his decision to seek board membership. The first individuals he referenced as fundamental contributors were his father and mother.

> So anyway my dad was a farmer as I said, but I remember when I was about possibly four years old he came, he came down with an illness. And we're not too sure if it was Parkinson's disease. This would be back in about 1944, Parkinson's Disease, or was it, he was extremely ill in the trenches in France and I remember him bringing home, I don't remember him bringing it home but I remember he did bring home a gas mask. So he may have had some of the gas that was in WWI and his health deteriorated from there on out from the time I was four until he finally died when I was 16 in high school…I remember before I went to school my father would, this would be in the first, this would be well I guess when I was five years old, my two oldest brothers, I have two brothers, no sisters. As they went off to school uh to get the school bus, my dad and I, he had to do a lot of exercising, so we would walk up and down the dirt roads there and just spend some time together then when I became a first grader myself I remember uh him being out there and we lived at the crossroads, a dirt crossroad and he was out there looking for the school bus for us then he would come to the house and he would tell us that we better get with it cause the school bus is coming. (Lawn interview, 2003)

254

When Arvin was very young recognized his father was in poor health. After his father became ill, his mother made an attempt to preserve the ownership of the farm. "My mother tried to maintain the farm. I remember her trying to drive that tractor, taking care of an invalid husband, an invalid mother and an invalid father all three at the same time" (Lawn interview, 2006). However the obstacles facing the family were too great and the farm was lost. His mother then took a job with the school cafeteria which she held until her death. The family was poor in financial resources but rich in harmony.

> I never saw my dad go to church because he wasn't able to, but he was a
> tremendous bass singer when he could go before I was born. And uh my
> mother played the piano and…What we did then was we would gather
> around the piano and we would sing primarily religious hymns and a few
> little gospel hymns, but we would sing, and sing, and sing and sing.
> (Lawn interview, 2003)

Perseverance, humility, and harmony were the lessons Arvin learned from his parents. These qualities served Arvin as he nurtured the professional and volunteer dimensions of his life. "…you learn to be, this business of volunteer management you learn to connect people to people to people. You want to get to this person over here but you're here and you say how do I get to that guy" (Lawn interview, 2003). Perseverance helped him to stay focused and work steadily to accomplish his goals. Humility helped him as a board member as he had a strong connection with the poorer members of the community and helped to keep him grounded. "Yeah, well I think that I am absolutely the poorest guy that ever served on this board…And sometimes uh how has it affected my school board service, I think I can look at things more fairly" (Lawn interview, 2004). The third

255

quality, harmony, allowed Arvin to bring people together and put their differences aside for higher cause. The influential members of Suburbia recognized this quality in Arvin and found it desirable as they recruited him to seek board membership. They said, "You would be a good harmonizer between there were fractions at that time within the board where the board and the teachers or the board and the district you might say" (Lawn interview, 2004). Qualities learned from observing and participating in life with his parents clearly contributed to his development. However there were others in the community who played a role in as Arvin developed.

As the family was the poorest in the community they were eligible for and received assistance from several sources including the school. Arvin pointed to his teachers and identified each teacher from first grade through high school graduation and their contribution to his maturation. Teachers and other community members made sure Arvin was able to survive and this behavior provided the first lesson in caring, sharing and serving. His teachers knew the family and watched over Arvin and his two older brothers. They took specific action to provide assistance which combined with their own sense of efficacy helped them overcome the obstacles they encountered as children. The other members of the community found ways to help the family in a manner that allowed the family to maintain their dignity. The lesson was reinforced when Arvin returned to south Texas from his first year in college. He took a job with a television station and observed, "…my boss was getting a new Corvette every year. Ok and I said well there is something really wrong here. There is not any caring, sharing or serving…" (Lawn interview, 2004). The juxtaposition of the giving nature of the

members of his hometown combined with the behavior of the owner of the television

station reinforced the lesson of caring, sharing and serving.

The caring, sharing, serving lesson was again reinforced when Arvin began his

association with Danny Thomas and Tom Landry. Both of these gentlemen appear to

have had a profound effect on Arvin and how he viewed his role in society. Arvin met

Danny Thomas when he went to work as a fundraiser for St. Jude's Children Hospital.

Arvin made arrangements for events featuring Mr. Thomas and his orchestra to secure

funding for research projects conducted by the organization. Arvin learned compassion

for children as his relationship with Danny Thomas evolved. "Danny Thomas always

said that each child on earth is a child of us all. Y'know, so let's do what we can uh for

everybody and I have kind of stuck with that motto, I guess that he taught me" (Lawn

interview, 2003). Arvin took this knowledge and awareness and applied it to his

volunteer work in Suburbia. Arvin met Coach Landry as a result of his work with St.

Jude's and the relationship continued when Arvin moved to Concordia University.

Typically, Coach Landry would serve as a keynote speaker during a celebrity/amateur

golf tournaments. Coach Landry communicated the concept that humans should seek to

transcend beyond the mundane and aspire to exist at a spiritual level. The relationship

with Coach Landry reinforced the desire Arvin felt to play a role in his community.

"Because all this stuff about people helping people I guess it had an effect on me

because I started out, they wanted me to be a member of the volunteer fire department"

(Lawn interview, 2003). Arvin eventually transformed his work as a volunteer fireman

into service as a school board member however the transition required external prodding

from influential members in the community which will be explored during the discussion on his path to board membership.

The influential people including parents, teachers, an unnamed boss, and two celebrities taught Arvin important life lessons. The relationships formed lasting impressions that contributed significantly to his desire to participate in board membership and nurtured his sense of altruism as a motivator to participate. The events and people help explain his motivation for board service and the perceptions of others will provide a deeper understanding of the influences that contributed to his decision to seek and retain board membership.

How Arvin is seen by others

Board service is often taxing for the participants and quite a few board members serve one term and voluntarily step down from the dais after their service is complete. Arvin Lawn has served as a Suburbia ISD board member for eighteen years which either speaks to his perseverance or his ability to befriend others or both character traits. Understanding how others see and describe Arvin will provide greater insight into his character and better illuminate the motives that contribute and define his board service.

The primary sentiment used by the other board members to describe Arvin is he is a good fellow with his heart in the right place but time has taken a toll on his ability to serve. Henry Elkins said, "Arvin is a, he's good-hearted. Hey when Arvin had a stroke, hey his memory has dissipating on him and uh uh. With Arvin, there's no telling what's going to be said at any given time" (2003). Olympia Landry voiced a similar opinion about Arvin, "Y'know he's just such a nice guy. He's from the old school, from the

good old buddy system" (2003). Finally, Lynne Lender suggested Arvin was a

mouthpiece for the superintendent, Dr. Ivory. "I like Arvin, but he is going to do

whatever Adele tells him" (Lender interview, 2003). While the participants voiced the

belief that Arvin was past his prime and the conclusion to his board service was eminent,

the superintendent narrated an incident where the board was brought to their knees and

Arvin was a central character in the conflict.

Dr. Ivory realized she had committed to a district facing a set of serious

challenges when she was hired. The demographics were changing, the community was

growing and student performance was heading in a negative direction. However, the

major problems were pushed to the rear when the superintendent and the board faced a

significant leadership dilemma.

> But when we actually had a fist fight, um y'know that was telling tale and
> then when Oakley Ingham resigned because Arvin was um was board
> president, was elected board president. He was offended because he
> didn't think even though he had been on the board he didn't think he
> could do the job. My former board chair probably agreed but was much
> more (*pause*) polite about it…When Oakley Ingham quit, he quit strictly
> because Arvin was elected board president…He quit because he said
> there would be no growth in Suburbia if they are going to elect someone
> like Arvin Lawn, he represented old Suburbia and he quit… And so that
> is why he quit and he publicly said so in the paper. So, Arvin was pretty
> gracious about that, etc. It aired the split a little bit in the news in the
> (local paper) (*laughs*)…. (Ivory interview, 2003)

259

When board member Ingram decided to vote with his feet by public resigning from the

Suburbia ISD board the rest of the members rallied around Arvin even though they knew

he would probably have a difficult year serving as the president of the school board.

> **…**he wouldn't be a good president but he was nice person. He deserved
> it for one year at least he had been on the board for 19 years and he has
> given a lot to this district, Dr. Ivory said she would step in and try to help
> where she could and try to make sure that everything was written down
> and it was to me it was more of an honor for us to appoint him as
> president. And he, he was so proud of what he did…. (Landry interview,
> 2003)

Clearly the other board members and the superintendent perceived Arvin to be a good

fellow with positive motives and they understand time has taken a toll on his ability to

be an effective member of the team. It is interesting to note that none of the participants

were members of the Suburbia ISD board when Arvin was initially elected and thus they

have an incomplete perception of his service. They see him in the twilight of his tenure

and understand he is simply trying to make one day at a time. However, they also

understand he is not a threat and will probably take the path of least resistance when

dealing with most issues. Eighteen years of service have exacted a price however there

is a need to explore the path Arvin took to board service to complete the picture and

tease out his unbroken line of motivation.

The Path to the School Board

A foundational study examining school board members' motives conducted by

Goldhammer (1955) and cited in the review of the literature of the present report

illustrated the closed system existing in the political fabric of a local school board

election and shed first light on the practice of recruitment of board members. Subsequent research (e. g. Prewitt, 1970) made similar findings in the dimension of the praxis of recruitment in local elections. The literature clearly supports the assertion of recruitment as an accepted practice with deep roots in the political process resulting in school board elections. The school board members or local politicians described in the literature have for the most part been recruited by members of the community to serve and the path Arvin took to board membership fits the pattern illustrated in the literature however there is a slight twist and turn in the road.

The evolutionary path to board membership began when Arvin and his family moved from Houston to Suburbia. The community was small which was to their liking and Arvin had a strong desire to participate. His ardor to play a role in the community was prompted by his experiences as a child in south Texas where he had an introduction to the concepts of caring, sharing and serving. The most obvious choice for Arvin was to become involved in the activities his children gravitated toward as they grew. "…when we moved to Suburbia I had two children one was seven years old and the other one was just a baby. So as they grew a little bit more I looked for ways in which to volunteer so in the community" (Lawn interview, 2003). Athletics and animal husbandry were very popular activities for children in Suburbia and Denise and Eric became involved in both. Arvin characterized this early involvement as serving children in the community including his own. "But all this is helping young people. Little League, and what have you. Um 4-H, all that stuff…I guess that is what motivated me to do what I am doing" (Lawn interview. 2003). The Lutheran church was another

outlet for Arvin and a way to stroke his need to play a role in the community. "Then we got involved in the church and taught Sunday school. And was a youth sponsor" (Lawn interview, 2003). The involvement with the church led to a seat on the council which led to the appointment as the President of the Church Council. A third area of community participation involved the local volunteer organizations and Arvin became a member of the Suburbia fire brigade and shared in the functions of the organization which went beyond the obvious. The fire department was a hub for other groups and this experience led to a membership in the local Lion's Club where he embraced the leadership of one of the organization's major projects.

> I was responsible for the free eye exam and the eye glass program for
> needy SISD students and that was very rewarding because I worked with
> the students, I worked with the nurses in the schools. And through their
> testing of their students on their campus they would tell me that so and so
> needs glasses but they can't afford it so I would set it up with in
> arrangements with TSO and through our Lion's Club that I was a
> member. And we would, uh free of charge pay for the child's
> examination and glasses. So this again is someone who is in need of
> something y'know in a way that I could be a part of paying back. (Lawn
> interview, 2004)

Each of these experiences pushed Arvin closer to board membership and he describes the process as developmental in nature. "…it was an evolutionary process that is exactly what it was. It was a continuation, a continuation of volunteer activity, in another area but it was an evolutionary process" (Lawn interview, 2004). Arvin was making a name for himself in the community through his involvement and active participation and

262

leadership in a variety of organizations. The stage was now set for Arvin to make the leap to school board membership but he needed a bit of prodding.

Long term residents of the community, Jesse and Nancy Jo Underwood planted the seeds of school board membership in Arvin's mind however he rejected their initial advances.

> I had no real ambition to become a board member. It just kind of fell into place. I remember people like Jesse Underwood calling me and saying why don't you run for the school board and somebody else would call and say why don't you run for the school board. And my initial response was no, y'know that's kind of far out there. That's reserved for other people who (*laughs*). Me on the school board, you've got to be kidding! (*laughs*) (Lawn interview, 2004)

The idea of serving a school board member was quite an anomaly for Arvin as his previous knowledge suggested board membership was for the wealthy members of the community. The only experience Arvin had with school boards emanated from his childhood in south Texas and he viewed the board members as people with a station much higher than his, "…they were people who had, who were kind of pillars of the community uh they were large farmers, land owners… (Lawn interview, 2004). Therefore the idea of serving on the school board in Suburbia was somewhat laughable and rekindled his sense of inadequacy; the weed growing among the tall cotton. However the members of the community were persistent.

