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ABSTRACT

Collective bargaining contracts with teachers unions have reduced principals' autonomy but have still left them opportunities for effective administration of their schools. Interviews with 289 educators in six diverse school districts across the country show that contracts have limited principals' powers both from above, by centralizing labor relations at the district level, and from below, by expanding teachers' rights in areas like job security and grievances. Many principals understand, however, that three organizational factors help them maintain much control. These include the necessary interdependence between teachers and principals; teachers' desires that are not covered by the contract, such as student discipline or public and parental support; and teachers' ambivalence toward unionism. The most effective principals are those who respond best to teachers' concerns, whether included in the contract or not. Both effective and ineffective principals cope with contractual limitations through one of three strategies: an aggressive one, which meets the letter, but not always the spirit, of the contract; a defensive one, which strives only to avoid contract violations; or a reciprocal one, which wins cooperation by trading favors or fostering convictions of interdependence. (RW)

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND THE PRINCIPAL

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There are dramatic changes in the principalship, particularly over the past decade. In 1959, when I was appointed principal, I was the king and what I said was law. That's not true anymore.

-A Shady Heights Principal

Disputes persist about the effects of teacher unionism, but all sides agree that it has changed the position, discretion, and obligations of the principal. And yet, it is not clear what the character or extent of these changes is or what they mean for the schools. Have teachers transferred their allegiance to the union? Has collective bargaining transformed principals into mere functionaries, irrelevant to the important work of schooling? Is it possible, as one principal remarked only half facetiously, that "Soon perhaps you won't even need the principal. You'll have the union. They'll run everything"?

This paper examines the effects of collective bargaining on the role of the principal and the management of the school. I conclude that the work of principals has indeed become more difficult with collective bargaining. Their power and autonomy have been diminished by district office efforts to standardize school practices, to centralize labor relations expertise, and to ally with union leaders to ensure contract compliance. Meanwhile, the principals' power has

been eroded in the schools by a contract that legitimizes the authority of the union, restricts the administrator's right to regulate teachers' use of non-teaching time, and establishes procedures by which teachers can challenge administrative actions. This paper reviews the ways in which the principal's autonomy has been reduced by district level changes and by constraints imposed at the school site by teachers and their contract.

Yet this is only part of the story. Despite substantial reductions in the principal's power and discretion, some school administrators in even the strongest union districts continue to manage their schools effectively and to elicit high levels of teacher support and service. What makes this possible? Principals in this study who coped effectively with collective bargaining in their schools were aware that certain features of school organizations moderate the effect of collective bargaining. These include the interdependence of teachers and principals, the breadth of teacher concerns that extend well beyond what is defined by the contract, and teacher ambivalence about unionism. The second part examines the factors in the school organization that enable skillful administrators to make labor relations work despite considerable restrictions on their autonomy.

Given these realities of the school organization, principals respond differently to the demands of teacher unionism in their schools. Some adopt aggressive strategies of management; some resort to defensive strategies; and some prefer strategies that capitalize on their interdependence

with teachers. The third part of the paper will review the characteristics of each of these strategies and assess its effects on school labor relations.

This research was conducted in a diverse sample of six school districts which have been assigned fictitious names here. Table I summarizes some important differences in the districts. In-depth interviews were conducted with 289 teachers and administrators in the districts. Details of the research methodology are included in the Appendix.

#### I. CONSTRAINTS FROM ABOVE AND BELOW

Collective bargaining has redistributed power within the school district. By centralizing labor relations at the district level and by broadly expanding the rights of teachers within the school, collective bargaining has reduced the power of principals. Once largely autonomous in administering their schools, principals are now subject to constraints from both above and below them.

##### Changes in District Level Practices

The teachers' contract, being centrally negotiated and administered, establishes policy and practices for all teachers, principals, and schools within a district. School districts, known for their lack of coordination and regulation of school-site practice are, under collective bargaining, expected to behave hierarchically. Control, information, authority, and expertise are assumed to be at the top of the organization; the contract is intended to standardize policies at all schools. The school department management

acts on grievances sent up from the schools and decides whether to settle or arbitrate them. Principals are expected to meet district-wide deadlines for teacher observations and evaluations. Seniority lists govern layoffs for all district teachers. Arbitration decisions establish precedents that regulate practices in all schools in a district.

