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First-Year Superintendents' Perceptions of Preparation and Practice

Brady D. Quirk
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First-Year Superintendents' Perceptions

of Preparation and Practice

by

Brady D. Quirk

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A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in partial

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First-Year Superintendents' Perceptions

of Preparation and Practice

by

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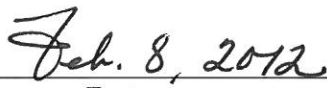
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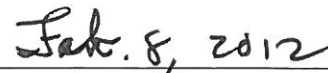
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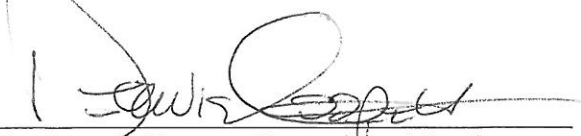
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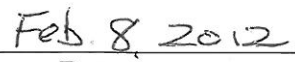
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Abstract

Through this qualitative study, the perceptions of first-year superintendents in Missouri were obtained regarding their graduate preparation program and the types of supports they sought in their new position. The superintendency is a complex role, requiring the school district leader to work within the often-conflicting framework of organizational manager versus instructional leader. The superintendents, both male and female from districts of varying sizes, were interviewed within this framework in order to make comparisons with the existing related literature. Certain themes emerged from the data, notably, a relationship between district size and the perception of the primary responsibilities of the superintendent. The smaller the district, the first-year superintendent viewed him/herself more as an instructional leader. As student population increased, these instructional responsibilities were delegated to central office staff and building principals, resulting in a focus on organizational management. Themes in regard to superintendent preparation programs included a need for emphases in school finance and school law, a preference for practicing or recently-retired superintendents as instructors, less theory-based curriculum, and more real-world problem solving. Although a major recommendation, internships were viewed with mixed results, usually depending on how project-based they were. Both mentoring and networking were viewed by all superintendents as extremely valuable. Opinions on the future supply of superintendent candidates were mixed. The superintendents were generally satisfied with their new responsibilities and intended to remain in their role.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background of Study

The top school administrative position has become increasingly complex over the past several decades (Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, & Ellerson, 2011). A combination of increased academic accountability, shrinking financial resources, increased diversity of student and staff populations, and advances in technology have made the superintendent role more challenging than ever (Bjork, Glass, & Brunner, 2005, Kowalski et al., 2011). Nationwide, school districts are facing massive budget cuts resulting from the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent recession (Johnson, 2010). Although there is debate as to whether there is an actual superintendent shortage (Bjork, Grogan, & Johnson, 2003), qualified candidates for openings are becoming more rare (McCord, 2007). First-year superintendents are particularly vulnerable to the complexities of the job as they navigate the school district culture and expectations of the board (Sanaghan & Lytle, 2008).

A 2007 survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) found only 15% of acting superintendents felt confident there is an adequate supply of qualified candidates (Mansfield-Sutton et al., 2008). Additionally, the average age of acting superintendents is rising, with large numbers planning to retire (Kowalski et al., 2011). As a result, the recruitment, preparation, and retention of new superintendents have become more important than ever. This study focused on first-year superintendents in Missouri and their perceptions of how they were prepared for their new position.

Waters and Marzano (2008) conducted research confirming the important impact the superintendent has on student achievement. In a meta-analysis of all available

research on superintendents' impact on student achievement from 1975 through 2005, Waters and Marzano (2008) found five key district-level responsibilities that seemed to have a significant correlation. The responsibilities included the general process of setting goals for academic achievement, generating support from the board, utilizing resources to support instructional improvement, and monitoring progress effectively, all of which are primary areas requiring the stamp of approval from the superintendent (Waters & Marzano, 2008). These complex and wide-ranging responsibilities of the superintendent require adequate preparation and ongoing support, especially for those new to the position.

Whittle (2006), the founder of the Edison Schools, asserted that frequent superintendent turnover has a negative effect on overall student achievement. Whittle compared the tenure of superintendents with corporate CEO's, citing the Kansas City, Missouri, school district's 14 superintendents in the prior 20 years (average tenure of 1.4 years) and Washington DC's nine superintendents in the same period (average tenure of 2.2 years). Conversely, in the past two decades there has been only one CEO at Microsoft, Federal Express, and Dell and only two CEO's at General Electric, corporations that are among the most successful in the world (Whittle, 2006). Whittle (2006) reported that longer superintendent tenure and its resulting stability would allow district staff to better implement achievement strategies over time. Between frequent turnover and a lack of qualified candidates, the preparation and retention of superintendents is an important issue for school districts.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined superintendent preparation programs through the conceptual frameworks of the business manager model and the instructional leadership model. Since the inception of the position in the 1830s, there has been controversy over the primary responsibilities of the superintendent role (Kowalski et al., 2011). At various times over the last 150 years, often depending on the economic conditions of the country, the superintendent has been primarily regarded as an instructional leader, a business manager, a democratic leader, and an applied social scientist (Kowalski et al., 2011). The content and delivery of preparation programs have been changed over the decades to suit the demand, at times stressing the business management philosophy and at other times utilizing an instructional leadership emphasis (Kowalski et al., 2011).

There has been an ongoing debate over the licensure and certification of superintendents. Many advocate for strengthening the requirements to practice, while the other camp pushes for continued deregulation of preparation programs, which has been the trend in the past several years (Kowalski, 2005). Those in favor of deregulation tend to come from the business community and/or outside the field of school administration, while those in favor of tightening the requirements are usually practicing school administrators (Kowalski, 2005).

Various academics, administrators, and management consultants have advocated for utilizing a business management philosophy in the preparation of superintendents, while others believe an instructional leadership emphasis should be utilized in preparing new school CEO's (Bjork, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2005). Marzano and Waters (2009) have found distinct correlations between superintendent leadership and student

achievement in settings where corporate-type strategic planning and goal setting are utilized. Schlechty (2008) cautioned districts, however, that schools and business entities are far too different to utilize a corporate approach to student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The increased accountability and complexity of the role of the superintendent has resulted in fewer quality candidates willing to take on the position (McCord, 2007). With the current situation of shrinking financial resources and increased accountability, aspiring superintendents require preparation programs that address their future challenges. No other government program has been as seriously impacted by the recession as public schools, which are the largest budgetary item in state budgets (Johnson, 2010).

Nationwide, glaring examples of the financial challenges are the New York City school district, which laid off 8,500 teachers, or 11% of its total; and the state of California, which has shed 22,000 teachers, or 7% of its total (Johnson, 2010.) School closings are rampant in large urban areas, with Detroit, Michigan, public schools closing 44 campuses; Cleveland, Ohio, shutting the doors on 16 schools; and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, closing 18 buildings (Johnson, 2010). In Missouri, the Kansas City school district closed half of its under-used buildings during the 2009-10 school year, laying off over 300 teachers (Johnson, 2010). Increased accountability has also led to several high-profile cheating scandals, such as in the Atlanta, Georgia, school district in 2011, where the recently-retired superintendent and other central office staff were investigated (Winerip, 2012).

Byrd et al. (2008) found that superintendents' tenure was an average of six to seven years, regardless of district size or location. The average age of superintendents has increased from 51 to nearly 55, creating a shorter tenure for the average district leader (Glass & Franceschini, 2006). Disincentives of assuming the superintendency include public school funding, sacrifices to personal life, and school board relations (Mansfield-Sutton et al., 2007).

While the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is in the beginning stages of reauthorization, the profoundly increased accountability standards of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) continue to be a daunting prospect for aspiring superintendents. While the incentives of assuming the superintendency, including the opportunity to make a difference, lead the learning process, and increased salary are attractive to some, many of these applicants are under-prepared for the challenges that await them (Mansfield Sutton et al., 2007). As a result, superintendent preparation programs must be developed in formats that best meet the requirements of this complex position.

Aspiring Missouri superintendents face significant challenges, with over $600 million in proposed cuts to the state budget for the 2011 fiscal year that will directly impact education (Gray, 2010). Cuts include 50% of state-reimbursed transportation costs, from $153 million to $83 million, and the elimination of the popular Career Ladder program, which amounted to $37 million (Lieb, 2010). A Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO-DESE) survey of school superintendents in August 2010, in which 319 of 523 districts responded, confirmed that 87% of districts' budgets had been reduced from previous years and 83% of districts had reduced staff (MO-DESE, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine new Missouri superintendents' perceptions of best practices in preparation programs. The superintendent sets the overall tone of the district and develops the mission and vision of the entire educational organization. It is a challenging role to assume, and, therefore, it is of utmost importance that superintendents are adequately prepared and continue to receive substantial support in the first few years on the job. This study reviewed existing literature on superintendent demographics and typical characteristics, the incentives and disincentives of the position, and best practices in the preparation and induction of new superintendents. This study also examined the perceptions of new superintendents regarding their preparation programs, the requisite knowledge and skills of the position, and the types of supports that are sought by new school CEO's. Data were gathered through the conceptual lens of a business management model of superintendent preparation compared to an emphasis on instructional leadership.

Research Questions

To examine best practices in the development of new Missouri superintendents, it was necessary to more closely examine their past experiences while in the university preparation program and their present experiences as a new superintendent. Within a framework of business management emphasis versus an instructional leadership emphasis, the following questions guided the research:

1. What are the best practices in the content and delivery of preparation programs for aspiring superintendents?

2. What are the requisite knowledge and skills of new superintendents?

3. How do individual perceptions of the role – business manager versus instructional leader – influence practice?

4. What types of support do first-year superintendents need?

Significance of the Study

Aspiring superintendents were the primary benefactors of this study. The significance of this study lies in the collection of perceptual data that contributed to the ongoing development of school leader preparation programs. Superintendents are expected to assume the potentially conflicting roles of both operational manager and the main instructional leader of a school district. University preparation programs must address these areas in a way that best meets the needs of aspiring superintendents, so graduate students in educational leadership will also benefit from this study.

