

# Research Reports

## *Master Contracts of Teachers and the Supervision of Instruction*

**Robert D. Krey, Lanore A. Netzer, and Glen G. Eye**

*What effects are teachers' negotiated master contracts having upon the supervision of instruction? These researchers provide some findings and recommendations based on their study of this question.*

A noticeable trend in the evolution of the supervision of instruction has been the increase in participation in the supervisory function by persons within and outside the formal school organization. This has been accompanied by an increase in participation in the decision-making process regarding matters historically in the domain of the supervisor. One approach for teachers to acquire and secure their place in that process has been through a union-negotiated master contract. The legal ramifications of complying with such a master contract have appeared to restrain administrative personnel in their tasks, or at least to make their work more challenging, complicated, and/or interesting. The scuttlebutt within administrative and supervisory organizations tends to indicate that perhaps it is no longer possible to function in a supervisory capacity because of the constraints of the teachers' master contracts.

The literature does not contain evidence to support or reject the hypothesis that master contracts of teachers are a deterrent to the function of supervision. Speculation does not serve the requirement of evidence-based judgment. Concern on this point led these authors to examine this phenomenon.

### **Purpose**

This study was planned with several purposes in mind, including a desire to answer the following questions:

1. What is in the master contracts of teachers that interferes with or prevents supervisors from functioning?

2. Do master contracts of teachers interfere with or prevent performance of supervisory tasks that are not specifically negotiated?

Two null hypotheses tested were stated as follows:

1. There is no difference in the effect of master contracts of teachers on the supervision of instruction as reported by supervisors at different levels of employment.
2. There is no difference in the effect of master contracts of teachers on the supervision of instruction as reported by supervisors in different size school systems.

Ancillary concerns were identified by determining, (a) the variety of position titles held by supervisors, (b) whether supervision was in fact a function of various positions, and (c) to what extent building unit or system-wide formal curriculum guides were still being created or selected by supervisors and teachers.

### **Methodology**

The first task involved the identification of negotiated items in master contracts that potentially may affect the supervision of instruction. Current master contracts from school systems in the largest cities of the six regional areas of one Midwest state ASCD<sup>1</sup> were examined to compile a list of negotiated items. This examination of contracts resulted in acquiring a list of 44 different

<sup>1</sup> The six regional areas are geographic divisions of the state within which the ASCD membership is organized into sub units. Officers of those regional areas are members of the board of directors for the state unit.

items that were found in the master contracts of those school systems.

A pilot instrument was developed containing two parts. Part I of this instrument contained a list of the 44 items, each followed by a Yes-No choice response to indicate whether each negotiated item affected the supervision of instruction in the school system in which each prospective respondent worked. The respondents also were requested to indicate the statement in the master contract that was the influencing factor in indicating a Yes response to any item in Part I. In Part II, the respondents were asked to explain how or why the statement from the master contract, as indicated in Part I, functioned to interfere with the supervision of instruction.

This pilot instrument was given to 23 persons employed in 12 school systems. Eighteen of those individuals, representing nine school systems, completed and returned the instruments. There was unanimous agreement by the respondents that 19 of the 44 items negotiated had no direct bearing on the supervision of instruction. It appeared that the remaining 25 items had the potential of affecting the supervision of instruction. Those 25 items, which appear in Table 1, were selected for use on the revised instrument used for this study.

It became apparent, when examining the responses to Parts I and II of the pilot instrument, that the reasoning provided for indicating that an item had a potential for affecting the supervision of instruction was based on the respondent's perception of the contract items and how they may affect supervision more than on the facts stated in the contract items. This tended to confirm that the master contract affects the supervisory function as much by the individual perceptions of the contract as by the facts of the negotiated agreement. The decision was made, therefore, that a greater potential existed for return of an instrument requiring simpler responses while at the same time gathering the desired information to achieve the purposes of the study.

The final draft of the instrument contained three parts and was designed with consideration for ease in responding. Part I contained a list of the 25 items derived from the pilot instrument. The respondents were requested to place an X on a line under one of five choices to indicate how

each of the negotiated items affected them in supervising instruction in their school systems. The choices were "Provides Support," "No Interference," "Some Interference," "Much Interference," and "Prohibits Action." For purposes of determining mean responses for the analyses, a weighting of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively, was assigned to those five responses. A mean response of 1.00-1.49 was selected to indicate that the master contract tended to support supervision in regard to a given item; 1.50-2.49, to indicate no