Collective bargaining has provided district administrators with new leverage over principals who have traditionally acted independently. There are sanctions against particularistic school practices and incentives for standardized, centralized administration of the contract. The time and expense of processing grievances and arbitrations, the threat of unwise precedents being set by careless school-site administration, and complaints by the union that the school department does not keep its side of the bargain have been translated into pressure on the principal to honor the contract, comply with district directives, and not make mistakes.

Furthermore, labor expertise in the district is centralized. While not an esoteric science, labor relations can be complicated and require more of a principal than common sense. Principals must know their contractual obligations, learn how to write defensible evaluations, be familiar with grievance and arbitration decisions throughout the district, and understand how to respond to a grievance. The centralized expertise of the sample districts increased with contract complexity. While most districts had but one administrator responsible for

district, with the strongest union and contract, had an administrative department of ten professionals to oversee school site labor practices.

In all but one district there also developed an alliance between union leaders and district administrators to ensure contract compliance and smooth labor operations. In Shady Heights, the personnel director and union president were described as having "the same job. But they work for different sides." In Plantville, the personnel director reported that together, he and the union president "Put out the brush fires." In Metropolis, union and school department staff were often said to work together to bring about contract compliance; usually a recalcitrant or inept principal was the target of their efforts.

#### Contractual Constraints at the School Site

In addition to these restrictions on school site autonomy imposed by the district administration as a result of collective bargaining, principals are constrained by the teachers' contract that limits their control of staff composition, restricts their right to regulate teacher services or use of time, entitles teachers to challenge administrative actions through the grievance process, and introduces the competing authority of the union representative or union committee into the school.

During the 1950's, principals had not only the right but the responsibility to staff their schools. Expanding enrollments and teacher shortages led principals to actively recruit

teachers from inside and outside the district. Declining enrollments and seniority layoff and transfer provisions negotiated in some districts have restricted the principal's control over who teaches in the school. The contracts of Shady Heights, Plantville, Mill City, and Metropolis require teacher layoffs and transfers to follow seniority order. In these districts, principals could do little to guarantee that their teachers were qualified to meet particular program needs or shared an allegiance to them. Further, procedural restrictions on the principal's power to transfer or terminate teachers for poor performance reduce the principal's control over who staffs the school.

The teachers' contract also has reduced the principal's right to control teachers' time, both how long they spend in school and what they do while there. Teachers in all but one sample district had a contractually defined work day, before or after which the principal could not expect them to be on duty. In most districts, teachers, not principals, could determine how and where they would spend their preparation periods. No teachers could be assigned to cafeteria duty during their lunch; in some districts they could not be assigned to lunch duty at all. While principals retained authority over teachers' classroom time, they were restricted by the contract in regulating the use of non-teaching time. As one principal said, "I can't say 'Be here' and 'Do this' anymore."



Principals also could not assign students to classes or teachers to courses however they wished. Several contracts set limits on class size and prohibited the principal from creating large and small classes for particular subjects or groups of students. There were further restrictions on the kinds of teaching programs to which principals could assign teachers. Secondary teachers in Shady Heights could not be asked to teach more than two subject areas. Metropolis teachers could not be assigned to more than three grade levels, four preparations, or three consecutive teaching periods.

Also, principals no longer have the final say in disputes about school policies and practice because grievance procedures provide teachers the right to challenge administrative actions. Some contracts permit grievances only about contractual violations; others allow teachers to grieve any dissatisfaction in the school. While the number of grievances about school practices was found to be small, (1-5 per year) a teacher's very access to these formal and sometimes hostile procedures inhibits the principal's autonomy. Casual comments, complaints, reminders, warnings, and threats all carry with them the implicit threat of a grievance, making principals now accountable to the teachers they supervise.