Sanaghan and Lytle (2008) reported that first-year superintendents must adequately prepare themselves for the challenges that await them as they assume the job. University preparation programs may not have prepared aspiring superintendents for complex variables such as board politics and increased accountability measures, so first-year superintendents must carefully negotiate their contract and develop a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the district (Sanaghan & Lytle, 2008). The significance of this study is tied to how the perceptions of first-year superintendents are similar or dissimilar to the reality that awaits them.

Limitations

The primary limitation of a qualitative study is that the findings cannot be generalized to the population-at-large. The limitations of this study revolved around the purposeful sample of eight superintendents from the state of Missouri. The sample was

limited to first-year superintendents only. Only those first-year superintendents who were interested in responding were an option for data collection, and the data were subject to the truthfulness of responses.

Summary

This study examined best practices in the preparation of new superintendents and how to best support them in the first few years on the job to maximize retention and performance. With the current situation of increased accountability and reduced resources, the preparation and induction of new district leaders is crucial (Glass & Franceschini, 2006). The increased challenges of the job have led new superintendents to assume the job later in their careers, which contributes to shorter tenure and increased turnover (Glass & Franceschini, 2006). Superintendents are expected to perform as both an operational manager and the instructional visionary of the district; how these responsibilities potentially compliment and/or conflict with each other was the overriding theme of this study.

In Chapter Two, a review of relevant literature was conducted. The main topics of review included the history of the superintendent role, the conceptual lens of business manager as opposed to instructional leader, characteristics of and recommendations for superintendent preparation programs, and types of support sought out by beginning superintendents. The methodology of the study was outlined in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four the results of the study were discussed and conclusions and recommendations were provided in Chapter Five.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

History of the Superintendent Role

The expectations of the school district CEO have consistently become more complex since the inception of the superintendent role over 160 years ago (Kowalski et al., 2011). As a result, there has been a decline in the number of quality applicants for superintendent openings (Adams, 2010). The role was created in the 1830s with the first superintendents appearing in Louisville, Kentucky, and Buffalo, New York (Kowalski, et al., 2011). For the first 80 years, the primary responsibilities were the implementation of curriculum and supervising teachers, which were instructional in nature (Bjork, Glass, & Brunner, 2005). Superintendents were viewed as master teachers and instructional specialists, while the business functions of the district, such as finance and human resources, were taken care of by the school board (Bjork et al., 2005).

The perception of the superintendent as a scholar slowly eroded over the next several decades due to politics, school board expectations, and a perceived lack of superintendent skills in management (Kowalski, 2005). The onset of the Industrial Revolution, which was deemed successful in part due to the application of scientific management principles, helped influence the perception that superintendents should focus on time and efficiency (Kowalski, 2005). The scientific management movement was popularized by educational scholars such as Ellwood Cubberly, George Strayer, and Franklin Bobbitt between 1900 and 1920, which resulted in the first school management graduate programs (Kowalski, 2005).

Superintendents, as well as the general public, began to perceive the role as more about management and less about teaching. Callahan (1966) debated whether the

superintendents of the early 20th century were actually skillful managers who utilized scientific management principles or if they were just leveraging these popular management concepts of the era to gain personal power. Regardless of the success of applying scientific management principles to the superintendency, these early superintendents ensured that business management concepts would be the foundation of the superintendent role for several decades (Callahan, 1966).

Kowalski et al. (2011) reported that from the 1930s through the 1960s the superintendent role evolved through emphases as democratic leader and social researcher before ultimately being viewed as a multi-functioning position with an emphasis on effective communication and implementing change. The superintendent-as-democratic leader movement emerged from the Great Depression, when funding was scarce, and superintendents became more involved in lobbying state legislatures to receive more resources (Kowalski et al., 2011). By the 1950s, it became apparent that superintendents needed to focus more on the day-to-day issues of school district management, and although the political aspect of the role still exists, the emphasis on democratic leadership was replaced by an emphasis on social research.

The idea of superintendent-as-social scientist was forged by a combination of societal forces that were summarized by preeminent public school historian Raymond Callahan. Callahan (1966) noted a growing dissatisfaction with politicians and democratic leadership after the end of World War II, when people held the political belief that shared decision making and shared authority were not the best way to solve problems. At the same time, the social sciences were rapidly developing and inspired the belief that school superintendents should turn their attention toward social ills such as the

poor, juvenile delinquents, and minorities (Callahan, 1966). The foundation of the Civil

Rights Movement was being laid during this era, fed by a growing public dissatisfaction

with segregated schooling (Callahan, 1966). Also during this era, professors of

educational administration programs were seeking to elevate the status of the

superintendency to bring it on par with business management, and skills in

social/statistical research, specifically in psychology, sociology and economics, were

considered a way to do this (Callahan, 1966).

The scientific management principles that shaped the superintendency in the early

1900s continued to emerge at various times throughout the 20th century (Kowalski et al.,

2011). As institutions of higher education continued to lobby to elevate the importance

of the role of superintendent, various management principles from business and industry

influenced the practice of school leaders and the evolution of superintendent preparation

programs (Browne-Ferrigno & Glass, 2005). Local school boards evolved into entities

that had the power to tax citizens, and they increasingly looked to hire individuals with

business knowledge to manage the district (Browne-Ferrigno & Glass 2005). During the

last two decades of the 20th century, demands stemming from *A Nation at Risk* and

NCLB ensured that the school superintendent would have to possess a blend of

knowledge and skills that encompassed instructional leadership, political savvy, social

research skills and organizational management prowess (Browne-Ferrigno & Glass,

2005).

Business Management and Instructional Leadership

The perception of the role of the superintendent varies greatly both in and outside

of the profession. Some critics have argued that the superintendent is primarily an

organizational manager devoted to finance, personnel, and board relations, while others maintain that the top leader in the school district must primarily guide and develop learning. Among the latter are Peterson and Barnett (2005), who stated "…the concept and emphasis of superintendent leadership has shifted from the behaviors associated with management, control, power, and authority to those that emphasize collaboration, community, and relationship building" (p. 121). Many believe that especially in an era of increased accountability under NCLB, many superintendents should shift their emphasis to instructional leadership, and, therefore, preparation programs must follow suit (Peterson & Barnett, 2005). Cuban (1998) discussed the complexity and importance of superintendents' role in instructional leadership as it developed throughout the 1990s:

> Historically, superintendents have been expected to be well versed in curriculum and instruction. Among the earliest school chiefs were teachers and scholars who prided themselves on being able to teach teachers and design curriculum. These instructional expectations for the superintendent continue today. Exactly what kind of instructional role, however, is unclear. Just in the past decade, for example, mainstream thinking about superintendents leading the instructional team has shifted markedly to a strong focus on school-site decision making only to, again, shift back to the superintendent's office. The superintendent is now expected to lead teachers and principals in aligning the curriculum, raising academic standards, and producing better test results. (p. 2)

Peterson and Barnett (2005) reinforced Cuban's viewpoint that instructional leadership should continue to shift toward the superintendent. Peterson and Barnett (2005) cited some required skills, including an understanding of effective models of

teaching, engaging in frequent conversations about teaching and learning, aligning

curriculum with standards, using different types of assessment data, and making relevant

professional development a priority. Management guru, Collins, (2005), cautioned

against social sector organizations adopting a corporate model:

> We must reject the idea – well-intentioned but dead wrong – that the primary path
>
> to greatness in the social sectors is to become more like a business. Most
>
> businesses fall somewhere between mediocre and good. Few are great. When
>
> you compare great companies with god ones, many widely practiced business
>
> norms turn out to correlate to mediocrity, not greatness. (p. 1)

Collins (2005) recommended the focus turn away from replicating corporate business

practices and shift toward discipline in planning, governance, and allocation of resources.

Schlechty (2008) reiterated that corporate models of doing business are

problematic when applied to school districts and students. Corporate leaders who

espouse applying business models to schools often do not have an adequate

understanding of how schools operate (Schlechty, 2008). While the scientific

management principles of the early 20th century led to great success for many American

corporations, these concepts are not as applicable in the early 21st century, where

consistent innovation and adaptability are the new keys to success (Schlechty, 2008).

On the other hand, Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) claimed that

superintendents must build leadership capacity but not at the expense of the appropriate

distribution of financial, material, and human resources, and that "management remains

critically important in the successful operation of local educational agencies" (p. 139).

Management is the process of accomplishing the goals and tasks set by the district, and

the superintendent must act as manager in the sense that final authority rests with the district CEO (Browne-Ferrigno & Glass, 2005). Bjork, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno (2005) identified six primary managerial tasks of the modern superintendent: managing governmental relations, district personnel, finances and budgets, facilities, contractual negotiations, and public relations. The contemporary superintendent must find a balance between leadership and management styles (Browne-Ferrigno & Glass, 2005).

The impact a superintendent actually has on academic achievement has been debated. Marzano and Waters (2009) determined that the longevity of the superintendent has a positive effect on academic achievement. A meta-analysis conducted by Marzano and Waters (2009) determined there was a direct correlation between the quality of superintendent leadership and increased student achievement when the superintendent exhibited certain behaviors, including:

1. Ensuring collaborative goal setting

2. Establishing nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction

3. Creating board alignment with and support of district goals

4. Monitoring achievement and instruction goals

5. Allocating resources to support goals for achievement and instruction. (p. 6)

The allocation of resources to support improved instructional achievement is a challenge for all superintendents, particularly in smaller districts where the superintendent is the only option. Marzano and Waters (2009) suggested dropping any initiatives not related to instructional improvement and designating any possible funding to the professional development of principals, who remain the primary instructional leader for teachers.