Table 1. Effect of Negotiated Items on the Supervision of Instruction

Item	Mean Response	Standard Deviation
1. Class size/teaching load	2.34	.96
2. Dismissal of teachers	3.20	.97
3. Non-instructional duties	2.86	.91
4. Department chairpersons/unit leaders	1.90	.91
5. Length of school day	2.76	.98
6. Transfer of teachers	2.75	.98
7. Staff reduction	2.59	.98
8. Teacher evaluation	2.70	1.00
9. Personnel files	2.63	.89
10. Leaves and absences	2.47	.99
11. Salaries/method of payment	2.42	1.12
12. Management rights	2.75	1.04
13. Nonrenewals	3.00	.98
14. School calendar	2.95	1.04
15. Conventions	2.26	.82
16. Term or duration of contract	2.35	.98
17. Grievance procedures	2.91	1.10
18. Professional preparation	2.32	.96
19. Promotions	2.35	.69
20. Teaching assignments and duties	2.59	.88
21. Special teachers and services	2.40	.74
22. In-service education	2.53	1.02
23. Substitutes	2.48	.83
24. Fringe benefits	2.23	1.06
25. Negotiation procedures	2.85	1.00

interference in supervisory activities; 2.50-3.50, to indicate some interference; 3.51-4.50, to indicate much interference; and 4.51-5.00, to indicate an item prohibits supervisory action. The respondents also were asked to list any additional items in their master contract that affected them in their work and to use the same five choices in responding. It was decided that if five persons listed a common related item, that item would be added to the compiled data.

Part B of the instrument contained a list of 14 items that identified some relatively common supervisory concerns or activities that were not

found specified in the master contracts examined. Those items appear in Table 2. The same response choices as in Part A were used in Part B. Additional space was provided for respondents to add other supervisory activities or concerns to the list provided. The same directions for responding were used as in Part A. It was decided for Part B also, that if five persons listed a common item, that item would be added to the compiled data.

Part C solicited from each respondent the personal data that were required to provide information necessary to answer the questions and test the hypotheses. Seven items requested the pertinent data.

Public school personnel with supervisory positions in one Midwestern state were the subjects of this study. The state has had a recent history of increased teacher militancy and active teacher organizations, both NEA and AFT affiliates, and also has been the setting for several serious teacher strikes within the past several years, one of which was settled in the U.S. Supreme Court in the spring of 1976. The instrument was sent to 137 persons with public school position titles that could be identified as supervisory as listed on the official membership list of the State ASCD. Principals, superintendents, and teachers were not included in this sample.

Table 2. Effect of Master Contracts of Teachers on Other Supervisory Concerns

Item	Mean Response	Standard Deviation
1. Curriculum determinations	2.16	.65
2. Evaluation of students	2.12	.52
3. Text and materials selection	2.06	.55
4. Program evaluation	2.45	.66
5. Use of Instructional Materials Center	2.01	.46
6. Pupil grouping	2.10	.48
7. Classroom observations	2.35	.83
8. Orientation for new teachers	2.06	.76
9. Planning sessions	2.46	.87
10. Committee work	2.51	.81
11. Teacher enrichment	2.33	.80
12. Local research activities	2.15	.54
13. Teacher consultant (counseling)	2.30	.64
14. Demonstration or directed teaching	2.14	.57

A mean response and standard deviation for each item on the instrument were computed to analyze responses from the total group on Parts A and B of the instrument. To test the two hypothe-

ses, the data were regrouped for analyses according to level of employment and also according to size of school system. Mean responses and standard deviations again were computed for the six levels of employment for Elementary School Only, Secondary School Only, K-12, Middle School, Single Area Only, and Other. The same procedures were applied to data for size of school system determined by the number of teachers, including school systems with less than 50, 51-100, 101-200, 201-300, 301-500, 501-1000, and more than 1000. A median test and chi square formula were applied to the data for the respective hypotheses to test for significant differences.

Additional data provided in Part C permitted identification of position titles and identification of others with supervisory responsibilities. Other data were grouped for calculation of percent responses of Yes and No in reference to the following questions:

1. Are there others in your school system who have assigned supervisory responsibilities?
2. Do you and your teachers create or select formal curriculum guides, plans, or documents for your instructional program? If yes, for building unit or for school system?
3. Do you have assigned supervisory responsibilities?
4. Do the teachers in your school system have a union negotiated master contract?

### Findings

One-hundred-eight, or 79 percent, of the 137 instruments were returned. Seven of the respondents did not complete the questionnaire, but rather indicated that they did not have a master agreement. One respondent chose not to respond because of other responsibilities, and an additional member of the group had left the position and had not been replaced. The analyses, consequently, were based on the responses of the remaining 99 respondents.