Finally, collective bargaining has introduced into schools the competing authority of the union in the roles of union representative or building committee members. In each district studied, the union had specified rights within the school; e.g., separate bulletin board space, access to teacher mail boxes, the right to hold membership

meetings and make announcements during staff meetings. All districts had union representatives within schools who responded to teacher complaints, accompanied teachers to disciplinary meetings and watched over the enforcement of the contract. The contracts of Plantville, Shady Heights, and Metropolis also prescribed union building committees that would meet regularly and advise the principal on school policies and practices.

## II. THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND UNIONISM

These factors, in combination, might be expected to disable school administrators. If teacher contracts were fully and literally implemented, if principals were not free to exercise administrative judgment, if teachers and principals were rule-bound and adversarial in their roles and responses, then students and programs would likely be harmed.

However, the evidence from the schools suggests that while some principals report having great trouble administering their schools under collective bargaining, many others do not. While the presence of the contract and the union made their work more difficult, some principals continued to be effective administrators of good schools.

These principals understood the interdependence of teachers and administrators and relied on their mutual interests to manage the schools. They understood that teachers have a

far wider range of concerns than those addressed by the contract and that some of what they seek can only be provided by the principal. Finally, these administrators understood that teachers regard themselves as far more than union members. Effective principals responded to teachers in this broader context.

#### Interdependence in the Schools

Even before the advent of collective bargaining, the relationship between teachers and principals was highly interdependent. The success of each depended, in part, on the cooperation of the other. Teachers could not be effective in their classrooms without fair and balanced class assignments, while principals could assure order in the school only if teachers upheld administrative rules and policies. Principals could not supervise all the activities in the school and instead, granted teachers considerable discretion in their work. In return teachers offered their allegiance. The principal and teachers, like the family to which they are often compared, informally negotiated ways of working together that served their mutual interests. To be sure, some of those families were repressive, some of the principals dictatorial, and some of the teachers cowed. But in general, norms of teacher-administrator reciprocity took precedence over narrow

rules and definitions of responsibilities.

Collective bargaining, teacher unions and contracts have been introduced at the school site into the context of this interdependence. Teachers and principals have generally downplayed their roles as labor and management and avoided literal interpretation and enforcement of the contract. While a small number of contract provisions were found in this study to be uniformly implemented -- seniority layoffs and transfers, duty-free lunch, and class size limits<sup>1</sup>-- most provisions regarding teacher/service and performance and teacher-administrator relations were informally reinterpreted and renegotiated at the school site, giving rise to extensive intradistrict variation in labor practices. Because the contract does not and cannot define everything that is important to them, teachers and principals are constantly balancing and trading their concerns and interests in a process that variously enforces, modifies or ignores contract provisions. Teachers, being ambivalent in their union support, are reluctant to emphasize their roles as union members and are often prepared to compromise and cooperate in order to achieve shared educational goals. The following discussion shows that teachers must rely on the principal rather than the union or contract.

<sup>1</sup> These findings are discussed more fully in "Implementing Contracts in the Schools," delivered at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, April, 1981.

for much of what they want in their work.

Teachers: What they Want and How they View Unionism

While it may be appropriate to speak of union priorities when considering district level labor issues, it is necessary to speak of teacher priorities, at the school site. For in this setting, union affiliation is but part of the teacher's concerns. The relationship between teachers and principals extends well beyond the relationship between labor and management. Labor relations at the school site must be understood in this larger context.

There was remarkable consensus among the 189 teachers interviewed for this study about what they want in their work. First, they seek salaries that enable them to live comfortably. Second, teachers want the job security they believe is due them in exchange for accepting positions of public service. They not only want to retain jobs but also positions in particular schools, grades and classrooms.

A third concern of teachers is that they be assigned a reasonable number of students and a reasonable number of classes. Many teachers believe that the size of their teaching load -- both in number of students and classes -- determines the possibility of success in their work. Maintaining class size limits also protects jobs and therefore is of importance for two reasons.