Copland and Honig (2010) attested there are longstanding central office cultural norms that define district leadership as operational in nature rather than supporting instructional-type initiatives. With a national emphasis on school district reform and improvement, Copland and Honig (2010) conducted research on how superintendents can better support principals in instructional initiatives, and found it requires a shift in how central office staff conducts their daily work. District superintendents who had successfully made the shift from the traditional operational manager to the nontraditional instructional leader followed some specific practices, including delegating central office staff for the sole purpose of providing intensive support to principals, who also struggle with running a building while acting as instructional leader to their teachers. In order for superintendents to improve instructional practices in their district, superintendents must provide "…job-embedded assistance designed to help principals continuously improve as instructional leaders is central to overall system improvement and therefore absolutely critical central office work" (Copland & Honig, 2010, p. 12). Other suggested practices for superintendents to improve instructional leadership include providing support and professional development for central office staff charged with supporting principals, taking a customer-service approach in providing principal support, and utilizing data to guide principal support initiatives (Copland & Honig, 2010).

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) created six standards that have been used by most states as a guidepost for developing their local leadership standards and which are designed to maximize instructional leadership. The first standard reads, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and

stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14). The content of the superintendent exam required in many states for certification, as well as the curriculum of many superintendent preparation programs, is based upon the ISLLC standards.

Decman, Badgett, Randall, Parmer, Sanchez, and Coryat (2010) conducted a qualitative study with 16 superintendents in order to examine ISLLC standard one and better understand how superintendent behavior influences student achievement. One of the research questions specifically addressed to what extent superintendents coming from a nontraditional or business background can effectively lead a district. The main theme emerging from the study was that sufficient knowledge of both instructional practices and business management practices were the ideal situation. Nine of the 16 respondents felt that while this balance was important, that superintendent applicants from the business world should not be completely discounted, however. Four of the respondents were opposed to superintendents from a nontraditional background, and two were in favor of business leaders as superintendents (Decman et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, superintendents coming from corporate America have been a rising trend over the last 15 years, particularly in large urban areas (Adams, 2011). The Council for Great City Schools conducted research on nontraditional superintendents and found their average tenure of 3.64 years was the same as superintendents coming from an educational background (Adams, 2011). Some common advantages of the business leader-turned-superintendent are experience leading a large organization, expertise in finance, and the ability to provide fresh perspectives and new ideas in an era when many are unhappy with the state of public education (Adams, 2011).

One business leader-turned-superintendent who made headlines in 2011 was the appointment by New York City (NYC) mayor, Michael Bloomberg, of publishing executive, Cathie Black, to the post of Chancellor of NYC schools. Black's appointment set off a firestorm of controversy due to her lack of educational credentials. After three months, Black resigned after a series of high-profile gaffes that made her appear out of touch with NYC students and their families (Adams, 2011). Former NYC education chancellor and current superintendent of the Miami, Florida, school district, Rudy Crews, said, "I think it's a profession with a discrete set of skills and specific certification requirement. It does require some level of preparation beyond having attended a school oneself" (as cited in Adams, 2011, p. 36). A successful business-to-education example is former Colorado governor Roy Romer, who led the Los Angeles Unified School District from 2000 to 2006 and cited his background in politics was invaluable in helping him be successful with management and policy analysis (Adams, 2010). Paul Vallas, who previously led both the Chicago and Philadelphia school systems, cited his nontraditional background in public policy as an Illinois legislator as a reason for his success: "The ability to understand public finance and outcome-based budgeting is an edge for nontraditional leaders" (as cited in Adams, 2011, p. 36).

Another factor influencing the degree of instructional leadership versus organizational management in the superintendency is gender. Female superintendents employ a different style:

> [Females] work from the center of a web-like organizational structure rather than a top-down structure; employ a collegial, supportive, empowering style; establish a district culture of increasing achievement through their instructional leadership;

create a positive environment for change; justify tough personnel issues on the

basis of children first; develop supportive networks to address political and

budgetary issues; and stay true to their core values of integrity and caring about

people. (Washington, Miller, & Rene, 2007, p. 281)

Haar, Raskin, and Robicheau (2009) conducted research on the positive attributes that

women bring to the superintendency. They found females bring a higher level of

expertise in curriculum and instruction, stay abreast of educational reform movements

and embrace them as opportunities for growth, and display better interpersonal skills than

their male counterparts (Haar et al., 2009).

Superintendent Demographics

A recent major research study on the superintendency was conducted by Glass

and Franceschini (2007) who collected information from superintendents all over the

country. Many of the major findings pointed to the importance in preparing and

inducting new superintendents, including the demographics. The average age of the

2,110 respondents (superintendents) was 54.6 years, and over 70% were 50 years and

above (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Twenty percent were over 59, and 19% were in

their forties, with only 3% younger than 40 (Glass & Franceschini, 2006). The

respondents were 80% male, 20% female, with an average of 5.2 years in their current

position (Glass & Franceschini, 2006). Nearly 40% planned to retire in the next five

years, and there was a 17% overall turnover rate (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Glass and

Franceschini (2007) cited nearly 60% of the superintendents reported being under very

great stress or considerable stress and that 85% believed that there is an inadequate

supply of superintendents prepared to assume the position, perhaps based on the significant disincentives to the role.

Glass and Franceschini (2007) reported of those considering the superintendent role, 54% were turned off by the lack of funding in public schools, 46% worried about family sacrifices, and 44% cited potential problems with the board as reasons to stay away. Other issues cited were local politics, accountability, low salary, and labor relations. The primary incentives attracting those to the job were the opportunity to make a difference, cited by 74%, and leading student/staff learning at 52%. Other incentives were salary, building a team, and addressing challenges.

In comparison, the 2010 AASA study revealed some similarities and differences from the 2007 responses. In regard to gender, the superintendency saw a decline in females between 1950 and 1980, with only 0.5% representation in 1982 (Kowalski et al., 2011). In the past two decades, more women have assumed the role, rising to 7% in 1992, 14% in 2000, and now estimated to be at 24% (Kowalski et al., 2011). In regard to race, minority superintendents made up just 2% in 1980, 3% in 1990, 5% in 2000, and currently sits at about 6% of the total (Kowalski et al., 2011). In regard to turnover, only 50% of those surveyed indicated they would remain in the superintendency in 2015, and within that group, only 1 in 5 were open to moving to a different district in order to remain the position (Kowalski et al., 2011). Of those planning to retire, nearly 79% indicated they planned to continue working part time (Kowalski et al., 2011).

In regard to personal demographic characteristics of the respondents, Kowalski et al. (2011) reported that 91% were married. Political party affiliation was fairly equal, with 37% identifying as Democrat, 28% as Republican, and 25% as Independent. In

comparison, they reported their political philosophy as 30% conservative, 15% liberal, and 55% moderate. The age of the respondents was not as equally distributed, with 54% between the ages of 51 and 60, 23% of superintendents were in their forties, 5% in their thirties, and 18% in their sixties (Kowalski et al., 2011).

A similar state-level study in Texas, by Byrd, Drews, and Johnson (2006), found that of the total 1,029 Texas school districts, 570, or 56%, of the superintendents had left the profession between 2003 and 2008. Of the remaining 459, only 283 had been in the same position for five years (Byrd et al., 2006). It appeared that those who remained five years had significantly longer tenure (an average of 10 years) than those who changed positions within the first five years. Those who had tenure of more than five years reported significantly higher salaries (Byrd et al., 2006).

In regard to job responsibility, tenure, salary, and supply, there are significant differences in the role of rural versus urban superintendent. Lamkin (2006) reported that the rural superintendent role is less desirable for a number of reasons, including isolation, limited resources, community expectations, and culture. Rural school districts have a more difficult time attracting candidates because of a general lack of respect and value for a rural setting and experience more frequent turnover (Lamkin, 2006). In rural districts, the superintendent is often the sole administrator, performing multiple roles. The school district is frequently the largest employer in the community, giving the superintendent additional responsibility for economic viability. Rural superintendents also experience a significant lack of privacy, working and living in a fish bowl-type environment (Lamkin, 2006). Despite these conditions, most first-year superintendents begin the superintendency in small districts, which are often located in rural areas.

Kowalski et al. (2011) reported that 68% of respondents in the 2010 AASA survey were employed in districts with less than 3,000 students.

The experiences of female rural superintendents are even more complex. Gammill and Vaughn (2011) interviewed 40 female rural superintendents and found that these women who pursued a historically masculinized role in rural communities often experienced additional barriers to success. Gender role perceptions of women, exacerbated by small-town values, complicated the superintendents' attempts to lead the school district. Gammill and Vaughn (2011) reported that female superintendents must be "aware of how a school community views acceptable womanhood" (p. 113) and avoid the temptation to use a gender-neutral style, recommending instead that they integrate female-associated behaviors into their leadership approach.

The demographic characteristics of urban superintendents differ in some ways from rural superintendents and the population-at-large. The Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) reported feedback from 56 urban school districts in 2010, with 47% of the superintendents identifying themselves as White, 41% Black, and 11% Hispanic. Males comprised 74% of the urban superintendents. White female superintendents increased from zero in 1999 to 9% in 2010, while Black and Hispanic females slightly decreased from1999 (CGCS, 2010). The CGCS (2010) reported 91% of all urban superintendents came from an educational background as opposed to a non-traditional path.

Incentives and Disincentives of the Superintendency

The majority of Glass and Franceschini's (2007) respondents (85%) believed that there is an inadequate supply of superintendents prepared to assume the position, perhaps

based on the significant disincentives to the role. Glass and Franceschini's 2007 survey

indicated that nearly 60% of the superintendents reported being under *very great stress* or

considerable stress. Glass and Franceschini (2007) reported that of those considering the

superintendent role, 54% were deterred by the lack of funding in public schools, 46%

worried about family sacrifices, and 44% cited potential problems with the board as

reasons to avoid the position. Other issues cited were local politics, accountability, low

salary, and labor relations (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Byrd et al. (2006) studied 235

Texas superintendents and reported similar results on disincentives, including enormous

pressure to increase student achievement and the often tenuous school board relationship.

The main factors that negatively affected Texas superintendent tenure were working with

the board president, not being able to get decisions made at the board level, and general

board relations (Byrd et al., 2006).