> I guess specifically I didn't want to run, I ran for the school board was not even on my mind. But there were people like Nancy Jo Underwood and other folks that said, why don't you run, why don't you run. The

school board at the time was kind of ultra-conservative. Uh, I mean they

were, they just, they watched every check that came out of the building.

(Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin was viewed by the individuals that recruited him as stabilizing force on the school

board. Suburbia was just starting to grow and transform from a rural to a suburban

community and the school board consisted of conservative land holders with the primary

goal of keeping property taxes at the lowest level possible. Arvin was encouraged to

attend what was touted as a significant meeting of the Suburbia ISD school board.

I attended a board meeting one night when the teachers, I wasn't on the

school board, and had given it no thought. I just knew that it was going

to be a coming issue at the school board meeting cause I had heard that.

So I did and one of the teachers said, well, goodness gracious, y'know we

need a little bit of money to live on, from the audience…And one school

board member said you know don't we have such a thing as probationary,

y'know put somebody on probation when we want to, he was angry. And

so some people said why don't you run for school board. Well, I don't

know anything about the school board. Well you learn. Will Perkins

said, you can be a harmonizer. I never will forget that and I turned out

that I was that harmonizer…. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Observing the board in action coupled with the push from specific members of the

community that perceived a role for Arvin took him to the edge of board membership.

There was one more piece of the puzzle that caused him to identify himself as a potential

member of the Suburbia ISD school board.

Arvin cultivated his personal and professional dimensions along similar paths.

The work he performed as a fund raiser for charitable organizations designed to conduct

264

research into childhood and adult diseases had an effect on his decision to seek board membership.

> …another reason why I finally did run for school board was because I could serve young people. Uh Danny Thomas always said that each child on earth is a child of us all. Y'know, so let's do what we can uh for everybody and I have kind of stuck with that motto, I guess that he taught me. (Lawn interview, 2004)

His association with philanthropic individuals such as Danny Thomas and Coach Tom Landry clearly contributed to his decision to seek board membership.

All the pieces of the puzzle were assembled and now Arvin was in many ways compelled to seek board membership as this was the obvious conclusion to all the events that had predestined and informed his board service. Community participation driven by a desire to contribute and enrich the experiences his children and others had as they matured combined with external forces pushing and pulling him toward the decision coupled with a strong sense of altruism instilled through his relationships with individuals with a high degree of philanthropy all converged in his psyche. The only logical conclusion was to emerge and Arvin submitted his name to the district as a candidate for the board in 1986.

The Unbroken Line of Motivation

An exploration and analysis of the events and people coupled with a discussion of the perceptions of other board members and illumination of the path to the board sets the stage for the examination and discovery of the unbroken line of motivation. Stanislavski theorized the actor through a comprehensive character analysis using the

265

text provided by the playwright could tease out the unbroken line of motivation and thus bring honesty and authenticity to the role. The character analysis conducted using the text co-constructed by the participant and the researcher suggests the existence of two major internal themes that serve to motivate Arvin. The first is labeled Good Fortune and the second Caring, Sharing, Serving.

The events and people from the past have an effect on the present and the future actions and behavior of an individual. The individual's personal history informs and provides a context to understand the motives and decisions enacted by the entity. In this specific case, Arvin is a product of an economically poor family history and the events and interactions with the children and adults in the community caused him to believe he was less than adequate than others. As a child, Arvin compared himself to the other children in his class and came away with the idea that the other children possessed greater capabilities. "I felt so withdrawn or, or what's the word, inadequate, I can't match up to the rest of them because I knew what they had and I didn't" (Lawn interview, 2003). The sense of inadequacy affected his personality as he matured and started to examine his perceived career opportunities. "And I still thought that I was not the chosen one to be this or that or that because that is reserved for the more intelligent people or somebody y'know like that" (Lawn interview, 2003). While Arvin felt like less than adequate, he started to realize that for one reason or another he was the beneficiary of good fortune. "I'm the little weed in the tall cotton! I got in there some kind of way, the right place at the right time you make your own luck, what ever it may be"(Lawn interview, 2004). The juxtaposition created by the sense of inadequacy is

266

mitigated by the belief of good fortune. Apparently Arvin is not alone in this scenario.

Luck and good fortune has been examined empirically.

Wiseman (2003) produced a longitudinal study examining the phenomena

associated with individuals describing themselves as fortunate. The protocol utilized for

the study included an analysis of survey and interview data with four major findings

emerging from the investigation. Wiseman found four differences between lucky and

unlucky people.

1. Lucky people constantly encounter chance opportunities. They
   accidentally meet people who have a very beneficial effect on their
   lives and come across interesting opportunities in newspapers and
   magazines. In contrast, unlucky people rarely have these sorts of
   experiences, or, as in the case with Stephen, they meet people who
   have a negative effect on their lives.

2. Lucky people make good decisions without knowing why. They just
   seem to know when a business decision is sound or someone
   shouldn't be trusted. Unlucky people's decisions tend to result in
   failure and despair.

3. Lucky people's dreams, ambitions, and goals have an uncanny knack
   of coming true. Once again, unlucky people are the exact opposite –
   their dreams and ambitions remain little more than an elusive fantasy.

4. Lucky people have an ability to turn their bad luck into good fortune.
   Unlucky people lack this ability and their bad luck causes nothing but
   upset and ruin. (Wiseman, 2003, p. 19)

Arvin exhibits all four of the characteristics of a fortunate person as articulated by

Wiseman. Arvin has had numerous chance encounters that have had a positive effect on

his career. The people he met when actively engaged in his career had a very positive

effect on him monetarily and spiritually. Danny Thomas was one of the individuals that had a positive effect on Arvin. "But then in '78 I switched over to St. Jude's [Research Hospital] (*pause*) and as I said I ran across many, many interesting people and because I just happened to be in the right place at the right time…" (Lawn interview, 2003). The decision to join St. Jude's enriched Arvin and his family's life in many ways and motivated him to pursue altruistic activities in his community. Arvin worked hard to overcome his childhood life circumstances and while he initially envisioned working in the cotton industry, he found a better route through attaining a college degree and creating a financially comfortable career.

The juxtaposition of Arvin's sense of inadequacy coupled with the beneficial effects of good fortune contributed to his decision to seek board membership. His initial reaction when approached to run was predictable in the context of the previous discussion. "And my initial response was no, y'know that's kind of far out there. That's reserved for other people who (*laughs*). Me on the school board, you've got to be kidding (*laughs*)" (Lawn interview, 2004). However Arvin made this work in his favor and positioned himself as a member of the board representing the economically middle class majority of the community.

> Yeah, well I think that I am absolutely the poorest guy that ever served on this board. I really mean that! And sometimes uh how has it affected my school board service, I think I can look at things more fairly. Because I've been on the other end. I never have been at the opposite (*laughs*) and I doubt if I will ever get there now. But I think I can see, I think I

268

can probably be more objective than anybody else. (Lawn interview,

2004)

The theme of good fortune is augmented by a second major theme in the unbroken line

of motivation contributing to Arvin's decision to seek and retain membership on the

Suburbia ISD board of trustees.

Much has been written by scholars identifying and characterizing systems of

human behavior and personality. Cavalier (2000) theorized the existence of multiple

themes of personal motivation, "the ego has three ways to go: to indulge itself, to expand

itself, and to expend itself" (p. 68). The second theme serving to motivate Arvin exists

in the third mode of the ego as described by Cavalier. Caring, Sharing, and Serving

emerged as the second significant theme in the text created through the interviews

produced collaboratively with Arvin.

Arvin learned the concepts of caring as a child when members of the community

took action to ensure that his family was able to survive. He understood the genesis of

the behavior that provided necessities of life when he was a child. He also recognized

when the behaviors of others did not model caring and took pains to disassociate himself

with those individuals such as the television station manager.

> I was working at a TV station in Harlingen. And after about four years I
> realized I was only doing four things, I was putting some meals on my
> table, but my boss was getting a new Corvette every year. Ok and I said
> well there is something really wrong here. There is not any caring,
> sharing or serving…. (Lawn interview, 2004)

When Arvin realized the effect of his labors at the television station he and his new bride

made the decision to leave Harlingen and head north to Houston. Shortly after moving

Arvin had an encounter with an individual from south Texas who cleared the way for his

entrance to what would be a life-long career working with charitable organizations. The

caring dimension emerged as a negative character trait when Arvin was approached by

an individual to sell insurance.

> Yeah, he was going to hire me. Oh, man he thought I was going to be
> wonderful. And he came back and he said, I don't want to hire you. He's
> say if it will cost this guy some money, you'd probably say you really
> can't afford this. (*laughs*) So, I wouldn't make any sales. I wouldn't
> make any car sales either. I wouldn't be able to do that. (Lawn interview,
> 2004)

Arvin realized early in his life caring was a foundational element of his character and

thus he gravitated toward organizations dedicated to this theme. Service on the school

board represents an opportunity to be a part of an organization with a focus on caring for

the next generation. The second element in the triad defining the unbroken line of

motivation, sharing, is closely aligned with caring. "In high school um we received the

VFW Christmas basket (*laughs nervously*). I mean y'know, it showed you how much

the people cared for you…I never will forget that day, when they came and presented

that Christmas basket" (Lawn interview, 2003). Sharing is one of the behaviors that

define caring in the present context. Arvin sought to replicate the act of sharing in his

professional and personal life through involvement in charitable organizations.

Participation on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees is one of the organizations he

gravitated toward after the idea was introduced to him by a member of the community.

The third element in the theme, serving, was learned when Arvin went to work for St. Jude's Children's Hospital and started a relationship with Danny Thomas.

> …another reason why I finally did run for school board was because I could serve young people. Uh Danny Thomas always said that each child on earth is a child of us all. Y'know, so let's do what we can uh for everybody and I have kind of stuck with that motto, I guess that he taught me. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Serving emerges as the dominant element of the triad in this present theme. Serving is close aligned to altruism and philanthropy. A founding theoretical structure for the present study emanated from the literature on motivation produced by Cavalier (2000) who defines altruism as, "…the expenditure of the self in the service of others" (p. 68). The theme caring, sharing, serving borders on the edge of altruism as defined in this context.

Clearly Arvin displays behavior as a school board member associated with altruism and the theme Caring, Sharing, Serving serves as a strong source of internal motivation which influenced his decision to seek and retain board membership. However the evidence presented by the participant and the commentary by the superintendent suggest the existence of an external source of motivation with a powerful influence. Arvin as the other participants report identified external motivation in the form of recruitment behavior from influential members of the community.

> And then about this time also there were board elections coming up in the spring of '86 and (*pause*) there were some people that contacted me who said why don't you run for the board…Because people had encouraged me to run. I had no real ambition to become a board member. It just kind

of fell into place. I remember people…calling me and saying why don't you run for the school board and somebody else would call and say why don't you run for the school board. And my initial response was no, y'know that's kind of far out there. That's reserved for other people who (*laughs*). Me on the school board, you've got to be kidding! (*laughs*) (Lawn interview, 2004)

Arvin like other board members understood he was drafted for board membership to serve a purpose articulated by other members of the community that actively encouraged him to run for office.

Now, uh (*pause*) here it was people who I said who called me…and at the time, at the time the board was ultra conservative. I remember going to a board meeting because I heard the teachers were going to gripe…And sure enough there was some dialogue some very serious dialogue going on and they were ultra conservative. I have always said that teachers have the most important job in the world. I mean absolutely. I mean their job is more important than the job I ever had because somewhere along the line one of those teachers influenced me…I wouldn't say I was talked into it, lets just say I was encouraged to run for the school board…And I think that was probably one of the, desires that I had to become a school board member was to upgrade it, ok. It's to see what I can do to make it better. I guess…I think the first word that they used was that you could be a harmonizer. You would be a good harmonizer between there were fractions at that time within the board where the board and the teachers or the board and the district you might say…Number one was to be a harmonizer, and number two was to get things moving in a progressively conservative way. (*laughs*) Ok, not the all out (*pause*) liberal, but as a harmonizer and move it in a constructive way….(Lawn interview, 2004)

272

Arvin understood who his benefactors were and while their motives appeared to be beneficial for the community they served to provide a framework for the work Arvin performed as a board member and satisfied the constituency who recruited him to board membership in 1986. The fortunate aspect is the individuals who recruited him seemingly had a desire to improve the state of the schools in the community and understood Arvin had a demeanor that was conducive to create change internally.