A fourth priority of the teachers in this study is the reduction or elimination of non-teaching duties, e.g., clerical jobs, cafeteria supervision, lavatory duty, which they regard as unprofessional and a misuse of their time. A fifth and related concern is the teachers' desire for non-teaching time during which they can relax, eat lunch and catch up on work. They resent having this time controlled or withdrawn unexpectedly by administrators.

Sixth, teachers want equitable treatment. They resent favoritism and school politics, and they seek assurances that important decisions such as transfers, and routine decisions such as duty rosters, will be made in orderly and fair ways.

Seventh, teachers expect a modest amount of influence over school policies and practices, particularly those that affect their classrooms. They like to be consulted about such things as textbook selection, budget decisions, discipline policies, or grading practices. They want the opportunity to initiate change. However, they do not want large-scale responsibility for school-wide matters; their attention centers on their classrooms.

Student discipline was one of the most frequently mentioned concerns of teachers, who believed that order in their classrooms depended in part on the overall order of the school. Poor student attendance, fighting in the halls, and

disrespect at recess were all viewed by teachers as evidence of administrative shortcomings. Furthermore, teachers wanted assurance of administrative support if they sent students to the office; some reported that their classroom success depended on students' awareness of that backing.

Security within the school is an issue related to discipline. However, in urban schools where intruders are known to have assaulted teachers and students, it is a broader issue requiring more than tough discipline practices with students. It may call for locked entrances, assigned guards, and repaired intercoms. In schools where attacks had occurred, security was a very prominent concern for teachers, leading in one school to a march on the principal's office.

A tenth concern expressed by teachers in this study is the lack of parental support and public regard for their work. If teachers could regulate such things, they would arrange for parents to emphasize the value of school with their children, monitor homework, endorse a teacher's expectations for good behavior, and respect the teacher's expertise. Teachers were dissatisfied with their current low public esteem and said that it affected both their classroom success and their sense of professional worth.

Finally, teachers want to work with effective principals, administrators who not only assure the order, security, and maintenance of the school, but who also provide direction, leadership, and high standards for student and teacher success. Such administrators are said to be visible, active and principled; they expect the teachers to be as well.

Some of what teachers want can be addressed by collective bargaining; some cannot. Many of the concerns discussed above have been dealt with in the contracts of this study, and bargaining gains have helped teachers achieve their ends. In some cases, the teachers can readily enforce their gains. For example, when teachers win the right to a duty-free lunch in negotiation, the issue is largely resolved. In other cases, provisions are dependent on administrative cooperation for their implementation. For example, teacher expectations of equity are included in contractual provisions calling for fair rosters; however fairness, being undefined, rests largely with the administrator. Teacher participation in decisionmaking can be provided for by the creation of a building advisory committee, but the effectiveness of the committee can be easily undercut by the principal.

There are certain of these teacher concerns that are not bargainable, including guarantees of parent support, public regard and administrative leadership. But principals who proved



to administer schools effectively under collective bargaining were attentive to these issues as well as to those addressed by the contract. Such principals were also well aware that teachers are ambivalent about unionism, that they seldom want to be viewed strictly as union members who singlemindedly enforce the contract in the school.

While teachers perceive collective bargaining to have improved their salaries, limited the size and number of their classes, and tempered administrative abuse, they are uneasy about its effects on their professional status, on the quality of their relationships with administrators, and on the competence and performance of their peers. While levels of union membership may be high and while teachers may overwhelmingly support strikes during strained negotiations, many report having strong reservations about both the notion of unionism and the conduct of their local organization.

In this study, there were many teachers like this one who regretted the necessity of collective bargaining:

I'm an idealist and I would like to believe that it would not be necessary, that these things could be settled without a formal organization, but I think that it's probably unrealistic at this time.

There were other teachers who firmly believed that virtually all educational gains were union accomplishments that would be swept away if it weren't for the continued presence and activity

of the union. While there was overwhelming, if sometimes reluctant agreement among teachers in all sample districts about the continued necessity of collective bargaining for teachers, few teachers reported full satisfaction with the contract or the action of their organization.