The primary incentives attracting those to the job were the opportunity to make a

difference, cited by 74%, and leading student/staff learning, at 52%, while other

incentives were salary, building a team, and addressing challenges (Glass & Franceschini,

2007). Much has been made of superintendent salary over the past few years. Glass and

Franceschini (2007) reported it is a primary incentive for many who aspire to the

position, particularly those who subscribe to the business manager philosophy of the role.

Salary incentive is reflected in rising compensation, as salaries for large district

superintendents increased nearly 20% between 1995 and 2005 (CGCS, 2006).

The CGCS conducted a 2010 salary study of urban superintendents in the largest

66 districts in the country, serving nearly 49 million students and 30% of the lowest

income families. This study revealed the average salary to be $239,000 in 2010, up from

$154,000 in 1999 (CGCS, 2010). Salaries varied based on size of student enrollment in large urban settings. Superintendents serving in districts with 25,000 to 50,000 students averaged $197,000; superintendents in districts with 50,000 to 100,000 students averaged $226,000; superintendents in districts with an enrollment of 100,000 to 200,000 averaged $271,000 and those districts with over 200,000 students paid an average salary of $286,000 (CGCS, 2010). Salaries for rural superintendents were much less, with an average of $146,000 for districts with an enrollment between 2500 and 10,000, and $108,000 for districts with 300 to 2,500 students (Education Week, 2006).

Fringe benefits are another growing phenomenon, with the most common including housing allowances, car allowances, travel, and bonuses for meeting goals (CGCS, 2010). The CGCS study revealed that among urban superintendents, who are much more likely to receive fringe benefits and bonuses, only one-third reported receiving pay-for-performance provisions, ranging from $5,000 to $65,000. With the average benefits package totaling $141,000, 73% of urban superintendents reported both car allowances and retirement account contributions, and 2% reported receiving a housing allowance (CGCS, 2010).

While superintendent salary is markedly higher than other district employees, the salaries still pale in comparison to similar positions in higher education and the corporate world. The American Institute for Research studied the efforts of New Jersey schools to attract quality candidates for their state, which has 25% of its districts in need of improvement and an annual superintendent turnover rate of 20% (Cavanna, Norris, Adams, & Therriault, 2008). While the average salary of $154,000 was competitive with neighboring states, such as New York and Connecticut, it fell short of the average public

university president salary of $264,000 and average private university president salary of

$320,000 (Cavanna et al., 2008). Further comparisons supported this gap, with the

average salary of New Jersey Fortune 500 CEO's at $1,046,000 and hospital CEO's in

New Jersey at an average of $668,000 (Cavanna et al., 2008).

Although nowhere near their corporate counterpart salaries, the resignation or

dismissal of a superintendent has a significant financial impact on the district. It is

estimated the cost to replace a superintendent is 1.5 times the annual salary and increase

when a buyout is involved. Although the AASA (2006) found only 2% - 3% of

superintendents were forced out of their jobs, the implications of superintendent

termination and buyouts have lasting effects. Ray and Marshall (2005) cited negative

impacts on finances, staff morale, community support, and ultimately student

achievement in each of the five Texas districts they studied following a buyout.

Requisite Knowledge and Skills of the Superintendency

Peterson, Fusarelli, and Kowalski's (2008) study of first-year superintendents

identified three general areas of superintendent preparation program coursework that

were perceived as the most beneficial. The first was coursework in the practical aspects

of the superintendency, such as finance, law, and personnel management (Peterson et al.,

2008). In this study the respondents recognized finance in particular as an important

subject, but had mixed feelings about the quality of the courses (Peterson et al., 2008).

A second area was practical experiences, such as internships and opportunities to interact

with school boards, and the third area was the instructor's ability to combine coursework

with real-world problem solving (Peterson et al., 2008). The respondents in this survey

cited theory, lack of instructor experience, and not enough real-world projects as the primary weaknesses in their preparation (Peterson et al., 2008).

The 2010 AASA study collected data from superintendents about why they were selected for their position by the local school board. In that survey, 33.5% responded it was their personal characteristics, 24.9% believed it was the potential to be a change agent, and 20% cited the ability to be an instructional leader (Kowalski et al., 2011). The ability to make change was also the number one skill cited in the 2006 AASA survey; other skills noted in the 2006 study were the abilities to build a team and address challenges (Glass & Franceschini, 2006). Regarding knowledge gleaned from coursework, in the AASA survey school law was rated as *extremely important* by 73% and school finance was rated second at 64%. Following law and finance, there was a substantial drop in the *extremely important* rating, with all other subjects falling to 50% or below on the *extremely important* rating (Kowalski et al., 2011).

In *The Superintendent as CEO*, Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, and Glass (2005), outlined a series of skills that superintendents must possess in order to be a successful instructional leader. A superintendent should know and be able to perform the following:

Develop, implement, and monitor change processes to improve student learning, adult development and climates for learning; demonstrate an understanding of motivation in the instructional process; describe classroom management theories and techniques; demonstrate an understanding of the development of the total student, including his or her physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic needs; formulate a plan to assess teachers; allocate instructional resources, and assign them in the most cost-effective and equitable manner to enhance student

outcomes; describe instructional strategies that are multi-culturally sensitive and learning style oriented; apply computer technology to instructional programs; describe alternative methods of monitoring and evaluating student achievement based on objectives and learning outcomes; describe how to interpret and use testing/assessment results to improve education; demonstrate knowledge of research findings on the use of a variety of instructional strategies; and develop a student achievement monitoring and reporting system. (p. 56)

These requisite skills directly relate to the meta-analysis of Marzano and Waters (2009), which recommended that the superintendent tie these types of instructional strategies to specific district-wide goals. The superintendent must consistently and directly communicate the link between the district-wide goals and their effects on achievement. The requisite knowledge and skills in organizational management for the superintendent are complex and varied.

According to Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005), the role of the superintendent increasingly resembles that of the corporate CEO: "Today's superintendent, like the contemporary corporate CEO, must achieve high levels of productivity through less-hierarchically structured organizations in which individuals are empowered and decision making is distributed among those most closely engaged in the work" (p. 139). The six primary managerial tasks of superintendents identified by Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005), which include managing governmental relations, district personnel, finances and budgets, facilities, contractual negotiations, and public relations, clearly identify the superintendent as a variation of the corporate CEO. Among these, personnel and financial management are arguably the most crucial for success of the organization.

School districts are defined by the people who make up the organization, and perhaps the most important skill of the district leader is to ensure quality professionals are hired and retained. Personnel management is comprised of human resources planning, recruitment, selection, professional development, performance appraisal, and compensation (Browne-Ferrigno & Glass, 2005). Related to these tasks is the importance of superintendent mentoring. Corporations increasingly utilize mentoring, identified as crucial for superintendent success.

According to several studies, more than one-third of major corporations utilize mentoring programs to help develop the workforce (Ouchi, 2009). The NYC Leadership Academy, which mentors both superintendents and principals in New York City schools, was studied by UCLA management professor, William Ouchi, who conducted research on many executive-training programs. Ouchi (2009) studied such companies as IBM, Hewlett-Packard, and General Electric, and cited the NYC Leadership Academy for principals as one of the best leadership training programs in the United States. Ouchi (2009) cited the program's intensive mentoring combined with the superintendents allowing for greater autonomy at the building principal level:

> Principals do need special training to operate in an empowered way. They need to understand how to use a budget effectively. They need to understand how to lead a team of teachers through a collaborative decision-making process, because teachers are very independent professionals and oftentimes protected by a union, so the principal cannot simply dictate to them. (p. 2)

Corporate management gurus, Bolman and Deal (2008), suggested developing a shared-management approach that encourages autonomy. After hiring, training, and

retaining the right people, successful organizations then invest in and empower these

individuals to promote decision making and egalitarianism (Bolman & Deal, 2008). This

correlates directly with the research of Marzano and Waters, who recommended that

superintendents develop autonomy among their building principals. The concept of

defined autonomy is discussed by Marzano and Waters in their 2009 meta-analysis of

superintendent influence on instructional achievement:

> The superintendent has established a relationship with schools we refer to as
> *defined autonomy* when he or she also encourages principals and others to assume
> responsibility for school success. Defined autonomy means that the
> superintendent expects building principals and all other administrators in the
> district to lead within the boundaries defined by the district goals. (p. 8)

In their research on principal autonomy and the role of the superintendent,

Sigerson, Ames, Levey, Murphy, Morote and Inserra (2011) reinforced the importance of

goal alignment:

> The principal, the superintendent and the board of education must be aligned in
> their goals in order to successfully achieve desired academic results. All
> stakeholders must be invested in the outcome and success of their district. The
> principal must feel a level of autonomy but must not be left to make all decisions
> alone. Therefore, we believe that "defined" autonomy combined with a
> collaborative working relationship can predict student academic achievement. (p.
> 7)

Sigerson et al. (2011) studied the perceptions of dozens of New York school board

presidents to glean information about the role of the superintendent in creating autonomy

related to student achievement. They concluded in order to reach this crucial stage of defined autonomy, carefully planned professional development must be implemented among all levels of the organization (Sigerson et al., 2011).

In regard to professional development, Senge (2006) espoused the importance of developing a Learning Organization, which quickly became part of management lexicon and inspired nothing short of a revolution in the corporate world. The concept of the Learning Organization has been embraced by superintendents and other school leaders, particularly the concept of systems thinking. Systems thinking is the umbrella for the other four Senge-penned disciplines of personal mastery, team learning, building shared vision, and mental models that guide and develop organizational learning (Senge, 2006).

Senge (2006) reported that continual learning and improving processes begins with personal mastery of the subject, in this case by the superintendent, who in turn facilitates team learning. The team, in this case, building principals and central office staff, learn together to develop a shared vision for the school district that define all actions of the organization and its goals (Senge, 2006). This shared vision is brought down to the teacher level and in turn informs all practice in the classroom (Senge, 2006). This professional development of superintendents, principals, and teachers is inherent in both improved instructional achievement and improved organizational management (Senge, 2006).

