



THE RELATION OF THE PRINCIPAL'S SALARY TO THE SALARY  
OF THE SUPERINTENDENT IN INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS  
IN OKLAHOMA

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An "Independent District" in Oklahoma is one having a fully accredited four year high school or the equivalent. In these schools the most prominent positions are the superintendency and the principalship. Of the two the superintendency is the more influential because the superintendent is by law required to recommend all teachers for election by the board of education. The board of education is limited for funds to the approved estimate furnished by the county excise board and they may not exceed this limit without incurring heavy penalties. They are confronted then with the proper distribution to secure the best possible results. A just balance between the two administrative positions is thus seen to be very essential.

The salary of the superintendent would be set by the board of education in accordance with three main conditions; (1) the available funds; (2) the possibility of securing a suitable candidate; (3) the record of the appli-

cant in previous positions. They may, in attempting to meet these conditions, set the superintendent's salary either above or below that which a balanced schedule would indicate. The superintendent would naturally be the first elected and would assume at least some responsibility for the selection of the principal and for setting his annual wage. How much should this salary be? What percentage should it be of the superintendent's salary? Evidently no one knows. Perhaps an examination of the present conditions would be helpful in deciding what is a reasonable proportion to use as a standard.

The most reliable source of information at hand on the subject of salaries is found in the annual "Educational Directory" published by the State Department of Education under the authority of the State Superintendent. The "Independent Districts" are listed by counties with the salaries of both the superintendents and principals given. The bulletin for 1929-30 (No. 108-F) was used to prepare the material in Table No. 1 which may be read as follows: Column 1, the salaries of superintendents; the exact salary is given if all superintendents received the same salary at any interval; otherwise the lowest number of the interval is given followed by a hyphen, (-); for example, \$1400- indicates salaries from \$1400 to not more than \$1499. Column II shows the number of superintendents receiving the salaries indicated in Column I. The "High," "Low," and "Median" salaries of principals in the same schools as the superintendents in Column I, are given in Columns III, IV, and V. Column VI shows the percentage that the median salary of the principal bears to that of the superintendent. Several schools listed the salary of the superintendent without giving that of the principal; others gave that of the principal but not that of the superintendent; neither of these could be used. In two schools two principals were given for only one superintendent. In establishing the percentages the median salary of the principals was compared with the lowest in the interval grouping of the superintendents; thus the rate tends in some cases to be too high. In, all, the table reports 302 schools.

The table shows a general tendency, as would be expected, for the principal's salary to increase as the superintendent's salary increases. This is indicated by the "Median" column which gives a fairly regular advance whenever the number of superintendents is large enough to be representative of a salary grouping. However the salaries of the principals are at a considerable distance below the superintendents. Even the higher salaries do not show a drawing together; in fact, the percentages are even less than in the lower groupings for superintendents. In general the principal's salary seems to average about 65 to 70 per cent of the superintendent's salary.

The "Low" column shows a persistence of the \$900 minimum for principals up to the \$2400 level for superintendents. At this point 55 per cent of all schools listed has been passed. The median of all principalships is \$1415.

The variants from the normal are worth noting. One principal is listed for a salary of \$3,000 although his superintendent is getting only \$2,500. Another is getting \$2,400 at the time his executive colleague is paid \$1,800. These principals are evidently either Smith-Hughes agriculture teachers or coaches of athletics. Three schools show the same salary for the two posi-

tions. In one of the larger cities the two have been at the head of their departments for a number of years and seem to have developed a harmonious arrangement. Two women superintendents are found on the rolls but they are more generous than most of the men since they allow their principals as much as 82 per cent and 85 per cent of their respective salaries.

It is evident that many principals are called such only by courtesy; they are really high school teachers, performing very few duties outside of teaching. In school systems employing from six to fifteen teachers the superintendent assumes much of the responsibility which in a larger system is assigned to the principal.

An interesting side-light on the principalship is that, by actual count, 74 of the 304 principals are women. This is 24 per cent or practically one-fourth of the total number. Three receive salaries of \$2000, \$2400, and \$2,800; all the others are lower. Twelve receive less than \$1,000; the median for women principals is \$1215.

Doubtless many principals, especially in the small school systems, hope to be superintendents. In some cases also they feel that they should be given the superintendency when the superintendent moves on to another position. No doubt some superintendents feel that their principals are too active in anticipating the removal of their official head. The impression has gone out that some superintendents meet the situation by seeking weak principals and paying them very low remuneration.

Is it too much to suggest that the principalship should be regarded as a distinct job and that principals should be encouraged to think of going from one principalship to another, instead of from a principalship to a superintendency? The higher salaries are just as worthy of effort in the one case as in the other. Certainly a feeling of confidence and cooperation would be built up if these were regarded as two distinct positions with no expectation of going over from one to the other. No doubt such a condition would result in longer tenure and a general improvement of school relationships.

TABLE NO. I

Salaries of Supt's	Number getting salaries	Salaries of Principals in the Same Schools			% of Supt's Salary
		High	Low	Median	
1350	1	1035	1035	1035	77
1400—	2	1100	1000	1050	75
1500—	6	1300	900	1000	67
1600—	3	1150	1150	1150	72
1700—	5	1105	900	1100	65
1800—	28	2400	900	1200	67
1900—	3	1600	1200	1350	71
2000—	51	2000	900	1305	65
2100—	14	2000	1000	1350	65
2200—	25	1800	900	1350	61
2300—	3	1600	1300	1450	63
2400	25	1900	900	1395	58
2500—	23	3000	1100	1530	61
2600—	10	2000	1170	1530	59
2700—	20	2250	1305	1662	62
2800—	6	2000	1400	1750	62
3000	20	2400	1350	1880	65
3100—	3	2300	1800	2250	72
3200	1	2400	2400	2400	75
3300	2	2000	2000	2000	61
3400—	3	2100	1400	1800	53
3500	3	2600	2000	2400	69
3600	16	2800	1900	2300	67
3800	2	2400	2100	2250	59
3900	2	3000	2800	2900	74
4000	5	3000	2400	2500	64
4200	1	2250	2250	2250	53
4400	1	2800	2800	2800	64
4450	1	4450	4450	4450	100
4500	2	2800	2700	2750	61
4750	1	3000	3000	3000	63
4800	1	2750	2500	2625	51
5000	4	4200	2700	3100	62
5100	2	4000	3200	3600	70
5400	2	4000	3800	3900	72
5750	1	4000	4000	4000	70
5800	1	4100	4100	4100	70
6500	1	3800	3800	3800	58
9900	1	5300	4700	5000	50
12000	1	4700	4700	4700	39

Figures marked with the hyphen (—) indicate a class interval of 100. Other numbers indicate exact salaries. Read the above table as follows: Twenty-eight superintendents get \$1800, but less than \$1900. The highest paid principal gets \$2400 and the lowest one \$900; the median is \$1200 which is 67 per cent of the superintendent's salary.