Some teachers were dissatisfied with the cost and the politics of their state or national affiliate. There were teachers in each district dissatisfied with the adversarial relations and the "excessive concern for contract compliance" that accompanied collective bargaining.

Some teachers repudiated the blue collar image of unions -- pickets, mobs, confrontation -- that they considered incompatible with professionalism. One of the most frequently voiced dissatisfactions of both active and inactive union members, was that unions, in meeting their obligation to fairly represent all teachers, protect poor teachers. Some teachers in all districts criticized the unions' pursuit of high salaries and reduced duties at the expense of well-maintained buildings, adequate supplies and equipment, and in-service training. As one Metropolis teacher said, "There's too much emphasis on 'me'."

These were the recurring criticisms and dissatisfaction about unions and collective bargaining. Most teachers interviewed focussed on one or two points of dissatisfaction that were offset by points of agreement. Few teachers expressed total

disapproval, just as few voiced unconditional acceptance. Collective bargaining was viewed as a useful and necessary means to achieve narrow objectives rather than a cause deserving constant and unconditional commitment. At the district level, where the voice of one teacher might be inaudible, teachers accepted the necessity of pursuing their interests through the union. However, at the school site, where teachers were known individually and where they had the opportunity to act on their own behalf with administrators, they were far less likely to stress their union identities.

### III. THE RESPONSES OF PRINCIPALS

In the schools of this study, it was apparent that the teachers' decisions to ally with others as union members, to define teacher interests in opposition to administrative interests and to pursue problems through formal procedures were highly dependent on the attitudes and actions of the principal. If the principal was attentive to the things that teachers wanted and successful in helping to achieve them, teachers were likely to endorse administrative priorities, overlook occasional contract violations, avoid formal grievance procedures and bend the contract in the interests of the school.

Administrative compliance with the collective bargaining agreement explained but a part of the teacher support

effective principals enjoyed. In addition, these administrators were active, responsive, decisive, and held high expectations of teachers. Teachers respected them for their performance even though that performance might occasionally compromise teacher rights and freedoms. These principals knew the importance of job security, class size, and non-teaching time for their staff and they protected those interests. They emphasized the importance of the classroom and a teacher's instructional responsibilities and sought to minimize unnecessary non-instructional duties. They provided opportunities for teachers to influence administrative decisions. They were perceived by teachers to be understanding and evenhanded in their dealings with staff; they played no favorites.

These principals were also responsive to teachers' non-contractual concerns -- those things that enhanced the reputation of the school and thus the teacher's sense of professional standing. These included firm discipline practices, good community relations, high standards for teaching performance and the pursuit of incompetent or mediocre staff.

While collective bargaining had unquestionably complicated the work of principals, the organization of the school provided

them with the opportunity to achieve sufficient autonomy and influence to manage their schools well. One Shady Heights principal assessed the constraints imposed on his administration by collective bargaining:

Principals do in fact, have a few restrictions. But we don't really understand how to use all the power that we have. We don't even know where all the buttons are that might be pushed.

Principals responded to the realities of the school and the demands of collective bargaining with a variety of strategies. Some embraced the opportunity to involve teachers in school management while others strictly limited teachers to advisory roles. A few used the contract to manage the school and insisted on literal compliance with its provisions, while most minimized its role and relied instead on reciprocal relations with teachers to get things done. While most carefully complied with the contract, some did so in order to preserve their right to exercise all available management prerogatives, while others did so only to avoid trouble. There were a small number of principals who actively opposed the union and a small number who abdicated to it. Some principals coped well, most managed, and a few didn't cope.

The following strategies were the most prevalent responses of principals to collective bargaining in their schools.

Because this lists alternative strategies, it necessarily simplifies what are actually very complicated responses. Most principals were not consistent in the strategies they used, often being influenced by time, the issue, and the personalities of the situation. Yet there did appear to be dominant modes of response.