Besides the careful delegation of authority and the facilitation of professional learning, Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) considered contractual and/or collective negotiations as among the most difficult tasks facing the superintendent. Issues surrounding salaries, benefits, tenure, nonrenewal of teachers, and collective bargaining

agreements must be carefully orchestrated. Both corporate managers and superintendents involved in collective bargaining processes must tread carefully.

Since collective bargaining with teacher unions began 40 years ago, school districts have faced many challenges to the reforms that superintendents try to put in place. Rebore (2007) explained the collective bargaining process in local school districts is based upon the premise that employees in a democratic society have a basic right to provide input in the decision making process. For the collective bargaining process to work as intended, the position of the superintendent and the local school board must be in alignment and based upon the following core beliefs:

1) Recognizing the right of all school district employees to organize for the purpose of collective negotiations.

2) Authorizing the director of employee relations to negotiate with the duly elected employee representatives in matters relating to salaries, fringe benefits, and working conditions.

3) Requiring the director of employee relations to establish administrative procedures for the effective implementation of the negotiation process. This is to be accomplished under the supervision of the superintendent or the director of human resources, who is directly responsible to the school superintendent.

(Rebore, 2007, p. 303)

Moe (2008) cited the primary problem with the collective bargaining process: "Collective bargaining would not exist except for the power of the teachers' unions, and the core interests they pursue in negotiations are rooted in their own survival and well-being as organizations—not in student achievement" (para.4). Other critics of collective

bargaining, notably superintendents, argue that the negotiations rarely come out in favor of students.

Superintendent Preparation Programs

In 2003, there were over 600 graduate programs that awarded 15,000 masters degrees and 3,200 doctoral degrees in educational leadership (Levine, 2005). In the past 15 years, an increasing number or nontraditional superintendent applicants have emerged from the business world, resulting in increased debate over superintendent qualifications and background (Adams, 2010).) Fusarelli (2005) reported many states have initiated alternative certification routes for aspiring superintendents. Cooper, Fusarelli, Jackson, and Poster (2002) reported superintendent preparation is "rife with difficulties, including synchronization of preparation and actual practice, the theory-practice disconnect, the need for life-long learning, and development of an adequate knowledge base" (p. 242).

Most superintendents, around 75%, have rated their preparation programs highly over the last three decades, as indicated in studies conducted in 1982, 1992, and 2000 (Glass, 2000). Robicheau and Haar (2008) identified 10 content areas that were crucial to be covered in a university preparation program for new superintendents: coursework in strategic planning, students' due process rights, demographic changes and their effects, time management, site based management, public relations, recruitment of staff, empowering the staff, relations with the school board, and the evaluation of other administrators. Robicheau and Haar (2008) further concluded that these content areas should be framed within the context of extensive involvement in the program by the student, using standards to guide the preparation program, internships that are both

relevant and extend over time, and developing partnerships with the universities that supply the candidates

Kowalski, Peterson, and Fusarelli (2009) conducted research on the perceptions of novice superintendents in Missouri, Ohio, California, and North Carolina regarding their preparation program. The purposes of the study were to produce profiles of new superintendents and their school districts, to glean their perceptions of their preparation program, and to draw comparisons among the states. As background, Kowalski et al. (2009) noted that the majority of prior research conducted on educational administration preparation programs had focused on the principal role rather than the superintendent, and that there was a trend toward higher levels of education, particularly in regard to district size (Kowalski et al., 2009). Kowalski et al. (2009) found that 83% of superintendents in districts with more than 25,000 students held doctoral degrees, whereas only 17% of those in small districts with less than 300 students held a doctorate.

In their survey of 117 novice superintendents from both small and large districts in Missouri, Ohio, California, and North Carolina, the respondents reported satisfaction levels of their academic programs in different areas (Kowalski et al., 2009). Nearly 85% agreed they were prepared to be an instructional leader, 78% were prepared for managing resources, 92% were prepared to be a democratic leader, 72% were ready to conduct action research, and 80% were confident they could communicate effectively (Kowalski et al., 2009). Conversely, 42% were not prepared for working effectively with board members, and 59% were not prepared to engage in political action (Kowalski et al., 2009). School finance and law were cited as strengths of their respective preparation

programs, while too much theory and lack of superintendent experience among professors being the major weaknesses (Kowalski et al., 2009).

With more nontraditional superintendents moving into the field, many experts believe blended preparation programs, incorporating both educational and business coursework, will likely increase in number (Adams, 2011). In addition to blended programs, alternative superintendent training programs are finding success. The Broad Center for the management of School Systems, based in Los Angeles, California, is an example of a nonprofit organization that recruits superintendents from both inside and outside the field of education. The Broad Center has received about 7,000 applications annually over the past few years, but only selects 10 to 15 per cohort group (Adams, 2011).

Teachers College professor, Levine (2005), a vocal critic of American educational leadership preparation, conducted extensive research on educational leadership programs and found that over half of all education schools had a principal preparation program, usually at the masters degree level, and that about one-third offered a superintendent preparation program. The number of programs has increased dramatically over the past two decades, yet exhibit considerable problems, including curriculum that is disconnected from practice, professors with little experience in the field, little attention to mentoring, very low admission criteria, and insufficient funding (Levine, 2005).

Glass (2006) cited the major issues as too little hands-on experience, lack of technology as subject matter, no link between content and practice, and too much of an emphasis on the experience of the respective professor. Similarly, Fry, Bottoms, O'Neill, and Walker (2007) contended that too many administrative preparation programs are

centered on textbooks and lectures when future superintendents should be engaged in on-the-job training. They found that most internship programs, while almost always a part of educational administration programs, fail to fully address the scope of what activities a superintendent actually engages in regularly (Fry et al., 2007).

Recommendations in the Literature

The development of partnerships between university preparation programs and local school districts is cited as a major recommendation to better prepare aspiring superintendents (Bjork, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2005). Bjork et al. (2005) found that creating strong partnerships with local school districts are crucial in developing internships and relevant projects that are meaningful. These partnerships have grown in numbers over the past fifteen years. In 2008, there were 84 existing partnerships in 38 states, with 344 individual schools and 96 colleges and universities participating (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2008). According to the AACTE, district-university partnerships have common goals of maximizing student performance and achievement, preparing new teachers and administrators, providing professional development for existing teachers and administrators, and applying inquiry-based learning to improve practice (AACTE, 2008).

Robicheau and Haar (2008) cited the partnership between the St. Paul, Minnesota, school district and Minnesota State University-Mankato (MSU-Mankato) as a prime example of a successful program. A sampling of Minnesota superintendents met with MSU-Mankato faculty to devise a program whose key components were the use of state standards as the foundation for content, ongoing on-the-job training, a year-long internship with relevant assignments and projects, and the development of a partnership

with the Mankato K-12 district and other neighboring districts who were the likely

consumers of the program graduates (Robicheau & Haar, 2008). Seminar-style courses

were developed around the following competencies: district leadership, politics, policy

and school board relations, life balance, organizational communication, district culture

and values, and career preparation (Robicheau & Haar, 2008).

Students in the program completed a 150-hour individual internship and logged

an additional 30 hours every two months in a cohort-style group meetings, which are

based upon the six seminar topics (Robicheau & Haar, 2008). The cohort style was

intended to help the aspiring superintendents learn from each other, as well as from a

subject-area expert. Participants rated the program as very effective and relevant to the

position and recommended that other programs adopt a similar model (Robicheau &

Haar, 2008).

An established partnership with local universities also offers potential advantages

in regard to the program curriculum and certification and licensure of educational leaders.

Universities may revise curriculum content and delivery to meet not only the needs of the

students, but also the ever-changing certification rules at the state level. Kowalski et al.

(2011) reported that of the 50 states, nine require no superintendent licensure and, of the

remaining 41 states, 54% allow an emergency license, and 37% allow a provisional

license.

Another major recommendation found in relevant literature is the utilization of

both formal and informal mentoring of new and aspiring superintendents. The word

mentor comes from a character from Homer's Odyssey. Before departing for Troy,

Ulysses turns over his son, Telemachus, to be guided by his friend Mentor, who serves as

a teacher, guardian, and friend. With half of all new education graduates leaving the profession within the first five years, mentors can provide invaluable support (Sweeny, 2008). While there are many established induction/mentoring programs in place for teachers – many required by state law – there are far less programs for new administrators (Sweeny, 2008). The research and justifications that support effective teacher mentoring programs can be directly applied to administrative programs as well. Research shows that only half of the new educators hired are retained, that quality mentoring programs can dramatically increase retention rates, and that the cost of not retaining is more than the cost of effective induction (Sweeny, 2008).

More and more states are creating formalized mentoring programs for superintendents in response to the growing complexity and accountability inherent in the position (Beem, 2007). Superintendent mentoring programs are becoming more popular due to the success of teacher programs in the 1990s, which led to an increase in principal mentoring programs in the early 2000s (Beem, 2007). The state-sponsored programs, usually administered through the AASA state chapters, have a wide variety of components. Some states, such as Texas and Missouri, require mentoring participation, while others do not; other states pick up the tab for the program while others ask districts to pay a fee (Beem, 2007). Longstanding state programs in Massachusetts and New Jersey offer a model of what a successful superintendent mentoring program can look like (Beem, 2007).

Massachusetts launched its program in 2001 in response to an anticipated large number of superintendents who would be retiring (Beem, 2007). While regular voluntary roundtable discussions for superintendents were in place, Massachusetts added a summer

institute and three large-group meetings per year to discuss timely issues facing the state's school leaders (Beem, 2007). Two retired superintendents were hired as mentors and took on 12-16 new mentees each, with one-on-one meetings scheduled throughout the year (Beem, 2007). With these layers of support in place, over 100 new Massachusetts superintendents have participated in the program, nearly all of whom have provided positive feedback (Beem, 2007).