The mean responses and standard deviations of the total group for the 25 items in Part A of the instrument are reported in Table 1. Only eight items had standard deviations  $\geq 1.00$ . An examination of Table 1 shows that the mean responses ranged from 1.90 to 3.20. There was

agreement by the respondents that negotiated items regarding class size/teaching load, department chairpersons/unit leaders, leaves and absences, salaries and method of payment, conventions, term or duration of contract, professional preparation, promotions, special teachers and services, substitutes, and fringe benefits generally did not interfere with them in the supervision of instruction. Although the responses to the items pertaining to salaries and method of payment and fringe benefits indicated a standard deviation of  $>1.00$ , the great majority of the responses to those items were "Supports Action" or "No Interference."

The mean responses indicated agreement by the respondents that negotiated items generally presented some interference with supervisory activities in regard to dismissal of teachers, non-instructional duties, length of school day, transfer of teachers, staff reduction, teacher evaluation, personnel files, management rights, nonrenewals, school calendar, grievance procedures, teaching assignments and duties, in-service education, and negotiation procedures. Standard deviations for items pertaining to teacher evaluations, management rights, school calendar, grievance procedures, in-service education, and negotiation procedures were  $\geq 1.00$ , although for each of those items a greater number of respondents indicated that the master contract "Provides Support" than that the master contract "Prohibits Action."

Mean responses and standard deviations for the 14 items on Part B of the instrument are reported in Table 2. The mean responses ranged from 2.01 to 2.51, all with standard deviations of  $<1.00$ . The responses indicated general agreement that master contracts of teachers created no interference with supervisory activities pertaining to curriculum determinations, evaluation of students, text and materials selection, program evaluation, use of IMC, pupil grouping, classroom observations, orientation of new teachers, planning sessions, teacher enrichment, local research activities, teacher consultation, and demonstration or directed teaching. The mean response to one activity, that of committee work, indicated that the master contract of teachers created "Some Interference." No items added by respondents to either Parts A or B were provided in sufficient numbers to include in the analysis.

The first hypothesis tested compared the

effects of master contracts of teachers on the supervision of instruction as reported by supervisors at different levels of employment. There were 41 respondents employed in the elementary school only, three in the secondary school only, 44 in K-12, seven in a single area only, and four in other categories. The calculated chi square of 14.60 with four degrees of freedom was significant at  $<.01$  for the items on Part A of the instrument. The chi square of 25.14 with four degrees of freedom was significant at  $<.001$  for the items on Part B of the instrument. The first null hypothesis, therefore, was rejected, indicating that there was a difference in the effect of master contracts of teachers on the supervision of instruction as reported by supervisors at different levels of employment. As indicated in Table 3, the secondary school and K-12 supervisors provided the lowest

Table 3. Contingency Table of Mean Scores for Part A According to Level of Supervisory Position

Position Level	Above Median	Not Above Median	Totals
Elementary	11	14	25
Secondary	5	20	25
K-12	9	16	25
Single Area	13	12	25
Other	17	8	25
Totals	55	70	125

number of mean responses above the group median and the single area supervisors and "others" provided the highest numbers of mean responses above the group median in response to the negotiated items (Part A).

Table 4. Contingency Table of Mean Scores for Part B According to Level of Supervisory Position

Position Level	Above Median	Not Above Median	Totals
Elementary	2	12	14
Secondary	4	10	14
K-12	5	9	14
Single Area	8	6	14
Other	14	0	14
Totals	33	37	70

Table 4 shows that elementary school supervisors provided the fewest mean responses above the total group median in response to other supervisory concerns affected by the negotiated contract (Part B).

The second hypothesis tested compared the effect of master contracts of teachers on the supervision of instruction as reported by supervisors in different size school systems. Four respondents were employed in school systems with less than 50 teachers, 20 were employed in systems with 51-100 teachers, 26 were employed in systems with 101-200 teachers, 15 in systems with 201-300 teachers, 11 in systems with 301-500 teachers, 12 in systems with 501-1,000 teachers, and 11 supervisors were employed in school systems with more than 1,000 teachers.

The calculated chi square of 26.20 with six degrees of freedom was significant at  $<.001$  for the items on Part A of the instrument. A chi square of 31.16 was calculated for the items on Part B of the instrument. That chi square at six degrees of freedom also was significant at  $<.001$ . The second null hypothesis, consequently, also was rejected indicating that there is a difference in the effect of master contracts on the supervision of instruction as reported by supervisors at different levels of employment. As indicated in Table 5, supervisors in school systems with 301-500 teachers and in those systems with more than 1,000 teachers provided the greatest number of mean responses above the group median. The lowest number of mean responses above the group median was provided by supervisors in school systems with less than 50, 51-100, 101-200, and 501-1,000 teachers in response to negotiated items (Part A).