Meet the Letter of the Contract: An Aggressive Strategy

This strategy was typically used by principals who were described as authoritarian. They saw in the contract the opportunity to manage their schools and achieve some administrative ends. They typically knew the contract in detail, often better than the teachers and union representatives, and were unintimidated by its constraints and procedures. One such principal explained, "My philosophy on labor relations is to know the contract well. I try to squeeze out every management prerogative available." This Metropolis principal was particularly effective in documenting the weaknesses of incompetent teachers and moving them out of his school. He had never lost a grievance over an unsatisfactory rating; he had mastered the procedures and used them confidently and aggressively to improve the quality of teaching in his school.

A Plantville principal who was criticized by a union leader for regarding the contract as "an optional document,"

was very knowledgeable about the contract. He used its language to justify different purposes at different times, to avoid large classes, combine classes, or oppose combinations when that seemed best.

An elementary principal in Metropolis recognized that the contract did not restrict her authority over curricular decisions. She required teachers to supervise journal writing in their classes each day even though she knew they did not unanimously support the task. She used the contract language to defend her right to do so.

A junior high school principal in Metropolis used the language of the contract to assign teachers to cafeteria duty when virtually all other principals freed teachers from the task. The contract required him to relieve teachers of non-teaching duties "to the extent possible," and he successfully contended that the supervision demands of his school made such a change impossible.

#### Avoid Contract Violations: A Defensive Strategy

This strategy was usually used by principals who were described by their teachers as laissez-faire administrators. While principals who used the contract aggressively to manage their schools knew it in detail, those who complied with the

contract as a defensive strategy were less certain about what it said. They were often better informed about how it limited them than how it empowered them. Not only did these principals make sure that they met all their contractual obligations, but they were reluctant to ask teachers to bend the contract in any way, and in some cases they granted more concessions to the union than were contractually necessary.

These principals were primarily concerned with protecting themselves against challenge by the union. While the principals who used the contract aggressively would test the limits of their administrative power, these principals would stay safely within its zones. One Shady Heights principal said, "I function defensively, in anticipation of the problems." Another said, "I never put myself in a situation where I come up with egg on my face." For example, this principal explained that the PTO often requests evening programs with student activities. However, assuming that the teachers would not volunteer for such activities, he did not encourage them.

Principals who function defensively rarely require building supervision by faculty beyond what the contract specifies. Some have tried and failed and are reluctant to try again. One principal described this reaction:



Some time ago, when I was stuck and when I needed teachers to cover special duties, I would ask the teachers to take those duties on a rotating basis. However, I was duly informed, "You're not supposed to do that." And so lunch, recess -- it's a real mess. I'm hamstrung; I'm tired out. When I was informed of that, it was as much as to say, "You're not supposed to ask teachers to do anything." And the result of that -- well, it's a little bit of intimidation.

The consequence of this defensive strategy for some principals was that they exaggerated the constraints placed on them by the contract. One Shady Heights principal who was particularly discouraged said;

All of these things, in their cumulative effect -- well they make you cautious. You think there will be a ruckus, there will be complaints, there will be a grievance. And the total effect is intimidating. So you avoid, and the principal ends up doing everything. You know, teachers are bold; they're outspoken -- not all by any means, but enough -- and the ones who are outspoken, well they influence the others. Now I won't go to the other teachers for help because then the big union teachers will go and tell them not to work. They have influence. You might say there are unwritten things, unspoken things, that have influence on the school. So instead of getting yourself into trouble, you do the things yourself.

#### A Reciprocal Strategy

Principals who utilize a reciprocal strategy are usually very aware of their contractual constraints and obligations, but intentionally de-emphasize them with their teachers. This strategy actually manifests itself in two forms. One is the "one hand washes the other" approach in which there is a conscious trade of favors between principal and teachers.

The other is the fostering of a conviction between teachers and principals that their success is interdependent; they must work together for the good of students and the good of the school. Principals who administer schools on these terms are often described as democratic. In each instance, the principal seeks to have teachers regard the contract as a guide rather than a rulebook.