New Jersey launched its program in 1991 with mentoring becoming a required component to superintendent certification (Beem, 2007). New superintendents receive a provisional certificate upon completion of a graduate program and are automatically assigned a team of three mentors for a one-year residency during their first year (Beem, 2007). With an average of 60 new superintendents each year, this requires a large number of mostly practicing school leaders to serve on mentor teams, for which they receive a stipend (Beem, 2007).

The National Staff Development Council has cited mentoring as a promising strategy to develop and retain new educators, particularly when the mentoring activities are job-embedded (Darling, 2009). Sweeny (2009) asserted that mentoring has a number of positive effects, including retention, costs associated with turnover, and a trickle effect on student achievement. Learning experiences that are relevant and organized around student achievement can help leaders master the skills of their new position. The mentoring must be job-embedded and move beyond observation to assuming the responsibility for district-level projects (Gray &Walker, 2007)

Petersen, Fusarelli, and Kowalski (2009) reported that first-year superintendents have not had an induction process that is similar to first-year teachers or even other

administrators. Since school districts only retain half of all new teachers hired, research

has been conducted to show that quality induction programs can dramatically increase

retention rates, and that the cost of not retaining is more than the cost of effective

induction (Sweeny, 2008). Lobbying by teacher organizations has resulted in widespread

state funding for teacher induction, but efforts to support more focused induction for

superintendents has not occurred (Kowalski, Peterson, & Fusarelli, 2009). Glass, Bjork

and Brunner (2000) suggested since new superintendents are generally older and more

experienced than new teachers it is assumed they do not need induction. On the contrary,

anecdotal evidence on new superintendents reveals they have feelings of isolation and

anxiety because the position is so different compared to their prior job responsibilities

(Ceglarek, 2004).

The AASA's 2007 follow-up survey to Glass and Franceschini's, *The State of the*

Superintendency, gleaned the opinions of 2,200 superintendents on the importance of

mentoring, with 97% ranking it *very important* or *moderately important,* and only 3%

considering it *not important* (McCord, 2008). McCord (2008) found that only about 45%

had participated in a formal mentoring program, most of which were state-sponsored, but

that nearly two-thirds had received informal mentoring from experienced superintendents

in proximity to their district. These same superintendents reported in 80% of their school

districts there was no program for aspiring superintendents (McCord, 2008).

A survey by the Southern Regional Education Board of university-based

internship mentors, assigned to educational leadership students, found that less than half

of the respondents reported opportunities to lead school improvement initiatives and that

mentoring tended to focus on task checklists and reporting requirements (Gray & Walker,

2007). With increased accountability on superintendents to show continuous improvement, it is essential that mentoring activities, such as university preparation programs, must implement job-embedded problem solving at their core (Gray & Walker, 2007). McCord (2008) reported that many superintendents have a sense of isolation that is exacerbated by a lack of opportunities for mentoring, and that participating in one or more networks of superintendents combats this sense of isolation.

Livingston (2007) recommended that superintendents participate in multiple networks based on similarities in required skills and geographic location. Livingston (2007) attempted to define the concept of a network as:

> …something close to a connected group of individuals (or organizations) plus the pathways of communication, shared knowledge and interdependence that link them together. Not a definition with much precision, but we are likely to know one when we see one. And there are a number of appropriate stand-ins for network — each with its own nuanced contribution to the wide universe of meanings — words such as *alliance, association, confederation, consociation, consortium* or *fellowship.* (p. 2)

Livingston (2007) reported that when superintendents are surveyed, they consistently cite networking as a beneficial activity.

The AASA has studied formal superintendent networks that provide opportunities to discuss student achievement and to engage in projects designed to promote student growth (McCord, 2008). Additionally, the AASA found these networks provided opportunities for mentoring and coaching many superintendents were lacking, but they had an especially profound effect on new superintendents (McCord, 2008). Along with

formal and informal networks, state-level professional organizations were a common provider of networking for new superintendents, with many state affiliates of the AASA providing a variety of options (Beem, 2007).

Summary

A review of the literature revealed that the superintendency has evolved over the past 150 years into a complex position that combines aspects of both instructional leadership and organizational management (Kowalski et al., 2011). Superintendents have evolved through phases as primarily teacher leaders, business managers, politicians, and social researchers before ultimately becoming a hybrid of all of them (Kowalski et al., 2011). Increased accountability under NCLB has forced superintendents to consistently improve student achievement while working with shrinking resources.

While superintendents can have a significant impact on student achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009), the financial, personnel, and community relations aspects often dominate the role. Superintendents in larger districts have a different perspective of their role due to delegating tasks to central office support staff (Copland & Honig, 2010). Rural superintendents generally fill multiple roles, yet have far less students (Lamkin, 2006).

Superintendent demographics are changing, with more women and minorities assuming the role (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). In general, superintendents are entering the position later in life and have a shorter tenure than in the past (Kowalski et al., 2011). The incentives for pursuing the superintendency include the opportunity to make a difference, the opportunity to lead learning, salary, building teams, and addressing challenges (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). The primary disincentives were a lack of

funding for public schools, family sacrifices, and relations with the school board (Mansfield-Sutton, 2008).

There are concerns regarding the aging demographics of current superintendents and a potential scarcity of qualified candidates (Mansfield-Sutton, 2008). Frequent turnover is common, particularly in urban districts where the average tenure is about three years (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Turnover can have negative effects on the overall district (Ray & Marshall, 2005), so increased attention has turned to superintendent preparation programs.

The type and quality of preparation that the aspiring superintendent receives is crucial to both performance and retention. Some critics argue there are inadequacies in the preparation programs of new superintendents, including too much theory and not enough practice, not enough ties to real world problem solving, and a lack of quality mentoring activities designed to properly induct novice superintendents (Levine, 2005). Additionally, there is little consistency among the states regarding the licensure and certification of superintendents (Adams, 2011).

Recommendations in relevant literature included revising preparation programs to incorporate longer, more intensive internships based in problem solving; developing school district partnerships with the universities that supply educational leaders; and the creation of formal mentoring programs to guide new superintendents through the first years on the job (Adams, 2010; Bjork et al., 2005; Glass, 2006; Kowalski et al., 2009; Robicheau & Haar, 2008). Superintendents cited training in financial management, school law, and board relations as valuable coursework, and they prefer practicing superintendents over researchers as instructors (Kowalski, 2011). For those new to the

job, superintendent induction programs, which include opportunities for networking, are cited in the literature as very beneficial (Peterson et al., 2009). Regardless of potential changes to the preparation of new superintendents, the job of school CEO will continue to be very demanding and difficult. The successful superintendent must balance the demands of managing the organization and leading the learning of students and staff.

The procedures used to gain perceptions of Missouri first-year superintendents were discussed in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four these perceptions were compared to the findings in the literature, and in Chapter Five recommendations for future research were presented.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Problem and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of new Missouri

superintendents in regard to their preparation, the necessary knowledge and skills

required for the position, and the sources of support they sought upon assuming the

position. Individual perceptions of superintendent preparation and practice were

explored, particularly the duality of the role as both business manager and instructional

leader. This study also determined if Missouri superintendents' perceptions reflected

Glass and Franceschini's (2006) and Kowalski's (2011) studies of requisite knowledge

and skills. How the necessary knowledge and skills were transferred to aspiring

superintendents in their preparation programs were evaluated to determine if there was an

emphasis on management principles, on instructional leadership, or both. Within this

framework of management versus instructional leadership, the following research

questions guided this study:

1. What are the best practices in the content and delivery of preparation programs

for aspiring superintendents?

2. What are the requisite knowledge and skills of new superintendents?

3. How do individual perceptions of the role – business manager versus

instructional leader – influence practice?

4. What types of support do first-year superintendents need?

Population and Sample

The population that was studied were Missouri superintendents. Missouri had a

total of 523 superintendents for the 2010-11 school year. Within this population, a

stratified random sample of first-year superintendents was chosen. Trochim (2006)

defined a stratified sample as dividing the overall population into subgroups. A stratified

sample was purposefully selected over a simple random sample in order to fully represent

the sub group of first-year superintendents. Further, the stratified sample allowed for

equal representation of female superintendents, who made up a smaller percentage of the

overall group of first-year superintendents. The sample was identified and selected

through information provided by the Missouri Association of School Administrators

(MASA), the state affiliate of the AASA. The MASA supplied contact information on

first-year superintendents/members throughout the state.

     The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO-DESE)

has divided the state in ten supervisory regions, A through J. Out of the 523

superintendents, 50, or nearly 10%, were first-year superintendents, indicating a need for

guidance and mentoring for these school district leaders. First-year superintendents in

Missouri for the 2010-11 school year are summarized in Table 1. In regard to student

population, there were six districts in the 1-100 range, 32 in the 101-1,000 range, seven in

the 1,001-3,000 range, and four in the 3,001-5,000 range. The MASA information

revealed that out of the 50 first-year superintendents, 19 were female and 31 were male.

Table 1

First-Year Superintendents by MO-DESE Region

MO-DESE Region	Total # of First-Year Superintendents	District Student Population of 1-100	District Student Population of 101-1,000	District Student Population of 1,001-3,000	District Student Population of 3,001-5,000
A	3	1	1	1	0
B	3	0	2	1	0
C	4	0	2	1	1
D	6	1	2	2	1
E	7	0	4	1	2
F	5	1	4	0	0
G	8	0	8	0	0
H	3	0	3	0	0
I	5	0	5	0	0
J	6	4	2	0	0

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov

This study focused on these first-year superintendents, gleaning perceptual information on how their preparation matched up with the demands of the job and what types of supports they subsequently sought to compensate for gaps in knowledge and skills. The sample purposefully represented new superintendents from various geographical regions of Missouri and was equally divided by gender. The interviewees included eight first-year superintendents, four male and four female, from four different sizes of districts: 1-99 students, 100-999 students, 1,000-2,999 students, and 3,000-5,000

students. Out of the 50 new superintendents, all were in districts with less than 5,000 students, except one, which had just over 20,000 students. Due to the vast difference in student population, this outlier district was excluded. A male and a female first-year superintendent from each category were interviewed with eight out of the 10 MO-DESE supervisory regions represented.