The present study seeks to understand the motives that influence school board members through analysis of the community as well as individual character analysis. The analysis to this point provides a point of departure to explore the visible relationship extant on the board existing in the context of the regularly scheduled board meeting. In many respects the next level of analysis is fitting entitled, "The Play" and explores the visible interactions between the individuals present and seated on the dais.

<div align="center">Scene ix: The Play</div>

The Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees typically meets on the third Thursday of each month with the option of calling special meetings as needed. The Texas Government Code requires each public school board in the state to post a notice announcing the intent to convene a meeting of the board of trustees. The notice must indicate the date, hour, place and subject of the meeting and be posted at least seventy-two hours in advance of the event in a place accessible to the public. (TGC Section 551.041 and 551.043) The researcher observed numerous meetings prior to and during the data collection phase of the present study with the intent of examining the board members as they performed the roles in public. Three meetings November 20, 2003,

December 18, 2003 and January 15, 2004 were particularly important as the researcher attended with the intent of documenting board behavior and language on the public stage. Written notes documenting the meetings were produced during each event and a twenty to thirty minute oral debrief on recording tape conducted by the researcher was produced following each meeting. The researcher has had extensive training in the process of documenting events having served as a public school administrator in Texas since 1987 which requires the practitioner to conduct classroom observations with the intent of providing feedback and evaluating teachers. The purpose of this portion of the analysis is to illustrate board behavior as it appears on the public stage. Goffman (1963) suggests "…the individual is guided by a special set of rules…Upon examination, these rules prove to govern the allocation of the individual's involvement within the situation, as expressed through a conventionalized idiom of behavioral cues" (p. 243). The Suburbia ISD Board of Trustee public meetings provide a window into the internal and external motives of the members. I will begin with a brief description of the physical environment and then transition into an analysis of the behavior and language displayed by the board members in this public setting where they are most accountable to their constituencies.

The Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees meeting space exists in the physical perimeter of the Suburbia ISD Central Administration building. The space appears to have been designed for a multi-purpose functionality with the seating area for the board located on the north wall of the room. The room itself is nearly square in shape and is used for a variety of purposes during the day including meetings held by the central

274

administration. The room also serves as one of the polling places when the community

has a public election. The board dais is the most recognizable feature of the room and

dominates the environment. The board and superintendent are arranged in an elliptical

shape with the board president seated most directly in front of a podium used for

presentations. The seating order from "stage right" to "stage left" when the observation

was conducted was as follows: Henry Elkins, Arthur Ames, Dr. Adele Ivory, Olympia

Landry, Isaac Anderson, Arvin Lawn, Dr. Leann Abbott, and Lynne Lender situated at

the stage left end of the dais. The board members sit behind a custom designed cabinet

that contains a flat work surface for the participants and a panel that prevents the public

from seeing what board members have in front of them during the meeting. The seven

board members and the superintendent sit on comfortable chairs placed on a platform

behind the edifice which reinforces the illusion that the board members are looking

down on the audience. The rest of the room is decorated in neutral colors that cause the

eyes to focus on the most formidable object in the room, the board dais.

The stated focus of the meeting is to conduct the business of the board and they

must follow the posted agenda or find themselves in violation of state law. Olympia

describes the focus of the board meeting from her perspective as the president.

> A lot of – I think a lot of the um to me the one thing I live by is that it is a
> public meeting, not a meeting of the public. Some board members feel
> its' a meeting of the public so they're interacting, that's not what this is
> about. (Landry interview, 2003)

While Olympia may believe the purpose of the meeting is to conduct the business of the

board, there are other members that appear to believe otherwise. Board members were

observed during the three documented visits "playing" to the constituency in the room and apparently seeking to attempt to interact with the public even to the point of asking a member of the audience to provide an impromptu report on a construction project he was familiar with as a member of the community.

One behavior described by several board members is the practice of passing notes from board members to the superintendent or other board members. Lynne Lender and Henry Elkins described the communication not visible to the audience.

> …when somebody is in the audience that we don't recognize then notes go back and forth. Who's that person in the green shirt and why are they here? Do you know what they are doing here? I mean so if we are writing notes back and forth or asking who is that person and what are they doing here, it's like yeah, it matters to us. (Lender interview, 2003)

While the notes appear to be harmless they certainly could contain information that may be vital to the debate and could influence the outcome of a vote if produced and passed at just the right time. However, Elkins points out that the note passing behavior typically occurs during the portion of the meeting where the public is invited to address the board and the superintendent.

> So usually in terms of citizen participation if they are asking some questions that um that make you say hmmmm, why are we not ???? that, normally what I do, I pen a note and I pass it down to Dr. Ivory and I say hey, can you take a look at it, and then I am listening to her, how she responds also. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Ultimately the public is unaware of this behavior as the panel shrouding the actions creates a barrier that obscures the view of the public. Thus leaving the public in the dark

as a part of the communication between board members is not visible and literally exists under the table.

The meetings start at seven in the evening with board members arriving shortly before the event. They come prepared with their agendas, back up materials and notes and all of the SBMP's reflected on the unique process they use to prepare for the board meeting. The agenda appears to be co-constructed by the superintendent and the board officers a few days in advance of the meeting. "…the president, vice president and secretary would sit down with Dr. Ivory and we would have a lunch meeting and um discuss everything that was y'know that was on the agenda…" (Landry interview, 2003). However, this practice was modified as new board members complained about the agenda building process. "…then a couple of new board members got on there and they found out we were meeting with Dr. Ivory, they were furious" (Landry interview, 2003). The agenda and all supporting materials are delivered to the board members on the Friday before the meeting. The delivery creates an opportunity for the members to preview the items on the agenda and then direct questions to the superintendent or in some cases to another member of the administration. "…I didn't have any uh questions…but if I do I call Debbie…or Andy Andro. I find Andy is often times more forthcoming with information if I can get to him before Adele's told him not to say anything" (Lender interview, 2003). Lynne discovered questions directed to other members of the administrative team can lead to information which equates to power when the board conducts business. Questions appear to be one of the tools used by the

board members to tip the scales of influence during the meeting. Lynne addressed the

practice and how she uses questions during the meetings.

<div align="center">LYNNE</div>

…But um and then I can ask, a lot of questions I ask I really already
know the answer to, but I'm trying to elicit information as something
either for the public who is sitting there or my fellow board members so
that they might know something because I can't just start talking. So, I
ask a lot of questions that way.

<div align="center">RICK</div>

So a question becomes a way to share information with a broader
group…

<div align="center">LYNNE</div>

Yes

<div align="center">RICK</div>

…to elicit a response from another board member

<div align="center">LYNNE</div>

Yes! (Lender interview, 2003)

While Lynne uses questions to solicit a specific response which in turn will either sway

an upcoming vote she is a minor player when compared to Dr. Abbott and the number of

questions posed during a board meeting. Table 4.9 illustrates the quantity of questions

voiced by the board members during the November 20, 2003, December 18, 2003 and

January 15, 2004 meetings.

Table 4.9: *Analysis of the number of questions voiced during board meetings*

Questions	11.20.03	12.18.03	1.15.04	Total	Percentage
Adele Ivory	1	2	3	6	5%
Arthur Ames	6	1	0	7	5%
Leann Abbott	19	22	15	56	43%
Henry Elkins	1	2	4	7	5%
Lynne Lender	6	10	7	23	18%
Olympia Landry	1	1	0	2	2%
Isaac Anderson	3	16	7	26	20%
Arvin Lawn	0	1	2	3	2%
Total	37	55	38	130	100%

Dr. Abbott discussed her perceptions of the quantity of questions during the second interview.

> Yeah, I tend to ask a lot of questions. Me and um and Lynne, ask the most questions probably y'know, I mean it's easy to tell who's asking y'know you can rate who's asking and it's generally the same pattern y'know the same kind of questions you have people that don't ever seem to question anything and then you have people that, that tend to question a lot and then you have people that are more in the middle um and it's a basic, the same basic pattern. (Abbott interview, 2003)

A second set of data taken from the same meetings suggests Dr. Abbott is the most likely to speak during the meeting with thirty-eight percent of the total number of comments and questions during the three documented meetings. Table 4.10 displays the quantity of questions and comments voiced by the participants during the same board meetings.

Table 4.10: *Analysis of the number of questions and comments voiced during board meetings*

Total Comments and Questions	11.20.03	12.18.03	1.15.04	Total	Percentage
Adele Ivory	8	6	11	25	9%
Arthur Ames	9	1	0	10	4%
Leann Abbott	50	29	25	104	38%
Henry Elkins	8	9	10	27	10%
Lynne Lender	11	12	15	38	14%
Olympia Landry	3	3	7	13	5%
Isaac Anderson	4	16	23	43	16%
Arvin Lawn	7	5	2	14	5%
Total	100	81	93	274	100%

The data and Dr. Abbott's perceptions are clearly aligned as she understands she is the most active member of the board in terms of oral interactions. The spoken word in this context is the most powerful visible tool available to any school board member and the individuals with the greatest dexterity are often the most successful in achieving their agenda. Other board members recognize the ability of their peers and seek to mitigate this advantage. Olympia, the board president, clearly understands the power possessed by Dr. Abbott and how she uses it during the board meetings. "I don't have the fluent speech for instance that Dr. Abbott has and I'm not – I don't talk just to hear myself talk. Not that any of them do, but I'm not a public speaker so what I want to do is know that when I make that decision that it's the right decision" (Landry interview, 2003). While Dr. Abbott tends to focus on the debate, Olympia has a desire to get to lead the group to make the right decision.

The quantity of the comments and questions or interactions between the board members provides a view of the board members on one level. For instance, it is now known Dr. Abbott is the most adept board member with respect to quantity of the

interactions however, an analysis of the characteristics of the interactions provides a deeper understanding of the board member and their agenda. Combining the analysis of the texts with the characteristics of the observed behaviors and language used during the documented board meetings will lead to concluding remarks about each board member and the perceived role they play on the public stage.

Dr. Abbott has been labeled "The Pot Stirrer" in the present study because she comes to the board with an agenda and uses her available tools to advance her objectives. A brief qualitative analysis of the interactions she has with other board members when they come together on the dais finds Dr. Abbott frequently attacks other board members for their views, or complains about an action taken by the administration. During the November 20, 2003 meeting a portion of the discussion was about an updated phone system the district installed the previous year. Dr. Abbott spent quite a bit of time complaining about her perceived inadequacies of the system. Dr. Ivory and Will Randolph, the director of technology, attempted to respond to her attacks, but Dr. Abbott stayed on message and was not interested in hearing what she termed excuses. She went into great depth about her perceptions of the phone system during her second interview.

> I don't know the technical terms but then a whole new phone system
> where teachers have voice mail and phones in their rooms and we never
> had that before so I had some questions about the functionality of the
> phone system and was it doing what I was told it was going to do um in
> my opinion its not and since we had that kind of report brought about
> how much we are spending here, here, and here that was my opportunity

to kind of find out y'know what's their assessment of how it's going. I'm hearing from employees that it's not as good, it's not doing what I thought it was going to do… (Abbott interview, 2003)

The behavior observed at the documented board meetings combined with the analysis of the texts points toward a conclusion that Dr. Abbott plays the role of the bully on the board. While a bully may use his or her fists or other forms of physical intimidations to advance their agenda, Dr. Abbott uses words and the perceived political power from her constituency to accomplish her objectives. Power is understandably a major theme used by a bully to advance the agenda and this often takes the form of aggression. Piskin (2002) produced an analysis of bullying characteristics and connected the analysis to the published literature.

> The bullies appear to have a need to feel powerful and in control. They also seem to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others (Banks, 1997), they have little empathy for their victims (Fitzgerald, 1999; Olweus, 1999a), and often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way (Banks, 1997). Bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where the children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems, and where parental involvement and warmth are often lacking (Banks, 1997). It is also revealed that typical bullies are often aggressive towards adults, as well, both teachers and parents. In contrast to common belief, bullies appear to have little anxiety and to possess strong self-esteem (Olweus, 1993). (P. 558)

The finding that bullies are aggressive and do not feel empathy for the people they victimize is further advanced by Unnever (2005) who found "Data show that pure bullies were more likely than aggressive victims to be proactively aggressive, suggesting

282

that they perceive aggression as a legitimate means to accomplish goals" (p. 165). The

finding is consistent with the self-perception of the role played by Dr. Abbott. "I think of

myself as a watchdog. I think of myself as (*pause*) I continually endeavor to bring a

variety of viewpoints that might not be represented adequately in my opinion by the

administration" (Abbott interview, 2003). Playing the role of the self-assigned

watchdog requires a measure of tenacity and occasional aggressive behavior to bring

about the desired results. Dr. Abbott understands her role and knows the source of her

power and will use the public stage to advance her agenda through legitimate and

illegitimate means. As stated earlier, the district is growing rapidly and the board met to

develop long-range construction plans. Major portions of Dr. Abbott's constituency are

the middle school teachers employed by the district. When the board met, the

administration presented a plan that did not include a new middle school. Dr. Abbott

was not successful in swaying the opinion of the other board members to support a

decision to include a new middle school in the planning, and thus made a decision to

step off the dais to appeal to the public. Dr. Abbott initiated contact with the president

of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) of the middle school in her neighborhood and

she and Mr. Anderson met with the parents to solicit their input. This action was taken

independently without the endorsement of the rest of the board or the administration.