Many principals who consciously traded favors would occasionally permit teachers to violate the contract with the understanding that eventually they would reciprocate. A teacher in one school where the principal encouraged such a relationship said:

The principal bends the contract on behalf of the teachers. For example, there's a three day limit on prior notice for professional days. Sometimes people can't give that kind of notice. They've bent that one for me already. The administration here is not dogmatic and in response, teachers would respond with favors.

The principal of another school characterized the administrative side of this tradeoff, "If you do something for them and they're happy, then they will do something for you. Keep people happy if you can. Avoid confrontation."

The favors traded and allowances made in such schools were typically occasional rather than regular. The principal would allow teachers to leave school early for medical appointments and they, in turn, would agree to pick up students early from lunch on a rainy day or attend an emergency meeting without

comment. In these schools there was a limited flexibility in the contract that permitted bending provisions of secondary importance to teachers.

The second type of reciprocal strategy is based less explicitly on traded favors than on the acceptance by both teachers and administrators that they need each other and that together they make the school work. In many schools, teachers and principals likened the reciprocal ties to those of the family. One principal emphasized that he does not think of his teacher as "union members. They are part of the family. There's nothing we can't work out among ourselves." One Vista principal described the reciprocal process in his school:

I believe that if rapport and communication are really, truly part of the educational process, then there is no conflict in the roles of teacher-educator and administrator-educator. As a principal I violate the negotiated agreement and the teachers know that I do. But they would never file a grievance because we have already discussed and agreed on what was right for the kids.

#### An Assessment of Strategies

No particular strategy proved to be a prescription for success in managing labor practices at the school site. Each had potential advantages and disadvantages.

The aggressive strategy of contract management was effective in achieving certain defined ends -- transferring

but it also encouraged formalism, literal contract interpretation, and combative responses from the union. It made it difficult to gain faculty cooperation for non-contractual responsibilities such as sponsoring clubs, covering classes of absent teachers, or monitoring the halls between classes. One principal who used this strategy speculated about the difficulty of assessing it:

Even though I would win there would then be periods of strife when the union would go after me for other things. I don't know whether this approach is good. I don't know what in the end is effective. I know there are principals who get along with all their teachers. I don't know if that is what's good.

The defensive strategy of laissez-faire administrators was successful in minimizing the prominence of the union and concern about the contract in the school. Because such principals rarely confronted teachers or violated the agreement, there were few adversarial encounters in the school. When the teaching staff was highly qualified and dedicated to the school rather than to the union, this administrative style enabled teachers to cooperate effectively. However, in most such schools teachers reported wanting more direction and higher standards from their principals.

Reciprocal strategies also enabled administrators and teachers to successfully fend off formalism and literal contract enforcement, often to the advantage of students. These

who employed defensive strategies, for this was an interdependent arrangement with obligations for both sides. However, because this was based on trust and allegiance, it occasionally created what one principal called "soft spots" where principals were reluctant to monitor performance closely and hold teachers accountable for shortcomings.

Of the various strategies used by principals, the reciprocal strategy was most consistent with the interdependent character of the school organization and with the notions of shared management central to collective bargaining. However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends in large part on maintaining a staff that share common goals and on being able to shape school site practices without interference from district level union officers. In all sample districts but one that was readily achievable. However, in Metropolis where administrative constraints were many, where principals retained no control over staff composition because of frequent seniority transfers, and where district union staff members were active in monitoring contract compliance in the schools, the maintenance of constructive reciprocal relationships was extremely difficult. While one Metropolis administrator contended "the kinds of principals who succeeded before collective bargaining succeeded after it," it seemed that these

principals now needed a combative streak to survive. In addition to being responsive to teacher concerns, the Metropolis principal was expected by district administrators to be "imperturbable," "have the courage of his convictions," and be willing to take the "risky step and the flak that follows." One administrator elaborated:

He's a person who knows where he's going. He's able to lay down the law and people in his building appreciate this kind of stability. But he also has to be a kind of Type A person who is able to say, "I have to set the limit here. I know that the union will raise hell; they will scream and yell and we will end up in grievances and even in arbitration and the union will make a fool of me out of that, but I must do it anyway."