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative measures to collect perceptual data. Qualitative data are defined as data not recorded in numerical form and can include interviews, observations, and written documents (Trochim, 2006). Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Trochim, 2006) outlined four criteria that defined the quality of qualitative research, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In contrast to quantitative data, which is more concerned with validity, reliability, and objectivity, these criteria reflect the underlying assumptions in qualitative research.

Credibility involves the establishment of results that are believable to the research participants, and transferability is the degree that the results can be transferred and applied to other settings (Guba & Lincoln, as cited in Trochim, 2006). Dependability is the repeatable factor or the likelihood that the researcher would obtain the same or similar results if the study were conducted a second time, and confirmability refers to the degree that others who reviewed the study could corroborate the results (Guba & Lincoln, as cited in Trochim, 2006). This criteria was kept at the forefront when conducting interviews and analyzing responses. The triangulation of data came from existing research on superintendent preparation, the interview questions, and the interview field notes.

Instrumentation

Trochim (2006) advised using qualitative data to achieve a deeper understanding of the issues and/or to develop detailed stories to describe a phenomenon, so the utilization of interview questions provided more complex insights into the challenges faced by first-year superintendents. Open-ended questions are used in qualitative interviewing to allow for many variations in the responses. There are three different types of qualitative interviewing, which include informal, conversational interviews; semi-structured interviews; and standardized, open-ended interviews (Seidman, 2006). This study employed open-ended questions.

The interview included a series of open-ended questions designed to gather detailed demographic information, perceptions on the superintendents' graduate preparation program, and how prepared they were to facilitate team learning and thus build the capacity of the organization (see Appendix A). The interview questions were first constructed based on the conceptual lens of business manager versus instructional leader, then field-tested for reliability through mock interviews with district-level peer administrators and educational colleagues.

Data Collection

The eight interview subjects were initially identified through a list of first-year superintendents supplied by the MASA and then categorized by district size, location, and gender. The subjects were contacted via electronic mail with an explanation of the study and a request for permission to be interviewed (see Appendix B). Upon confirmation of their interest, a second electronic mail was sent with the interview questions, a letter of consent, and a proposed date for the interview (see Appendix C).

Since the interviewees were scattered throughout the state at a considerable distance from the researcher, the interviews were conducted on the telephone. The interviews, which were estimated to take about 30 minutes to complete, were audio recorded and later transcribed. In addition to the actual responses, field notes were also be taken to determine patterns in the responses.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is defined by Jorgenson (1989) as "… a breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces, [the] researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes" (p. 107). Bogdan and Biklen (2006), defined qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 145). Trochim (2006) stressed that qualitative researchers must utilize creativity to organize and categorize raw data into meaningful categories and later communicate this information to others. This organization and categorization is referred to as coding, which, according to Seidel (1998), serves to:

> Summarize, synthesize, and sort many observations made of the data....coding becomes the fundamental means of developing the analysis....Researchers use codes to pull together and categorize a series of otherwise discrete events, statements, and observations which they identify in the data. (p. 112)

Based on this traditional approach to analyzing qualitative data, the responses were coded first by question number, then by category, and finally by themes that

consistently emerged. Open coding was used to find commonalities in the responses.

Axial coding was then utilized to identify relationships within the existing

commonalities. An ongoing comparison of data was used throughout the analysis of

these commonalities to continually gauge the direction of the study.

Summary

This study utilized a qualitative approach to collect perceptual data of first-year

superintendents in Missouri. Attention was paid to the format and content of the

respondents' graduate school preparation program and its impact on practice. The study

identified trends in the perceptions of these first-year superintendents in order to make

recommendations on superintendent preparation program format and content. These

perceptions and insights were analyzed and presented in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, a

summary of the findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations

were discussed.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year superintendents regarding graduate programs in educational leadership that are designed to prepare students for the superintendency. A qualitative approach was taken to collect data through a series of interviews with eight first-year superintendents. The conceptual lens of the study was the often-conflicting perceptions of the role of the superintendent as primarily an organizational manager or as the district's main instructional leader.

Within this framework of a business management emphasis versus an instructional leadership emphasis, the following questions guided the research:

1. What are the best practices in the content and delivery of preparation programs for aspiring superintendents?

2. What are the requisite knowledge and skills of new superintendents?

3. How do individual perceptions of the role – business manager versus instructional leader – influence practice?

4. What types of support do first-year superintendents need?

The chapter was organized into the following sections: an introduction, a description of the participants in the study, a summary of the participants' school district demographics, a description of the protocol used to collect data, a description of how the data were analyzed, and a discussion of the important themes that emerged from the data. The important themes that emerged surrounded instructional leadership; organizational management; preparation programs issues such as types of coursework, internships, types of instructors; and sources of support for practicing superintendents, such as networking and mentoring.

Participants

Once the study had received IRB approval (see Appendix D), the eight interview subjects were selected from the 50 new superintendents in the state of Missouri for the 2010-11 school year. With 523 school districts in Missouri, this represented just under 10% of the total superintendents in the state. Additional variables in the selection of the interview subjects included gender, location, and district size.

An equal number of male and female subjects were sought. Of the 50 Missouri first-year superintendents, 19, or 38%, were female. The 2010 AASA decennial study of superintendents revealed that nationally, female superintendents had nearly doubled since the 2000 study, from 13.2% to 24.1%. Female superintendents are older when they first assume the role and have more experience in the classroom before going into administration (Kowalski, T., McCord, R., Petersen, G., Young, I., & Ellerson, N., 2011).

The 50 districts with a first-year superintendent were divided into student population categories of 1-100, 101-1,000, 1,001-3,000, and 3,001-5,000. These population categories represented 98%, or 49 of the 50 districts. District student populations of the 50 districts disaggregated as 12% in the 1-100 range, 64% in the 101-1,000 range, 14% in the 1,001-3,000 range, and 8% in the 3,001-5,000 range.

One district with a student population of over 20,000 was excluded as an outlier. Finally, attempts were made to select interview subjects from different geographical locations around the state. The MO-DESE divides the state into 10 supervisory regions, each with an assigned MO-DESE supervisor to assist with evaluation and accreditation through the Missouri School Improvement Process (MSIP). In this study, seven of the 10 districts were represented.

District Demographics

Superintendent 1(S1) from District 1 (D1), in the west central region of Missouri,

was a female first-year superintendent from the 1-100 district size range. Just one

interviewee from this student population range was selected due to the fact that most

superintendents in such small districts serve in dual roles, usually

principal/superintendent, which would potentially skew the data. The 2010-11 data for

D1 are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

District 1 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	61
% White	96.7%
% Non-white	3.3%
% Free/reduced price meal	60.6%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	5
Total attendance rate	94.2%
Current expenditure per student	$8,773.00
Assessed	$7,016,264.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 2 (S2) from District 2 (D2), located in the southwest region of Missouri, was a male first-year superintendent from the 101-1,000 district size range. Three of the eight interviewees were selected from this student population range because it represented 64% of the total districts with first-year superintendents. The 2010-11 data for D2 are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

District 2 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	572
% White	96.7%
% Non-white	3.3%
% Free/reduced price meal	67.3%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	14
Total attendance rate	93%
Current expenditure per student	$9,430.00
Assessed valuation	$42,316,720.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 3 (S3) from District 3 (D3), in the southeast region of Missouri, was a male first-year superintendent from the 101-1,000 student population range. The 2010-11 data for D3 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

District 3 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	552
% White	98.7%
% Non-white	1.3%
% Free/reduced price meal	65.9%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	11
Total attendance rate	94.7%
Current expenditure per student	$9,319.00
Assessed valuation	$24,402,972.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 4 (S4) from District 4 (D4), in the south central region of

Missouri, was a female first-year superintendent at a district in the 101-1,000 student

population range. The 2010-11 data for D4 are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

District 4 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	337
% White	99.7%
% Non-white	.3%
% Free/reduced price meal	73.8%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	14
Total attendance rate	95.5%
Current expenditure per student	$8,227.00
Assessed valuation	$14,189,135.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 5 (S5) from District 5 (D5), located in the St. Louis region of Missouri, was a male first-year superintendent at a district in the 1,001-3,000 student range. The 2010-11 data for D4 are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

District 5 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	2,478
% White	84.5%
% Non-white	15.5%
% Free/reduced price meal	32.4%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	14
Total attendance rate	93.8%
Current expenditure per student	$10,148.00
Assessed valuation	$404,957,950.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 6 (S6) from District 6 (D6), in the west central region of Missouri, was a female first-year superintendent from the 1001-3000 range. The 2010-11 data for D6 are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

District 6 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	1,049
% White	97.3%
% Non-white	2.7%
% Free/reduced price meal	60.2%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	14
Total attendance rate	95.2%
Current expenditure per student	$8,074.00
Assessed valuation	$81,767,300.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 7 (S7) from District 7 (D7), in the southeast region of Missouri, was a female first-year superintendent from the 3001-5000 range. The 2010-11 data for D7 are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

District 7 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	3,757
% White	95.4%
% Non-white	4.6%
% Free/reduced price meal	49.6%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	14
Total attendance rate	94.5%
Current expenditure per student	$7,905.00
Assessed valuation	$304,763,434.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Superintendent 8 (S8) from District 8 (D8), located in the central region of

Missouri, was a male from the 3001-5000 student population range. The 2010-11 data

for D8 are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

District 8 Descriptors

Descriptors	Data
Total enrollment	3,998
% White	89.5%
% Non-white	10.5%
% Free/reduced price meal	45.5%
Standards met on 4th cycle MSIP (out of 14)	13
Total attendance rate	94.2%
Current expenditure per student	$8,276.00
Assessed valuation	$369,054,034.00

Note. Adapted from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx

Protocol

The eight interview subjects were initially identified through a list of first-year

superintendents supplied by the MASA and then selected based upon district size,

location, and gender. The subjects were contacted via electronic mail (see Appendix B)

with an explanation of the study and a request for permission to be interviewed. Upon

confirmation of their willingness to participate, a second electronic mail was sent with the

interview questions, a letter of consent (see Appendix C), and a proposed date and time

for the interview. The interview questions were field-tested with colleagues to ensure the

questions were easily understood and that the interview flowed well. Since the subjects

were scattered throughout the state at a considerable distance from the researcher, the

interviews were conducted on the telephone. The interviews were digitally recorded and

then transcribed to confirm the dependability and credibility of the data. The use of

consistent data collection methods were used to ensure the credibility of the research.