She then composed and delivered a letter to the editor of the local paper which clearly

denigrated the recommendation of the administration and went so far as to say the

administration was deceiving the public in the use of bond money. According to Dr.

Abbott, the administration took the position the bond money was to be used for the

greatest need. "The board was reassured repeatedly by the administration that the original bond had been promoted to the voters as an option between '2 elementary schools OR a middle school depending on need'" (Abbott letter to editor, April 2004). Dr. Abbott came to a different conclusion following the meeting she and Mr. Anderson called with middle school parents and she used the media to magnify the struggle taking place in the Suburbia ISD board room.

> Overwhelmingly, parents reiterated that they had been told when they voted on the bond that the money would go to toward building a middle school and that the board should honor that recommendation. This was in direct contrast to claims made by the superintendent regarding how this bond was promoted. (Abbott letter to editor, April 2004)

Dr. Abbott clearly extended her authority as an individual board member by extending the argument to the public via the media. The act was a calculated aggressive power play in defiance of the recommendation from Dr. Ivory, the same superintendent that did not hire Dr. Abbott as the science coordinator about two years earlier. When Dr. Abbott was initially elected an influential member of her constituency advised her to find the right to exact her retribution. "And a friend of mine said, Leann you hold all the cards why play them now. Save them and when you need to, then you play your cards. And that was the best advice, political advice, I ever got" (Abbott interview, 2003). The aggressive behavior displayed by Dr. Abbott, playing the part of the bully, is directly contrasted by the role played by the board member with the longest tenure, Arvin Lawn.

Arvin Lawn was elected to the Suburbia ISD board in 1986 and eighteen years later he was still a member. Arvin suggests his service on the board is a result of his

personal philosophy of caring, sharing, serving, a phrase which he used repeatedly to characterize his motivation for board service. While his heart may be in the right place, his involvement in the action of the board now is nearly non-existent. The data extracted from the board meetings suggests Arvin is fairly uninvolved with the interactions with only five percent of the overall comments and two percent of the questions voiced during the meetings. The qualitative analysis of the board interactions suggests Arvin provides an element of comic relief when there is an elevated sense of tension on the dais. Arvin pointed to the constituency that nudged him into the arena of board service and the role they asked him to play.

> … lets just say I was encouraged to run for the school board. And so I did and I think it was probably the teachers were not regarded as very, maybe like it was in the original days as I understand, but it was more like a babysitting thing. While the men were out working or something like that. And that we need to, teachers need to be recognized more, they need to be paid more. And this is a profession. And we need to recognize as such. (Lawn interview, 2003)

The constituency that recruited Arvin even gave him a descriptive name based on his perceived ability to work toward building a consensus. "Will Perkins said you can be a harmonizer. I never will forget that and I turned out that I was that harmonizer…" (Lawn interview, 2003). The community in 1986 was at the front end of the rapid change that occurred during the 90's and Arvin was asked to serve as the link to bring the board into the present so that the children of Suburbia would receive a quality education. Arvin's constituency realized the schools operated by the community would not be able to improve if the primary function of the board was to keep the tax rate as

low as possible. A quality education requires adequate funding and the primary link to quality results is the level of expertise held by the classroom teacher. Teachers in the community were grossly underpaid and were appealing to the board for a pay increase. Following his election, Arvin was often asked to play the role of consensus builder behind the scenes by the superintendent.

> I ran because I was encouraged to run by several people and I think I became that harmonizer and I think that uh we had some, we and they kind of things and I was kind of the harmonizer in between. As a matter of fact, the superintendent, uh former superintendent would come to me and say Arvin, do you think you can iron this thing out? (Lawn interview, 2003)

Interestingly enough, Arvin was at the center of the critical incident the superintendent chose to discuss during her interview. Controversy erupted when the board members selected Arvin as the president. Another board member took extreme umbrage with the action and eventually resigned his seat in a very public manner. The board had a desire to change the leadership and used Arvin to create the opportunity despite his questionable ability to serve as the president. "He deserved it for one year at least he had been on the board for 19 years and he has given a lot to this district, Dr. Ivory said she would step in and try to help where she could…" (Landry interview, 2003). The difficulty encountered by Arvin appears to be enhanced by his medical condition and he made the decision to complete his term and not run again. While Arvin was recruited by a certain segment of the community to perform a specific task, his path to the board

appears to be somewhat aligned to another board member with a very different constituency.

Serving as a teacher and occasionally in a capacity of internal leadership for the district for more than twenty years created an extensive power base for Lynne Lender as many of the teachers and campus administrators live within the political boundaries of the district and are active voters. Her constituents communicated their expectations when they recruited her to seek board membership and then got out the vote on Election Day, which propelled her into office. Clearly Lynne views herself as an expert in education and believes the other board members bring different dimensions of expertise to the group. At question is the foundation of her expertise and if any board members defer to her in this self-proclaimed role. Lynne found herself at the end of her career in the public schools when she made a decision to leave what she described as a troubled school led by a principal that failed to grow as the school population expanded and changed. She was then recruited to board membership by a group of Suburbia teachers and campus administrators with similar beliefs. She perceives her role as a board member as an expert in education particularly when the other board members let her play this part. An analysis of the data collected during the documented board meetings suggests Lynne is an active participant with fourteen percent of the interactions attributed to her and eighteen percent of the questions. Almost all of the comments and questions Lynne ask are related to some aspect of education from the classroom teacher's point of view, which is aligned with her constituency and power base. There were very few occasions where she had interactions with other board members other

than to pose questions or make comments on the proceedings. Lynne did not participate

in any documented dialogue although she did have a few side-bar conversations with Dr.

Abbott the board member to Lynne's immediate right. Her place on the dais limits this

behavior as she is the last board member on the stage left end of the dais. Lynne

obviously avoids topics where she has little or no expertise unless she can frame the

interaction to advance the agenda of the classroom teacher. Lynne like Dr. Abbott is the

one of the newest board members and apparently has a desire to be a part of the inner

circle of the board, which is the group perceived to hold most of the power. While she

has aspirations to become a part of the inner circle, her obvious dislike of the

superintendent and her policies may tend to limit this opportunity as long as the current

administration is in control. Lynne's perceptions of power and the concept of the inner

and outer circle somewhat align with another board member who clearly started his

tenure with the board on the outer circle.

Life as a member of the outer circle of the board was clearly described by Henry

Elkins. He sought election to the board with the stated purpose of initiating change

within the system. Henry was a member of politically active African-American church

whose members understood the schools in the community had little interest in providing

children of color with an equal life opportunity. When Henry was elected the inner

circle of the board was aligned with the gentleman serving as the superintendent. The

primary goal of the constituency who elected Henry was to unseat the superintendent.

Before this action took place, Henry existed as a very vocal member of the outer circle.

After Superintendent Osnebee retired, Henry participated in the selection of the new

superintendent, Dr. Ivory. During the transition Henry transformed from a vocal critic

on the outside to a member of the inner circle. Henry's visible interactions during the

three documented board meetings were very limited in quantity, and typically served as

a form of encouragement after individuals made presentations. He did have quite a few

side bar conversations with Arthur Ames, the board member sitting on his immediate

left. Another observed behavior consisted of non-verbal cues such as tapping on the

table and motioning to the board president to speed up the proceedings. Henry was also

observed passing notes to the superintendent and the board president during the meeting.

His primary behavior could be labeled as off-task in nature. The only variance from the

observed behavior occurred during the November 20, 2003 meeting, which consisted of

a brief exchange with Dr. Abbott regarding a construction project the board was

debating. The rest of Henry's interactions with the board or the superintendent either

happens off the dais or does not exist. Where Henry started life as a vocal opponent of

what his constituents perceived as the leader of a racist administration, he has been

transformed into a cheerleader of the superintendent whom he selected and endorsed to

his the people who recruited him and cleared the way for his election to the board.

Henry perceives his role as that of the unofficial Sergeant-At- Arms of the board and his

presence is designed to move the business of the board to a swift conclusion. This

behavior is perceived in a negative manner by the current members of the outer circle,

Lynne Lender and Dr. Abbott. Henry believes he is helping the board president,

Olympia Landry, in her role as the elected leader of the board.

289

The president of the board, Olympia Landry, began her service in 1993 through a closed process when she was appointed by the superintendent to fill the term of a member who had to vacate his seat due to health problems. Olympia believes Superintendent Osnebee and the board had been nominated for a state award and thought a female board member would improve their chances for selection. "They wanted a woman, they had decided that they wanted a woman as their token female, that was how it was put, because (*laughs*) I am serious because he was wanting school board of the year and felt like he needed a minority" (Landry interview, 2003). Following several years of service, Olympia was eventually selected by the other board members to act as the president. Thus the role Olympia plays on the dais is modified by her standing as the elected president of the board. The board selects their officers following the general elections in May and the president is the most important office for a board member to hold. The significance of the office is most evident during public meetings as the board president is responsible for implementing the planned agenda and ensuring the board members limit their comments and questions to the items on the agenda. The Suburbia ISD board uses the parliamentary procedure outlined by Robert's Rules of Order and the board president is the individual charged with ensuring the board members adhere to their own adopted rules of conduct during the meetings. Olympia played her appointed role well during the three documented board meetings. She announced the beginning of each portion of the agenda, read the legal statements required during different portions of the meeting, introduced each action item which culminated by her seeking a motion and a second followed by discussion and then finally a vote on each item. The

procedure was perfect and Olympia referred to the notes she carefully prepares before each meeting. Her interaction with the other board members and the superintendent were limited to leading the procedural discussion with a few exceptions, which included a few side bar moments with Dr. Ivory, seated to Olympia's right, and Isaac Anderson, seated to Olympia's left. The Perfect Hostess persona was clearly evident throughout all three meetings as Olympia took care to ensure all the board members were invited to participate in each discussion by asking each if they had anything to offer. Olympia discussed the approach she prefers with respect to the behavior of the board and her orientation, "I think everyone should be able to express their opinion and then everyone makes a decision, vote – voting on what you heard that night and how you feel" (Landry interview, 2003). Ensuring the interaction of each of the board members before, during and after the meeting is a noteworthy observable behavior and is the most significant element in the Perfect Hostess paradigm displayed by Olympia.

There are two board members who declined to participate in the interview portion of the present study however they were present during the three documented board meetings and thus require some degree of analysis based on their actions and interactions. While the analysis is very incomplete there are a few conclusions that may be drawn from the analysis of the notes made of the meetings. Isaac Anderson is an African-American board member who was observed asking quite a few questions (twenty percent) along with additional comments (sixteen percent) during the meetings. Isaac tended to focus the majority of his questions and comments to specific areas of interest such as the discussion on technology. He had a significant encounter with Will

Randolph which caused the board to delay a decision awarding a contract to a specific technology vendor. While Isaac was vocal in some portions he became fairly quiet during topics or discussions where he seemed to have little interest or expertise. Olympia suggested, "Isaac is always on purchasing and, and um energy management, so if there is anything on that he is going to ask a lot of questions…" (Landry interview, 2003). Olympia was clearly correct based on the data collected at the November 2003, December 2003 and the January 2004 board meetings. While Isaac is a very involved and active board member, the other non-participant, Arthur Ames, is practically inactive. There is very little to be written regarding Arthur as he is apparently uninvolved in the questions and comments that occurred during the documented board meetings. His only source of action was to vote at the appointed times and since every vote was unanimous it is difficult to measure the effect Arthur has as a board member as he was rather static in nature and provided little insight regarding his motives.

The interactions between the board meetings are defined by their behavior and ultimately the motives that drive their actions. Clearly, each of the characters has at least one deeply personal motive which ranges from benign to near malignant. The interactions between the board members on the dais, in a very public meeting, provide one dimension of insight opening one of the doors to understanding and eventually learning the motives that drive them, or as Dr. Ivory stated, "You have to know where they are coming from to understand them" (Ivory interview, 2003). Thus we have reached the conclusion of this portion of Act IV with the schema emerging from the analysis the only significant contribution left to explore.