Some principals who cultivated cooperative relationships with teachers had never before been required to take this hard stand. As this administrator said, "There are a lot of principals who don't want to go through that, who will back off making decisions and take the path of least resistance." Sometimes that path leads out of education.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The principal's formal powers have been redistributed under collective bargaining. School administration is far more complicated than it once was. Success is less certain and shortcomings are more obvious. However, the interdependent character of the school organization, the breadth of teacher

concerns, and teachers' ambivalence about unionism all provide the principal with the opportunity to shape and moderate the effects of unionism in the schools.

The potential of collective bargaining to impair effective school operations has made the role of the principal more rather than less important. It is the principal who can moderate the impact of unionism in the schools and shape constructive labor relations. Collective bargaining has constrained administrative autonomy and empowered teachers to challenge their superiors, but in doing so has also increased the need for leadership in the school. Administrative authority continues to be exercised by principals and welcomed by teachers who remain ready to commit themselves to a shared educational venture. As one Shady Heights union member said, "Quite frankly, it depends on the principal. It depends on who's leading the parade."

APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I selected six districts that would represent a diverse sample of those involved in collective bargaining. Such a sample would permit me to map the range and variation of labor relations practices. Clearly, there are types of districts that are not represented in the sample. However, the districts included in this sample are diverse in size, controlling state statute, AFT/NEA affiliation, regional location, urban/suburban/rural character, racial and ethnic composition, enrollment and economic trends, strength and activity of the union, and strength of the contract. On the basis of preliminary data, I began with hypotheses that suggested that the effects of teacher unionism might be less extensive, formal, and fixed than they are generally thought to be. Consequently, I intentionally included districts reputed to have militant unions and experience with strikes.

There were many possible combinations of districts that might have comprised this sample. Generally, districts were selected because they were recommended by those familiar with local districts (SEA administrators, union leaders, community leaders, other school administrators) as ones that matched the combinations of characteristics I was seeking. I selected the sample sequentially to ensure that



the balance of variables could be maintained. I requested entree into eight districts. Two refused my request; the remaining six make up the final sample.

Within each district, I conducted in-depth interviews with central office administrators, union leaders, principals and teachers. Because of the relatively small number of central office administrators and union officers, I interviewed all who were identified as relevant to the research. The selection of principals was made with the help of district administrators and union leaders. I requested a balanced selection that varied in age and experience, sex, school level and location, labor attitudes, and administrative style. I repeatedly asked those interviewed whether the sample was "balanced and representative of the range of principals in the district."

After completing the interviews with principals, I selected three to five schools in each district that seemed to represent the range of grade level, location, administrative style, and union activity within the district. With the principal, I selected a sample of seven to fifteen teachers, once again seeking diversity on a number of variables: grade, subject, sex, union views, support or opposition to principal, degree of involvement in school

activities. The union building representative, who was always included in this sample, helped select the teacher sample in some cases and always reviewed the selection for balance. I spent one or two full days in each of twenty schools, with the length of visit depending on their size.

The 289 interviews of this study were semi-structured, and varied in length from thirty minutes to two hours. Throughout the research I made a concerted effort to triangulate information and responses, to disconfirm hypotheses, and to seek a range of views. Extensive notes were taken during all interviews. These were later dictated onto tape and transcribed, yielding 2500 pages of field notes.

In addition to the interviews, I informally observed classrooms, corridors, cafeterias, main offices, teachers' rooms and after-school activities. I attended several faculty and one school board meeting when labor issues were on the agenda. I collected copies of contracts, statutes, memos, teacher handbooks, union publications, district publications, and board policies from each of the six districts. I have subscribed to local newspapers for six months following site visits in order to follow current issues, e.g., negotiations, strikes, pending arbitrations.