In Table 6, a similar pattern of responses was noted in reference to other supervisory concerns affected by the negotiated agreement (Part B). Supervisors in school systems with 201-300 teachers, however, joined the others with the lowest number of mean responses below the group median for that part of the analysis.

Three ancillary concerns were analyzed from the additional information provided by the respondents regarding their employment situations. Item 1 of Part C asked the respondents to indicate the titles of their positions. Thirty-four different titles were designated by the 99 respondents. The most common titles were, in order of highest to lowest number of repeat responses, Elementary Supervisor, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Instruction, Elementary Education Coordinator, Director of Instruction K-8, Curriculum Coordinator, Director of Curriculum, Director of

Instructional Services, Supervisor, Elementary Supervisor/Principal, Supervising Teacher, Education Programs Coordinator, Curriculum Specialist, and Elementary Consultant. Nineteen additional titles were specified for the respective respondents.

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents indicated that others in the school system had assigned supervisory responsibilities. They identified a variety of position titles to indicate the persons involved. The significant others ranged from principals only to combinations of Princi-

Table 5. Contingency Table of Mean Scores for Part A According to Size of School System

Number of Teachers	Above Median	Not Above Median	Totals
Less than 50	9	16	25
51-100	9	16	25
101-200	6	19	25
201-300	12	13	25
301-500	19	6	25
501-1,000	9	16	25
More than 1,000	19	6	25
Totals	83	92	175

Table 6. Contingency Table of Mean Scores for Part B According to Size of School System

Number of Teachers	Above Median	Not Above Median	Totals
Less than 50	7	7	14
51-100	4	10	14
101-200	4	10	14
201-300	3	11	14
301-500	12	2	14
501-1,000	2	12	14
More than 1,000	12	2	14
Totals	44	54	98

pals, Assistant Principals, K-12 Curriculum Coordinators in special areas, Department Chairpersons, Director of Pupil Services, Director of Personnel, Superintendent and Supervisors of Special Education. Forty-seven respondents identified principals only, six identified principals and superintendents, four identified supervisors and supervising teachers, three identified subject area supervisors and building principals, three identified supervisors and coordinators. Twenty-five additional combinations were specified and seven respondents did not identify the significant others.

The effect of master contracts on curriculum effort was examined with Question 7 in Part C of

the instrument. In response to the question, "Do you and your teachers create or select formal curriculum guides, plans, or documents for your instructional program?" ninety-six percent of the respondents indicated "Yes." Of those responding "Yes," 16 percent indicated that this was done for the building unit, and 84 percent indicated that it was accomplished for the school system.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions derived from analyses of the data can be applied only to the population involved in this study. Implications exist, however, for all directly concerned with the effects of master contracts of teachers on the supervision of instruction. The conclusions are as follows:

1. Master contracts of teachers generally do not prohibit supervisors from nor create much interference for supervisors in fulfilling their responsibilities.
2. Master contracts of teachers affect supervisors differently at different levels of employment and in different size school systems.
3. Supervisors in the smallest school systems tend to have least interference from the master contract of teachers.
4. It is difficult to identify supervisors by title.
5. Supervision is a function of various positions rather than a function of a person with a supervisory title.
6. Supervision is perceived to be a phase of management by those negotiating master contracts.
7. Interpretation of the master contract of teachers is as important to supervisors as is the content of the contract.
8. Current master contracts of teachers are not a great threat to supervisors.
9. System-wide curricular guides, plans, or documents still prevail as an approach to curriculum development.

It is recommended that supervisors be increasingly alert to additional intrusion on their function by negotiated agreements in master contracts. It is also recommended that supervisors develop their skills in adapting to provisions of

master contracts of teachers. Those persons creating the master contracts need to be more fully aware of the impact of negotiated agreements on the instructional program as well as on the individuals employed in the school system. Any attempt at accountability for a school system must include accountability of those responsible for creating the conditions for employment.

Attempts should be made to develop some consistency in titles to identify supervisory personnel. That should increase status, clarify need, and increase visibility for a vital function within school systems. An additional recommendation is that supervisors should not use the master contract of teachers to excuse themselves from their contribution to the organization. Finally, it is recommended that additional or similar studies be conducted in other states and regions to provide additions to the literature in this area of concern for supervisors.



*Robert D. Krey (left) is Professor of Educational Administration, University of Wisconsin-Superior.*



*Lanore A. Netzer (left) is Professor of Educational Administration, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Glen G. Eye is A. S. Barr Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison.*



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