Each board member in the present study has an observable orientation to the community or constituency who played a part in bringing them to office as well as an intrinsic motive or set of motives that pushed them toward board membership. The constituency serves to recruit the prospective board member and it would appear from this study and the review of the literature the practice of recruitment is alive and well in the community of Suburbia ISD. Each of the participants clearly identified the individuals or groups acting to recruit or draft the individual into board service. Olympia Landry was appointed, Leann Abbott and Lynne Lender were strongly encouraged by their colleagues in the district classrooms, Henry Elkins was pushed toward service by the members of the church he attended and Arvin, the board member with the lengthiest tenure, was practically placed in office by a few powerful and well-meaning members of the community that sought improvement in the schools. Since each member was recruited they each then have a constituency which they have some degree of accountability toward as they go about the business of the board. It is not the business of the present study to examine this relationship, and perhaps others will explore this topic in future research, however it must be noted that an observable and perhaps measurable relationship must exist.

<center>Scene x: Stock characters</center>

A convention of the theatre is the stock character or a role played by an actor that is quickly recognized. Stock characters often represent social types with critical attributes that audiences understand and often identify with as they portray their roles. Stock characters often include crotchety old men, wide-eyed innocent girls,

<center>293</center>

rambunctious lads, and the like and today they are often seen in television situation comedies. However, the concept of the stock character can easily be traced to the early days of the Renaissance and as far back as Ancient Greece. The Commedia dell'Arte is most often identified as expanding the concept of the stock character. Each character in the Commedia has specific and easily recognized attributes and predictable behavior that affects the outcome of the presentation. The convention is easily transferred to the present study through a framework of analysis.

A framework designed to explore and illustrate the relationship between the orientation of the board member and the sources of motivation was introduced in Act III. Understanding the orientation and motivation of the board member will better allow the superintendent to predict behavior on and off the dais. This portion of the analysis examines the perceived community orientation as well as the internal and external sources of motivation for each participant. The analysis will define each quadrant of the schema and then construct an argument for the location of each member.

Table 4.11: *Analytical framework illustrating dimensions of orientation and sources of motivation and role identification*

Politicians: Low Community-orientation High Self-orientation High External Motivation	Representatives: High Community Orientation High Self-orientation High External and Internal Motivation
Statics: Low Community-orientation Low Self-orientation Low External and Internal Motivation	Difference-Makers: High Community Orientation Low Self-orientation High Internal Motivation

The community orientation dimension of the schema illustrates the participant's awareness of the expectations of the community and assesses the role the community plays in the board member's decision to seek or retain their seat. Individuals with a high community orientation are keenly aware of the members of the community and they consider this understanding as they go about their work as a board member. Individuals with low community orientation may be aware of the needs of the community but they put their desires first and the community second. The sources of motivation include external as well as internal sources. External sources of motivation include the pressure applied by individuals that play a direct role in recruiting the board member for service. The Triarchic Theory advanced by Cavalier (2000) will be utilized to assess the level of internal motivation for the present study. Cavalier posits the mind possesses three interdependent systems of motivation which initiate direct and sustain human behavior over time. The model has three elements: Formative (FMS), Operational (OMS), and The Thematic Motivation System (TMS) which provides a tool to assess the sources of motivation for the school board member. The TMS is subdivided into three categories: Ego Gratification, Self Actuation, and Altruism. Individuals with a high degree of Ego Gratification have a significant self orientation and the pursuit of personal power is the primary source of motivation. Individuals with a high degree of Self Actuation are not particularly interested in power or fame nor do they see their first purpose as assisting others. Individuals with a high degree of Altruism believe life was not meant to live for the self but for others, and the true meaning of life can only be found in this giving relationship to other people. Thus the use of the framework will allow the placement of

295

each participant into a specific quadrant. The quadrants are labeled Statics, Difference-Makers, Politicians and Representative. Statics participate with the board on a very limited basis. They typically have a low community orientation, a low self-orientation, and low external and internal sources of motivation. It is difficult to assign or measure the TMS factors and how they play a role for the Static Board Member. Difference-Makers have a high degree of community orientation, low self-orientation, and high internal motivation. Their sources of external motivation exist and may have played a role in motivating the board member initially, but the sources have diminished over time. Difference-Makers appear to exist in the Altruism dimension of the TMS. Politicians have a low degree of community orientation, a high self orientation and high external motivation. The sources of internal motivation do exist, but the Politician board member's primary focus is external in nature. Politicians exhibit a high degree of Ego Gratification and display power seeking behavior. Representatives have a high degree of community orientation, a high degree of self orientation, as well as high external and internal sources of motivation. They exist in the Self Actuation dimension of the TMS. Now the quadrants of the framework have been defined and the next task is to place the study participants.

Statics

The present study must rely on the analysis of the three school board meetings, November 20, 2003, December 18, 2003 and January 15, 2004 to identify an individual playing the role of the Static character on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. Trustee Ames is the only board member who seems to fit the criteria for the Static however the

296

analysis is very limited. Static observable behavior is a very definite absence of behavior or interaction during the board meetings. The analysis of the notes made from the three documented meetings indicates Trustee Ames had limited participation with only four percent of the noted interactions. In addition, Superintendent Ivory and the other board members made very limited comments about him. Statics take up space and appear to have limited interest in the proceedings as well as the outcomes of any actions taken by the board. Statics such as Trustee Ames often defy understanding as they reveal very little of their history and it is highly likely they would decline participating in any activity that may expose any portion of their persona. Predicting the behavior of the Static is difficult if not impossible. It is unclear why an individual with a Static role would run for any political office and how they conceive their role on the dais. Perhaps the Static plays a role dictated by another, but this is just conjecture.

Arvin Lawn may appear to play the role of the Static and seems to reside on the border of this quadrant. His participation in the three public meetings was fairly limited with only five percent of the documented interactions. However, Arvin has reached the end of his school board career after eighteen years and while his behavior suggests Static, the analysis of his texts suggests he more accurately plays a Difference-Maker role.

Difference-Makers

There appear to be two individuals who play the role of the Difference-Maker character on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. Difference-Makers have a measurable

desire to participate in their community and appear to be very altruistic; living to help others.

When Arvin Lawn, The Harmonizer, was physically and mentally more active and mentally alert, he was an active participant in the discourse occurring on and off the board dais however, time has taken a toll and he has retreated from active service in the last few years. Arvin defines his life with the Caring, Sharing, Serving philosophy. His background of poverty coupled with an early and acute awareness of the help he and his family received from the community clearly influenced his chosen vocation and his desire to participate as a board member. Arvin is a very self-effacing board member and tends to discount his status. "Yeah, well I think that I am absolutely the poorest guy that ever served on this board. I really mean that" (Lawn interview, 2003). Arvin sees his role on the board as one of service to the community and his role as a board member created an avenue to build upon earlier opportunities.

RICK

You talked about the circumstances that led you to the board and that there were some people that came to you and said we would like you to be on the board. I think we have kind of explored that enough and how you got there, but why did you stay on all those years?

ARVIN

Because I loved it. I really did. It was a continuation, you know I can't coach little league anymore and all those things are kind of behind me you might say. They asked me to serve on church council this year and I didn't want to because I'm getting off the board and because of the stroke and don't want to replace it with another board. So I'm not saying it's behind me it's just that some things wouldn't make sense for me anymore

for me to who is now 63 years old be to coaching little league, y'know. So the reason I stayed on is I realized that all these other activities that I had been involved with had kind of are kind of behind me now. I can't really go back teaching or coaching little league. And this is a wonderful opportunity to continue caring, sharing and serving. (Lawn interview, 2003)

Clearly Arvin has a strong desire to participate in the community and is aware of his role as a school board member. His orientation toward aggrandizing behavior is practically non-existent and he has a strong internal motive which appears to be altruistic in nature.

The second Difference-Maker character had a similar start in life with Arvin as she came from poor roots. "I didn't realize, I know I didn't realize how poor I was until I started school…I was labeled because we were poor basically with the poorer families because basically who I grew up with" (Landry interview, 2003). Olympia Landry, the Perfect Hostess, a person who is keenly aware of the effect of her personal history, the people in her past and the power they provided her as she overcame each obstacle thrown into her path has a strong, observable desire to contribute to her chosen community. Olympia demonstrated her ability to lead during the documented board meetings as well as her desire to ensure all board members were included or at the very least invited to participate in the dialogue. Olympia has a desire to serve as a mentor to others in the community and takes action to bring this about with younger or recent additions to the Suburbia district. A high degree of community awareness is evident in all the organizations Olympia has been a part of in the past ten years as she has served in various capacities in many community groups.

…the year before I think I had been chair of the chamber, president of the chamber and I had always been very involved with the chamber… I was involved with PTA quite a bit at middle school and high school I had gotten into the freshman PTA group…I am involved with a women's council for homebuilders and we do a lot of service, community service… We do give a lot to Safe Place. So we have to work the concession stand for Parade of Homes…. (Landry interview, 2003)

While Olympia is involved with a variety of different groups which suggests a high degree of community awareness, she intentionally maintains a very low profile.

I don't want attention. I don't want – I don't do any of this for attention. I would rather be just behind the scenes I have always been behind the scenes… that's how I do things. I don't get out in your face I normally get not behind the scenes but at least as quite as possible. I don't want to draw attention to myself…its not that I am doing it to get the attention. Y'know like some people I knew grew up with parents, disinterested parents or very poor and they do it because they want the attention. (Landry interview, 2003)

Clearly Olympia has a strong desire to deflect attention to others and the behavior was observed during the documented board meetings. The third criteria included in the Difference-Maker quadrant, a high degree of internal motivation is evident in the language Olympia uses to describes her desire to be a school board member.

I just felt like there was a purpose, there was a reason for me to be put in this position and it was such a strong revelation or question or whatever that it was just so strong in my life that I felt like this is where I needed to go… I have a lot of empathy and a lot of (*pause*) I guess concern for children that, that are um not necessarily poor children, but children that are kind of looked over. (Landry interview, 2003)

300

The desire to serve emanates from an internal source and suggests a strong degree of altruism is a key element in Olympia's motivation to serve. All of these elements; a strong orientation to the community, a desire to deflect attention, and a high degree of internal motivation all point to the conclusion that Olympia should be categorized as a Difference-Maker.

Politicians

The only individual that appears to meet the criteria established for the role of the Politician character is Dr. Leann Abbott. The first criterion examines the degree of community awareness and while Leann understands she must have some community support to maintain her office, she is very strategic in courting the community. Her path to the board was supported by a small and powerful group that arguably did not represent the broader viewpoint of the community.

> We had a team of people that worked very hard. I belong to a mom's
> group at a local church, Mothers of Munchkins, when like the children
> were born I was very involved with socially um we would meet once a
> month and we would also do a lot of social things, play dates and all this
> other stuff. And they were mainly college educated professional that were
> choosing to stay home with their kids…So, very intelligent women, who
> y'know when I asked for help, they were more than willing to help so we
> had, we partitioned out for instance the names of e-mail addresses, you
> could figure out people's e-mail address by their name, you would put
> their name @ middle school and I wanted to send an e-mail to every
> employee explaining who I was and why I was doing this. But I didn't
> want to do it through the school district. I knew I couldn't ask my friends

to forward these kinds of things that worked for the district. (Abbott interview, 2003)

Leann used her influence with her small circle of friends of the community and accessed the teachers who lived within the boundaries of Suburbia ISD via the district's email system. She knew she would appeal to this group having recently come from their ranks. Teachers in Suburbia are a powerful voting block and could easily affect the outcome of the election. Leann used the knowledge she had gained by working on other campaigns by utilizing another tested political strategy to influence the results of the election.

> Well I targeted people who, I had records of people who voted in the election the year before, um and um (*pause*) I also um targeted people generally on the west side, I mean on the east side of the highway, and old town Suburbia, cause that's where the votes are. Um y'know even with all the work that I did on the other side of the highway, the turnout was just abysmal and um y'know that's just unfortunate but it's true. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The political awareness of the community displayed by Leann is not indicative of her orientation to the community. Leann used a small, focused, politically active group of people to usher her into office as she knew the typical turnout for school board elections is measurably small compared to the overall population. A low degree of community orientation is one criterion used to identify a politician. The second criterion is the orientation the board member has to her own agenda.

The individuals who fit into the politician quadrant have a high degree of self orientation and this is typically found in the agenda they advance through their work on

302

the board. One measure of this criterion is the desire the board member has to pursue political office beyond the school board. Leann discussed this desire during the creation of her text. "My husband, very supportive um, y'know, has always encouraged me to run for the school board and any other political aspirations that I have…" (Abbott interview, 2003). Another measure exists in the language used by the board member as they describe their role in the community as well as their perceptions of board service. Leann clearly sees her role and the work of the board as an overtly political activity. "If you don't like it, you don't belong in politics. I mean, no one's going to have everyone agree with them all of the time and if that makes you uncomfortable then don't run for political office… As far as politics, y'know, I guess, a politician or y'know looking at those kind of ideas guide me as far as wanting to be a board member" (Abbott interview, 2003). Playing the role of the politician also requires a high degree of external motivation.

The external motivation criterion examines the effect of constituencies and how they inform the role played by the board member. Leann understands the constituencies extant in the community and as was stated earlier plays to those groups she knows will show-up on Election Day and have ability to influence other potential voters. Her motivation to seek and retain office in this context emanates from the individuals who recruited her to play the role and she often checks in with them regarding her performance on the dais.

The role of the Politician is complex as there are multiple dimensions that contribute to the development of the character. Politicians have a strong desire for

power and ego gratification and they will display power seeking behavior such as merging their constituencies and consolidating their power base. They operate and view the special world in a political context and thus behave in a like manner. The ability to predict the behavior of the Politician requires careful observation and knowledge of the individuals who recruited and support the board member in their work as the Politician is very likely to defer to her well defined and strategic constituency. While the Politician is extremely focused on their personal agenda the Representative tends to focus on the agenda of a specific group or a coalition of groups.

Representatives

The Representative stock character exists to act and speak for a group or a combination of groups aligned to a common goal or purpose. The Representative character has a high degree of community awareness, a high degree of self orientation as well as a high degree of external and internal motivation. Self-actuation in the TMS framework partially informs the Representative character as the Representative is interested in completion of goals. The present study is able to identify two Representatives based on the analysis; Lynne Lender, the Self-Proclaimed Expert, and Henry Elkins, the Co-Opted Trailblazer.

A career educator with over twenty years of service, a self-proclaimed expert believing she has acute awareness of the needs of the community, a fairly large ego and orientation focused on the self as well strong sources of external and internal motivation describes Lynne Lender. Educators employed by the district are the primary group Lynne represents and she has strong ties to the group having been a classroom teacher in

304

service to the district for over twenty years. The identified constituency contributed to her initial decision to seek board membership. Lynne recounted the conversation when she was pushed toward board membership by two colleagues an assistant principal and a teacher assigned to Suburbia High School.

> I happened to be at SHS talking to Irene and Elaine and um I said y'know
> it's too bad, I wish I could have run because I thought all this stuff with
> Arvin and Oakley happened in June so I thought it was over with and
> they said No, it's not over with yet, so on the very, in fact they hadn't
> even opened um the election, y'know, filing for the election, so I went
> and filed the very first minute. (Lender interview, 2003)

Before seeking a seat on the board Lynne played a role on district committees. "...one of the biggest things I really did was to be on the um insurance committee when we were self insured…I always felt that I was elected to represent a certain group and I always wanted to be sure that group was protected" (Lender interview, 2003). Clearly Lynne understands her constituency and plays to the group during board meetings having been observed in multiple conversations with SISD educators before, during called breaks and at the conclusion of board meetings. Lynne has an observed desire to serve her constituency and this combined with her self-actuating behavior and language reveals strong personal motives for board membership.

Representatives are similar to Politicians as both stock characters appear to have a strong self-orientation which is revealed by their behavior and language. Both characters have a strong need to identify what board service will do for them. Lynne seems to get some sense of pleasure from serving on the board and this reinforces her

305

desire to remain on the board; board service in this case fills a need for acceptance which was identified as a significant theme in her character analysis.

The other trustee playing the role of the Representative is Henry Elkins who came to the board representing the members of his church and the constituency of color in the district. His orientation to the community is high as he believes his board service is a calling. Two significant events occurred in his community which contributed to his eventual decision to seek board membership. First was his participation with the Million Man March and second was the perceived response from the superintendent when the church group attended a Suburbia ISD board meeting.

> I would say two things, uh the first (*pause*) and I can't recall which came first and which came second, but one for sure was the Million Man March. There was something about that event y'know that said hey you can do more. You can do more and (*pause*) so that was a calling uh to come back home … and try to have an impact on their community and so it just so happened that was a very significant event. And then I think secondly um y'know coming to the district uh to one of the board meetings and kind of being addressed as insignificant y'know members of the community when we arrived. Trying to be active participants in the process so uh and I think it was just the tone that we received from the superintendent at that time that this also probably sealed the event y'know if that was the second event then that night kind of sealed that event. (Elkins interview, 2004)

The events reactivated a deep seated need to serve the community that initially emerged when Henry was a child and during his teenage years, but seemingly had lain dormant

during his early adult years. As a child Henry was called to serve as a classroom monitor.

> And we talked about what Ms. Johnson did to us, I mean did with us, I mean because at times she would leave the weakest person in class in charge and so therefore those of us that were dominant would always run over that person. And the person wouldn't write our name down or turn us in or anything. But what she started doing is started leaving some of us that were so-called leaders in the class in charge and you had a dilemma. Do you know what I am saying? You could let your friend act the fool and not write his name down, she caused a few fights, well it caused a few fights because some of us y'know wrote that kid's name down and turned him in and it was y'know that was new to us because at first it was snitching, y'know but it was also as we start thinking about it, it was the start of being held accountable. As leaders also, do you know what I mean? And she picked y'know certain ones out y'know and I was one of the ones that she picked out all the time. I got beat up a couple of times but you know I kept turning the guys names in and that was about the 4th grade. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Then, in high school Henry found himself serving in a leadership capacity as the community addressed the issues associated with racial diversity.

> I was the president at that time and uh, uh (pause) in the 10th grade I became the first sophomore in the history of that school to be the president of the African-American Heritage Club…I can remember the most significant event of my tenure was uh during Black History Month, the put is in an AV room and then they had a Country Western band in the gym. That shit didn't go over well, man! I mean I was militant at that time and I knew I had enough militant Black men also to really raise some hell… I remember organizing all the African-American students

> and we did not go to class. We would come to the uh school and sit out
>
> in the courtyard. We would not go to class. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Acknowledging the influence of the community is a criterion associated with the role of

the Representative and Henry clearly has a strong orientation toward serving the

community which reemerged as he came to the decision to seek and retain board

membership.

A strong sense of self orientation is realized in the agenda Henry seeks to

advance in his work as a board member. The desire to ensure racial diversity "…when I

first was elected. I said to them, I said, hey, I've come to offer you guys some color to

the board…to offer some diversity and just to see what the hell was going on in the

school district" coupled with what appears to be a need to seek future political office "I

have thought about precinct one at the county commissioner's…" (Elkins interview,

2004) appears to define this aspect of Henry's role as a Representative.

The third element, motivation, contains two dimensions, internal and external

and Henry playing the role of the Representative has a strong internal and external

motivation. The internal motivation is grounded in his desire to overcome the obstacles

encountered because of his race.

> But once I realized that I can even from my background from all Black
>
> background and not liking white people and I mean hey still being able to
>
> kind of weave through the process in a in really in an unscathed manner.
>
> Not really offending a lot of people but also bringing a lot of the people
>
> to a side where they may understand me. (Elkins interview, 2003)

The external motivation is also associated with race and is realized in the push that came

from the members of the African-American community as Henry weighed his options

before filing as a candidate for the board. Henry spoke quite extensively about the members of his church and the committee they formed, The Friends of Suburbia, which was designed to interject their agenda into the community through membership on the school board and other local political offices. Clearly this group recruited Henry and served as a strong force pushing him toward board membership.

The Representatives, Lynne and Henry, bring their agendas grounded in the community to their work as board members. They have a strong sense of self coupled with a high degree of internal and external motivation. Maintaining the equilibrium of the elements is paramount for Representatives as they could easily slip into the role of the Politician if the individuals or groups become the sole source of motivation and their desire to serve the community transforms into a desire to achieve their personal goals.

All four stock characters, Statics, Difference-Makers, Politicians, and Representatives play important roles on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. The interplay on the public dais may be observed during the monthly board meetings. However, the behind the scenes behavior is shielded from the view of the public intentionally, and that is a subject for future research.

Scene xi: Responding to the research questions

Act I of the study tendered two questions designed to inform and guide the research. While the questions have been explored in a circuitous manner clearly there is a need to address the questions in a more direct manner. Hence, the final scene of Act IV is presented to fulfill the promise presented at the beginning of the act. The first research question provides the impetus to seek out and understand the motives for board

309

membership and the second question addresses the view of board membership from the view of the superintendent.

1. **What motivates individuals to seek membership on a local board of education?**

The question is deceptively complex as the findings that emerged from the analysis pointed to internal motives tempered with external forces. Each board member cited specific personal reasons that contributed to their decision to seek board membership. Olympia, Lynne, Leann, Henry, and Arvin all mentioned the desire to be able to play a significant role for their children in their school experience. Board membership provides an avenue of influence for parents willing to seek the office and not available to all and each of the board members clearly understood their membership on the board was advantageous for their children. A second prevalent motive is power. Each of the board members either was overt or covert regarding the dimension of power and how it contributed to their decision to seek a seat on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. Leann, the Politician, demonstrated a strong need for power over others in the district as she had a score to settle with the superintendent and saw a seat on the board as a means to her desired outcome. The initial motivation for board membership for Henry emanated from his association with a church group and their desire to effect change in the community. The group perceived the leadership in the district as racist and realized they would have to use power within the system. Henry acting as the leader of the group confronted the superintendent and discovered their suspicions were accurate. Lynne was less overt in her power discussion however she did see leadership as a power

310

position in the school system. Lynne sought to achieve power positions as a Suburbia

ISD employee and believed a seat on the board would be an ultimate power position in

the district. Olympia and Arvin danced around the power dimension during the creation

of their texts. They both seemed to understand the position carries an element of power

however they appeared to eschew the idea of using power as a tool in their work as a

board member. While the internal motives for board membership are interesting and

important in terms of a tool to predict behavior, understanding the external forces

pushing or pulling board members to the dais are critical to understanding the stock

character type.

Each of the board members pointed to others as having played a significant role

in their decision to seek board membership; all of the board members were recruited to

their seats by members in the community. The path to the board included influence by

friends or associates in the community. The recruitment literature suggests the primary

influence contributing to a decision to seek a political seat is external and individuals

within the organization recruit community members with similar beliefs and values to

pursue political office. (e.g. Dahl, 1961; Prewitt, 1970) However, the recruitment

process discussed by the board members in the present study included influence from

current and past board members as well as individuals existing outside of the confines of

board membership. Olympia discussed her entrance to the board as being closed as she

was sought to fill a vacant seat and to provide a perception of diversity. Lynne was

pressed into seeking board membership by the group she serves as a Representative.

Leann, the Politician, and arguably the board member with the strongest internal motive

was recruited by an employee with a strong desire to advance within the organization. Henry was recruited by the members of his church much like Arvin who was guided to his seat by influential community members. However, Henry, a Representative, understands and caters to the group he serves in the community and Arvin has transcended this behavior either through time or his inability to recognize the manipulators who steered him toward his seat.

In conclusion, the motives for board membership are internal and personal however the trigger pushing the board member comes from the process of recruitment. The recruiters clearly have motives of their own and seek to influence the outcomes undertaken by the board either for personal or public gain. Therefore, understanding who the individuals existing in the backstage area of each board member is an important dimension leading to a clear insight into the stock character played by the board member.

2. **Do patterns of behavior or roles exhibited by school board members as described by superintendents, reveal the motives contributing to the desire to seek election and remain on the school board?**

Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used in the present study to set the stage for the creation of the text by the superintendent, Dr. Adele Ivory. The incident discussed by Dr. Ivory occurred in the middle of her tenure and focused on a very public event that split the board over the selection of officers. The superintendent veered off occasionally and discussed the behavior of board members who joined the group after the incident occurred and the deviation allowed the researcher to better understand the

312

point of view presented by the superintendent. Dr. Ivory seemed to have a strong desire to develop an understanding of each board member.

RICK

So understanding their motivation helps you in terms of your work with the board?

ADELE

Um, um. It really does because sometimes I'll know from whence they are coming…. (Ivory interview, 2003)

From the beginning of her tenure, Dr. Ivory made a conscious decision to keep the board focused on school business as she understood the risks involved if the board turned inward. "Keep, keep it, try to keep it focused on business and not personalities, because the personalities will destroy it" (Ivory interview, 2003). Her strategy emerged from her philosophy of knowing where they are coming from as the members define themselves through their work on the board.

The discussion regarding the second research question seems to point to a complementary area for inquiry. Is it important for the superintendent to understand the motives that impel and propel a member of the community to seek board membership? Clearly, Dr. Ivory believes there is a need for the superintendent to understand the sources of motivation and the nexus between the internal motives and the external forces. Clearly, a portion of her success as a superintendent is tied to this belief and serves as a foundation for her work with the board.

Scene xii: Summary of the act

The analysis of the data has been presented in Act IV. The act began with a brief introduction which included a recapitulation of the research questions. An analysis of the special world of Suburbia ISD and the community was explored and findings advanced. The next part of the act presented a detailed character analysis of each of the primary players and findings that illustrated the motives for board membership. The act then turned to an analysis of behavioral data taken from three board meetings labeled the play. The analysis transitioned to the introduction of the theory of stock characters which included a matrix illustrating four character types. The character types were then linked to the board members participating in the study. The final scene was a brief review and analysis of the research questions.

Act V, the closing, will present a brief discussion regarding the motives for and discoveries that emanated from the study. The act will articulate the limitations of the study and applications of the research. The chapter will close with a discussion regarding directions for future research.

ACT V

THE CLOSING

- **"Men [and women] act upon the world, change it, and are again changed by the consequences of their actions." – Steinar Kvale**

- **"That's all I have to say about that." – Forrest Gump**

Having come this far, we have now reached the beginning of the end, or the final act in this analysis posing as a quasi-scientific study. The last act of any play serves to bring all the loose ends of the script together, answer any remaining questions that may have emerged during the previous acts, and obviously enough lead to the curtain call, the igniting of the house lights and the predictable criticism from professionals who publish their opinions to the amateur who may remark, "Well, that was interesting" to their friends when asked about the event. Perhaps the same may be true for this work as some may read it and provide a professional opinion regarding the quality of the project while others will glance at it questioningly and simply dismiss it as an overly long treatise with little or no value, unless they have a shared interest and desire to better understand the inner workings of the individuals who find themselves on school boards.

The final few pages contained in this act will begin with a brief analysis of the purpose of the study and attempt to answer why the research was conducted in light of the agenda of research on school boards. The analysis of the purpose will transcend to a discussion of theory emerging from the research, which will lead to an analysis of the limitations of the research. The fourth scene will provide the reader with a discussion on the applications of the research in and out of the realm of the context of the school board

and the public education model. Finally, the fifth and final scene will serve up a discussion of future research that should follow in the agenda of school board inquiry, and the curtain will descend, thankfully.

Scene i: Revisiting the purpose of the study

A few hundred pages back and three years ago the purpose of the research was described and having come all this way and nearing the end of this portion of the journey it seems fitting to take a moment to reflect on why the research was produced before concluding this final act. The purpose of the research initially stated on page four of the present study was, "In this research, I seek to understand why citizens actively seek and work to retain membership on local boards of education in suburban communities and how the motives of the elected or appointed board members affect the work performed by the group." The quest for meaning is inherent in the inquiry along with a desire to bring predictability to the work of a school board, which in the best of all possible worlds works as a corporate body. However, the reality is the school board is a loose confederation of individuals with a variety of agendas many of which oppose each other and muddy the waters of the work they advertise as their purpose. Certainly in education the phrase, "We're doing it for the kids" is often overused and frequently abused as any manner of decisions effecting students is prefaced with this remark. Public education is the grand territory of social experimentation and hopefully the older generation seeks to bring some degree of improvement to the educational system for the generation that follows. However, it would seem the desire to replicate what is

comfortable serves as a significant determinant in what may be propagated as one generation overtakes another and assumes the mantle of leadership.

While it is acknowledged in the literature review of the present study that board members reasons to seek membership are varied and personal, the motivation to conduct the research is cut from the same cloth. The genesis of the present research reaches back to my childhood and an incident where one of my mother's brothers did a particularly heinous and noteworthy act. My mother was talking with my father about the deed and I recall asking my mother why Uncle Tommy did what he did. This simple query has led to a lifelong interest in motivation and why people do what they do. Perhaps this is what drew me to the theatre and provided a rather safe place to explore the motives contributing to the portrayal of a character which eventually led to designing and directing productions. Later in my career when I became a school principal I had the opportunity to observe the political tinkering that existed on the school committee. The Texas Legislature in their infinite wisdom passed legislation creating Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) committees at every public school in the state. These committees consisting of teachers, parents, and other community members often emerge as a powerful political force driving the direction of the school. My role in this instance was two-fold. First, to understand the members of the committee and the agendas they brought to the committee, and second, to bring focus and purpose to the work of the committee. This was done through the development of a shared vision and mission statements which lead to the creation of a campus action plan designed to achieve specific goals and objectives. My initial foray into the nexus of motivation and schools

317

was an investigation of the phenomenon of the SBDM team psychology and the genesis of the movement which lead to the legislative action taken by Texas lawmakers. The completion of this initial project was morphed through discussion with professors and colleagues and transformed into the present study. Thus, the motivation for the study is part of my personal narrative which took shape as a life-long desire to understand the motives underpinning the observable behavior displayed in the public and private spaces. The link between personal discovery and career choice clearly provided the backdrop for the study and the eventual development of the statement of purpose. The early stages of the literature review pointed toward this small piece of seemingly undiscovered territory and beckoned this traveler to journey through the terrain.

While the geography of school board research was found to be lacking in the specific topography examining the motives for membership there was a significant literature examining the outcomes produced by the work of the school board and the analysis of the literature suggested the existence of a space and a need for the research contained in the present study. An aim of much research to increase the understanding of the phenomena associated with the scope of the analysis which may lead to the development of theory. Theory in this instance is used to illustrate two significant findings emerging from the study.

<center>Scene ii: Theory emerging from the research</center>

Kurt Lewin is most often credited with the quote, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory" and two theories which will bring a sense of practicality to the present study emerged during the analysis. The first is labeled stock character theory and the

<center>318</center>

second inner/outer circle theory. The remainder of this scene will be dedicated to the explanation of each theory and argument of their existence.

Stock Character Theory

The analysis presented in Act IV suggested the existence of theory to explain the perceived character types present on the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees. Stock character theory presupposes the existence of character types who are pushed or pulled toward school board membership. Critical attributes of Role theory and Social Learning Theory contribute to the stock character construct.

Role theory posits people spend their majority of their time in group settings and they strive to distinguish themselves through their behavior. Thus they create roles and perform functions within the group displayed as behaviors which are molded through the expectations of the group. The group seeks to normalize the behavior of the individual and since most people are conformists they will play the role assigned by the group. The learned role is strengthened through a system of rewards and punishments.

The dimensions of Role Theory are enhanced through Social Learning Theory, a line of research advanced by Bandura (1977) who posited people learn from one another in the social context and the learning may or may not result in a visible change in behavior. Social Learning Theory differs from Role Theory as it is considered to a cognitive model as opposed to a behaviorist approach. Bandura suggested the existence of three variables that influence learning in the social context; the person, behavior and the environment. He theorized people are reinforced by modeling the behavior of others. This is what causes individuals to adopt appearance and behavior roles in the

319

social context. The observer in this model observes others in the social context and seeks to conform to the expectations of the observed, the behaviors of others, or the environment. When the learning takes the shape of behavior, this is often reinforced by one or more of the three variables that influence the outcome.

The stock character in the context of the theatre exists to perform a specific and necessary role which is designed to move the story forward. Some roles are comic while others are dramatic in their nature. It is the interplay of these roles which emerge from the text and are performed by actors that cause the action of the play. Stock character theory posits certain character types are recruited to board participation and these individuals fulfill the expectations of the other members of the board, the superintendent, and the individuals who recruited the board member for service and to some extent the broader community. The influence of each factor will vary dependant on the critical attributes of the stock character. The present study identified and elaborated on four distinct character types in Act IV: Statics, Difference-Makers, Politicians, and Representatives. Each character type appears to display influences that take the form of internal and external sources of motivation. The stock character model suggests the need of varying character types to play specific roles on the board just as Role Theory posits as people enter into group settings they adopt specific behaviors which are molded by the rewards and punishments meted out by the group.

The act of recruitment clearly represents a factor in stock character theory as all school board members are recruited to their positions. The source of recruitment can come from the board, the superintendent, influential community members, or the

320

community as a whole. Each board member in the present study discussed recruitment and how this action contributed to their decision to seek board membership.

Inner and outer circle theory

Tuckman (1965) introduced the Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing (FSNP) framework as a result of his analysis of the human relations and group dynamics literature. He drew his conclusions from literature produced by visionaries such as Bennis, Piaget, Schutz and Taylor. The FSNP framework was later expanded to include a fifth dimension; Adjourning. However the FSNP acronym is easily recognized and will be used during this discussion of inner and outer circle theory. I will begin with a brief discussion of the critical attributes of the theory, and explicate the connection with the School Board Member Participants (SBMP).

The inner and outer circle theory is grounded in the observation that groups such as school boards are legally required to conduct elections for members and incumbents either withdraw or are defeated by another candidate. There are also occasions when sitting school board members resign their seats before they complete their term of service and a new board member is appointed. In any event, the school board undergoes a change in membership by design. New members join the group with limited understanding of the group norms and typically have an agenda constructed from their beliefs, or one handed to them by the individual or group who recruited them to service. However the agenda of the new school board member is most often constructed through a combination of internal and external sources. New board members typically exist in the outer circle of the group however they may be joined by veteran board members who

are rejected by the members of the inner circle. The behavior of the members of the inner circle is characterized by two actions. First, they seek to normalize the members of the outer circle and are often successful if the member of the outer circle has a desire to join the inner circle. This movement can cause the board member moving from the outer circle to the inner circle to modify their agenda as they either become integrated or co-opted. Second, they reject the new school board member and relegate them to a term on the outer circle. The behavior of the members of the inner circle is often in conflict to the behavior of the members of the outer circle. The behavior of the members of the outer circle takes two forms. First, they may seek to move closer to the inner circle by normalizing their behavior and adopting the agenda of the inner circle. Second, they may seek to change the inner circle by challenging their beliefs and thinking and attempt to abrogate the inner circle agenda. In any event, tension and conflict may exist between the two spheres and the superintendent seeks to maintain the stasis or resolve conflict that erupts through overt or covert means. This inner and outer circle construct was discussed by each SMBP as they constructed their text related to the work they perform.

Olympia, the only appointed member, discussed her entrance to the board in terms of who was in power and her role.

> It was (*pause*) when Pat Osnebee called me and said that the board was
> thinking about or wanted to talk to me and had wanted me to replace Tad
> because Tad was going to resign…I just thought this is a great
> opportunity for a woman to step forward and – and to be – or to be
> appointed and that it would be good for the community. I just felt like
> that I had a different perspective then what they [inner circle] did and I

322

didn't want them to treat me like I was a secretary. I mean the first thing,

I walked into Odell Oswald and said, "And I'm not your secretary."

(Landry interview, 2003)

Olympia perceived the inner circle members of the board would seek to marginalize her

by placing her in the role of a secretary, a traditional woman's role, and she took action

to overcome this perception by confronting Oswald, a member of the inner circle.

Olympia asserted her role as an equal partner and eventually moved to the inner circle

and served several terms as the president of the board before relinquishing her seat.

Lynne provides a contrast to Olympia as she and other members of the outer circle

worked to change existing behavior of the inner circle and the superintendent.

I didn't know but Adele [the superintendent] was calling in the officers

[inner circle]…And that they would get a briefing on what was going to

happen. They would have things explained…The rest of us [outer circle]

are trying to figure it out and when I heard that they were having this

meeting it's not illegal, but I mean it pissed me off. Why should they get,

if it's, well they're the officers and they need a little head up. Well if you

need to call them in, then call the rest of us in too! (Lender interview,

2003)

The superintendent, Dr. Ivory recognized the potential for conflict and modified the

existing practice of meeting with the officers by limiting her pre-board meetings to the

president. While Lynne was successful in this small change in behavior she was not

overt in her actions which helped to maintain the equilibrium between the members of

the inner and outer circle. However an overt conflict between the inner and outer circle

emerged when Henry joined the board. He and the members of his constituency brought

about change by openly defying the wishes of the superintendent.

…when I first got elected, there was a teacher called Nancy. Nancy had been here 23 years. Nancy was teaching Special Ed. students uh and she was a rebel, and at the time y'know I was too! …But we had a hearing, she had an opportunity to have her hearing conducted before I got on the board or she had an opportunity to wait until I got on the board. She waited till the very night that I got on the board and that's when we had the hearing…they wanted to fire her, and I said no! And I was the first one to say, no! Is there something that we can work out so this can be a win/win situation. And I know Osnebee said that, that was the first time that the school board had ever went against his recommendation. I said well, hey there is a first time for everything! (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry came to his position on the board with an agenda of change. He and his constituents believed Superintendent Osnebee was a racist and they actively challenged his leadership. Ultimately they were successful as Osnebee retired and Dr. Adele Ivory was hired as the Suburbia ISD superintendent. Henry discussed his perceptions as he moved from the outer circle to the inner circle.

And also it's weird, because with Dr. Ivory I feel more as um a member of the board who's value is been inclusive and worthy, alright. The previous administration um I thought that there was selected board members who only had they were viewed to have value of their opinion. (Elkins interview, 2003)

Henry clearly experienced a change in his perspective as he moved from his role as the activist seeking fundamental change to a supporter of the status quo. Part of the change may be attributed to his position on the board as they sought to replace the superintendent. Having served as a participant in the hiring process helped Henry begin the transition from the outer to inner circle. The ability for the board members to

identify with the inner circle is critical to the long term effectiveness of the superintendent. An experience discussed by Dr. Abbott illustrates what happens when the superintendent rejects the board member at the beginning of her term and attempt to force her to remain in the outer circle.

> …when I found out things that were said by the superintendent to other employees in the district about me, um y'know, in sometimes, when I found out certain things that were being said I personally called the person I was running against and the superintendent and I said I don't know where this is coming from. I'm personally telling you right now that, that is not true….I don't know if the superintendent just didn't (*pause*) I don't know – just seems foolish to think that wouldn't get back to me…And um there was a lot of concern and consternation (*laughs*) on the part of the superintendent and the assistant superintendent as a result of that, the deputy superintendent. Um she [the superintendent] didn't call to congratulate me, she just called to tell me that I had won by five votes but it wasn't final and they were going to do a recount. When I came up there to sign she didn't come out to shake my hand. She sent someone else out there, y'know. So just little things like that, that made it, y'know um well those were little things, bigger things, made it incredibly obvious that I would not have been her choice to be on the board. (Abbott interview, 2003)

The response or lack of response on the part of the superintendent when Leann was elected was the final nail in the coffin and served to define her relationship as a school board member. Leann described the perspective she brings as a school board member. "I think of myself as a watchdog. I think of myself as (*pause*) I continually endeavor to bring a variety of viewpoints that might not be represented adequately in my opinion by

the administration" (Abbott interview, 2003). The effect of being pushed away by the superintendent, a member of the inner circle, when Leann was in the entrance phase of her board service clearly served as a catalyst and contributed to her decision to question the administration at every possible opportunity. While Leann is clearly oppositional in her stance with the administration Arvin adopted a different role that defined his lengthy service on the board.

Eighteen years in the service to the children of the Suburbia ISD as a board member has provided Arvin with multiple perspectives as he has moved from outer circle to inner circle and back to the outer circle on multiple occasions. The initial entry to board service was defined by his desire to bring a more progressive voice to the board.

> The school board at the time was kind of ultra-conservative. Uh, I mean they were, they just, they watched every check that came out of the building…I mean ultra-conservative. I attended a board meeting one night…and one of the teachers said, well, goodness gracious, y'know we need a little bit of money to live on, from the audience…And one school board member said you know don't we have such a thing as probationary, y'know put somebody on probation when we want to, he was angry. And so some people said why don't you run for school board. Well, I don't know anything about the school board. Well you learn. Will Perkins said you can be a harmonizer. I never will forget that and I turned out that I was that harmonizer.... (Lawn interview, 2003)

Arvin recognized the need for change on the school board as he was introduced to the idea of running by moderate members of the community. As Arvin continued with his

service, he learned about the unseemly side of the politics of board membership. This was driven home when a board member publicly resigned his position in protest.

> ...there was a time when one guy disagreed with the rest of the board and resigned...he wanted to be president and um we, when I say we, somebody on the board said, Oakley, why don't you be vice president. And he said if I can't be president then I don't want to be anything. The vote was five to one because I didn't vote. And so nobody wanted him to be president except himself, and he said if I can't be president then I don't want to be anything so he quit...What normal people do when they resign from the board they send a letter to the superintendent...Ingham didn't do that he e-mailed...the Suburbia Sentinel and e-mailed the City Daily News. And I guess that he e-mailed Adele, I guess that is the way he did it. Well, so he kind of broke the routine as far as resignations are concerned. Was it uncomfortable? Initially it was a shocker, it was uncomfortable. (Lawn interview, 2004)

The board members in this case united behind Arvin and voted him in as the president for one term. Clearly, one board member did not agree and decided to appeal to the public via the media apparently with the intention of drawing attention to Arvin and the ineptness on the school board. Through this action, Arvin was catapulted into the inner circle despite the protestations of a former member of the inner circle, Oakley Ingram.

The outer and inner circle structure is clearly evident in the machinations of the Suburbia ISD school board as each member either referred to the construct directly or indirectly. Dr. Ivory, the superintendent seemed to understand the construct and decided to focus the attention of the board members on the work of the school district in an effort to bring them together as a team.

When I interviewed, no, when I interviewed I didn't see any conflict...But
it was immediately apparent to me by some actions of the board members
that there was an extreme rift between the...three or four that would
represent old Suburbia [inner circle] and then one or two on the new
population [outer circle]...I thought now how am I going to rectify and
bring [the board] together...so I talked to every board member um about
their concerns about their issues and...I will just tell you what, there were
a couple of them that just hated each other....the board president probably
sided with one side and um not too many others, there were several who
wanted to stay right in the middle and not act. And then there was the
other side. So, the best thing...is to get their minds on business and I
think that is what I did...We started with the bond issue. I took
groups...to see facilities because we were in dire need. And this is
something they liked, they liked going into schools and on one occasion I
even took two of the counterparts together. (Ivory interview, 2003)

Superintendent Ivory caused the members of the inner and outer circle to focus on the

work of the district which appeared to mitigate the conflict. However this was

somewhat short-lived as the tension resumed as new board members entered the picture.

Scene iii: Limitations of the study

The present study is a river a foot wide and a mile deep and as such contains

limitations both obvious and hidden. The initial limitation is the application of the

research in the broader context of the school board model currently entrenched in the

American educational structure. The findings and theory emerging from the study

suggest there is a need to view school boards through the lens of stock character theory

and the inner/outer circle schema however the present research focused on the deeply

personal text co-constructed by five school board members in an effort to better

understand their motives for board membership. While the construct of stock characters may be found in other school boards this subject was not the primary focus in this study and thus the findings are limited in this context. A second obvious limitation is the qualitative nature of the study which clearly will not resonate with individuals displaying Positivist or Post-Positivist leanings. However, a reaction to the study from this lens is hardly applicable to the study as validity was clearly not identified as a determinant of truth. The research sought to relay a sense of trustworthiness from the texts created by the participants. Who knows their life stories as well the quality and degree of emotion better than the participants? The rich descriptions and co-created text provide an insight not easily found in a study with a quantitative nature. The study does not seek to define truth as truths of this nature are relative to the individual and the context of their knowledge and understanding. Therefore the validity argument is not germane to the study and should be dismissed.

A third limitation is not as visible but must be addressed at this point. The hermeneutic process utilized as one step in the analysis of the text is best used with a large circle of readers. Kvale (1996) suggested the hermeneutical circle may not be adequate to fully illuminate the text if the size of the group is small. In the present study the circle of readers consisted of the researcher, one other person who read all the texts and a few others who read portions of the texts. Certainly the reading and resulting analysis of the text was complete as the process resulted in agreement regarding the motivation for each board member. However, a larger circle of readers would possibly

have enhanced the understanding by creating greater depth through more insight on the meaning of each text.

Despite the limitations, the study did reveal motives for each board member as well as a strategy the superintendent used to bring focus to the work of the board. Clearly the motives for board membership were deeply personal and the phrase "…know from whence they are coming…" uttered by the superintendent is a key understanding. However, the practice of recruitment seems to loom largely as the most important finding in the study, and thus has implications for the next scene; applications of the research.

<div align="center">Scene iv: Applications of the research</div>

The search for meaning coupled with a desire to increase the element of predictability is a goal often driving the production of research and this report would be remiss without a discussion about the potential applications emanating from the study. Certainly there is a direct application of the research for school superintendents as it would appear the most successful practitioners in this group understand the need to develop a rapid yet in-depth understanding of the community and the board of trustees. The evanescent nature of the superintendency has caused the individuals traveling along this career path to develop systems designed to accelerate learning and a tool that has the ability to enhance the understanding of the community as well as the members of the board will resonate with this troupe. Additionally, the research is applicable to a broader spectrum as the governance model common to education may be found in a variety of settings, both public and private.

<div align="center">330</div>

Superintendents entering the lofty level of system-wide leadership for an educational organization may or may not be armed with a variety of tools designed to increase the probability of success. Many of these tools take the shape of templates in an assortment of areas germane to the role. A common template currently found in the toolbox of the superintendent is used to construct a budget to support the goals of the district. Other templates exist in the realms of personnel management as well as the operational and academic territories. However, there seems to be a need for a template designed to accelerate a deep understanding of the board members and the community as a superintendent begins his or her work with the school district. The Special World Analysis Protocol (SWAP) which utilizes the SLEEPEOE model provides a template that will respond to this need. Hayes (2001) suggests, "It goes without saying that a superintendent needs to have an understanding of the school and community" (p. 37). Utilization of the SWAP will accelerate this understanding by providing a template of analysis.

The superintendent (or city manager) joining the community must also understand the agendas the board members bring to their work. Clearly the present research suggests the superintendent must understand the fact that every board member is recruited to their position and their personal history contributes to their decision-making which is a key element of governance. The superintendent who seeks to understand the school board members and learns their history as well as their power base will increase the probability of success during their tenure. Thus the need to take time to understand school board members is paramount for the superintendent. Additionally,

studies in group behavior suggest the need to replicate the practice of board member analysis as each newly elected individual joins the team, which suggests a need to conduct additional research in this area. (Tuckman, 1965; Peck, 1987; Lee & Pai, 2003)

Scene v: Directions for future research

Dissertation protocol and published empirical literature typically provides a discussion focusing on suggested directions for future study and the discussion in this section will offer several paths that will cause the research to expand. There are two likely directions to be traveled if one desires. The first thoroughfare relates to the design and methodology utilized by the study and the second is related to the theories revealed earlier in the present act.

The methodology utilized in the present study was limited to examining a very small and focused segment of the geography related to school board research which took the shape of one school board and their superintendent. Certainly there is a need to replicate the study in urban and rural school districts which will expand the number of participants and provide more data for analysis. The findings from the expanded research could likely be used to construct a broader study. Studies reported in Act II such as the research produced by Garmire (1962) resulted in an analysis which measured motives reported by school board members. Garmire posited citizens became board members because their motives were either community-based, or they were dissatisfied with an individual on the board or a policy promulgated by the board. The present study refutes the finding as board members' motives for membership are clearly nurtured by individuals or groups who recruit the citizen for membership. Perhaps a survey

constructed on the findings of the present study and distributed to a larger audience would reveal the broader perspective of the role of recruitment in the decision-making used by the board member. However there is much work that must be done in advance of a project with this scope.

The other direction for future research is to investigate the theory emerging from the present study. Stock character theory should be explored with the intent of identifying additional characters as well as validating the current character matrix. The inner and outer circle theory also requires additional investigation.

Scene vi: The curtain falls

Sometime during the decade of the 1930s, Walter Gibson introduced a character who took shape in the pulp fiction of the time and eventually migrated to radio, film and television. The tag line for the show, "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!" has become a part of the American lexicon. The research produced in the present study has made an attempt to understand the evil as well as the good associated with the members of the Suburbia ISD Board of Trustees, and to them I am indebted.

Act V has presented a discussion examining the purpose for the research, theory emerging from the research, limitations of the study, applications of the research and closed with a brief discussion guiding directions for future research. Certainly the institution of the school board is so deeply embedded in our culture it is difficult to imagine the landscape of public education minus the influence of the local board of trustees. Millions of words have been written in the past fifty years in an attempt to

understand the phenomenon of the school board with some advocating improvement and others proclaiming the demise. At the root of this extended dialogue is the school board member and understanding the motives associated with membership is critical for the superintendent and her staff if they have a desire to accomplish the visible and invisible goals of the district.

Finally, the lights dim as the curtain draws to a close.

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344

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