During the interviews, notes were taken to remind the researcher about key words

and phrases and to capture the tone of the participants' responses more accurately than a

transcription.

Process of Analysis

A qualitative approach was taken to collect the data via a series of interviews.

The interview transcripts were initially coded to examine and compare the data, followed

by axial coding to determine patterns and connectedness among the responses, which

identified certain themes. Axial coding is a process where data are put together in new

ways after they have been coded (Changing Minds, 2012). The coded data allowed for

comparisons to be drawn. A constant comparative method was utilized when examining

the data. The constant comparison method involves grouping similar data in categories,

which are then linked and organized by their relationship to one another.

Eventually, themes emerge from these categorical relationships (Seidman, 2006).

Finally, triangulation of the data was achieved through an analysis of the existing

literature regarding the superintendent role, the interview transcripts, and field notes

taken during the interviews. Triangulation helps to establish the validity of a qualitative

study through the use of different sources of data. When certain themes or outcomes

emerge from one or more data sources, the weight of the evidence leads to greater validity in the findings (Creswell & Clark, 2010). As a result of this process, certain themes emerged from the interview questions, including insights on organizational manager versus instructional leader, incentives/disincentives of the superintendency, superintendent preparation programs, and other avenues of support sought out by new superintendents.

Manager vs. Instructional Leader

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the superintendent role evolved through several periods that reflected the cultural expectations of the time. Kowalski (2005) reported that following stints as the primary instructional leader, and later the main organizational manager, the superintendent role later evolved through distinct phases, as a democratic leader and social researcher, before ultimately being viewed as a multi-functioning position with an emphasis on effective communication. In an increased era of accountability and public scrutiny, the superintendent role is currently perceived as a blend of the aforementioned roles.

Kowalski (2011) reported that current superintendents are expected to rely on professional knowledge and skills to identify areas for improvement, make the needed changes, and do so in a politically-charged climate that appeases the will of the people. In other words, superintendents are expected to make positive strides in the instruction delivered to students while also managing the day-to-day fiscal, personnel, and physical needs of a school district. Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) identified six primary management responsibilities that must ultimately lie with the superintendent: managing

governmental relations, managing district personnel, managing finances and budget, managing facilities, managing contractual negotiations, and managing public relations.

While all the respondents noted the importance of instructional leadership in the superintendency, six of the eight regarded their primary role as an organizational manager. Related phrases from the respondents included, "Management takes up most of my time," or "I wear many hats but right now it's more of a manager," and "I spend more time managing budget, facilities, and personnel." S5 attempted to explain the complex realities of the superintendency:

> Well, I know what the politically correct answer is, but I will tell you, that in my estimation, you have people that you put in place. You delegate people to do the educational jobs for you, and you delegate curriculum coordinators, or you delegate to building principals or to instructional coaches to do the educational piece. I think for the big picture, it is important that the superintendent be the educational leader of the district. That being said, you probably spend more of your time managing.

S4 touched upon a substantial theme with, "In a large district you are more of a manager." The consistent variable tied to this response was district size. There appeared to be an association between size of the district and the degree to which the superintendent acted as an instructional leader. Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) reported that districts with larger student enrollments generally have larger support staffs to assist the superintendent with management responsibilities. Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) concluded:

Although superintendents might delegate managerial tasks to others, they retain

supervisory responsibility to ensure that the work is completed promptly and

correctly because they are ultimately accountable to the local board of education,

the community and the state for effective and legal district management. (p. 148)

The level of delegation corresponds to one of the four district size categories

developed by the AASA: very large districts (more than 25,000 students), large districts

(between 3,000-25,000 students), medium-sized districts (between 300-3,000 students)

and small districts (fewer than 300 students). Glass (2006) reported the very large

districts have superintendents who are general supervisors of a large team of directors

who assume responsibility for specific areas of the management tasks noted; therefore,

superintendents must be adept at recruiting and hiring talented individuals to whom they

can effectively delegate. In large districts, superintendent responsibilities can vary

widely; districts with 10,000 or more students are much more likely to have extensive

support staff, while districts with less than 10,000 students have superintendents who

execute more hands-on activities with less delegation (Brown-Ferrigno & Glass, 2005).

Superintendents in medium-sized districts often do not have the financial resources to

retain more than one or two support staff, and small districts have superintendents who

often serve in multiple roles, such as superintendent/principal (Brown-Ferrigno & Glass,

2005).

S1, the dual principal/superintendent from the district with 61 students, responded

that instructional leadership was her primary role. S7, also a female and the

superintendent of one of the larger districts, with 3,757 students, cited the time-

consuming management responsibilities but maintained that from a philosophical

standpoint she was "primarily the instructional leader without a doubt." According to Kowalski et al. (2011), female superintendents reported the ability to be an instructional leader was the top reason they were selected for their position. Also, females were twice as likely as male superintendents to have over 20 years as a classroom teacher (Kowalski et al., 2011), which reinforces the notion that females, in general, perceive the role of superintendent to be that of an instructional leader.

Related to the district size issue is the concept of delegating the instructional leadership responsibilities to building principals. S2 summarized the sentiments of many of the respondents by saying, "I try to hire educational experts to lead curriculum and instruction and then empower them." S8 commented that superintendents "have more assistance in larger districts," including assistant superintendents for personnel and facilities, district curriculum directors, and building principals who directly evaluate and develop the classroom teachers. With just under 4,000 students in his district, S8 discussed the concept of *defined autonomy* to explain his approach to the superintendency. S8 explained, "[I have] worked with a finance director and a curriculum director to help manage the big picture, so it is not a complete disconnect from me to those facets, and I understand the power in providing leaders autonomy to do their jobs."

The concept of defined autonomy was discussed by Marzano and Waters in their 2009 meta-analysis of superintendent influence on instructional achievement. Defined autonomy refers to how the superintendent delegates tasks to building principals and central office staff in ways that are directly tied to overall district goals (Marzano & Waters, 2009). The two guiding research questions for the meta-analysis were: "What is

the relationship between district administration actions and average student achievement?" and "What are the specific leadership behaviors that are associated with student achievement?" (Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 6) The specific recommended actions included:

1. Ensuring collaborative goal setting

2. Establishing nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction

3. Creating board alignment with and support of district goals

4. Monitoring achievement and instruction goals

5. Allocating resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction

(Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 6)

While the meta-analysis showed mixed results on site-based management's effect on improved instructional achievement, a principal-centered approach was shown to be beneficial within the larger context of establishing nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction (Marzano & Waters, 2009). When defined autonomy is recognized and supported as a valuable model for district leadership, there is a positive effect on student achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Requisite Knowledge and Skills of the Superintendency

When the respondents were asked what incentives may have led them to aspire to the superintendency, a variety of responses emerged, but three of the eight responded the position offered "an opportunity to make a difference." Other responses included the opportunity "to lead learning and to build a team," "I never intended to become a superintendent," and "an opportunity to understand the big picture in order to maximize

services to children." Two superintendents responded it was an opportunity to "move up" in the district. S1 commented:

> But, I wanted to lead learning. I always wanted to help teachers and guide teachers. Work with staff, work with students. I do not want to get away from working with students. Building a team, to me, is extremely important. Those are all things that are important to me.

S3 wanted to maintain the momentum of recent progress while also advancing professionally:

> Well, I had been with this district for 13 years, and so it was a way for me to move up in more of a leadership status. Also, there were some things that the direction the way the school was going, I wanted to make sure we kept going in that direction, and we kept growing in that direction.

These responses mirror the 2010 AASA study, in which superintendents were asked why they were selected for their position by the local school board. In that survey, 33.5% responded it was their *personal characteristics*, 24.9% believed it was the *potential to be a change agent*, and 20% cited the *ability to be an instructional leader* (Kowalski et al., 2011). The ability to make change was also the number one incentive cited in the 2006 AASA survey; other incentives noted in the 2006 study were salary, building a team, and addressing challenges (Glass & Franceschini, 2006).

The superintendent-as-change agent is a common phenomenon in recent years due to a growing public dissatisfaction with perceptions about student achievement and the mission of public schools (Kowalski et al., 2011). The Stupski Foundation conducted superintendent interviews in 2005-06 to gain insight on the change-agent phenomenon

and found that without exception, the participants described initiating school change as "largely uncharted territory with insufficient resources," but that superintendents tend to take on this challenge as a matter of social justice and equity (Portis, 2007, p. 20). This moral reasoning behind leading change initiatives in the superintendency is a motivating factor for many aspiring to the role (Portis, 2007). In the present study, none of the respondents cited salary as an incentive for choosing the superintendency, which also reflected the findings from the 2010 AASA study. In that study, 34.2% responded they were *very satisfied* with their compensation, 51.8% were *moderately satisfied*, 11.4% were *moderately dissatisfied*, and 2.5% were *very dissatisfied* (Kowalski et al., 2011).

The opposite question was also posed to the interviewees regarding challenges and disincentives associated with the superintendent role, and more varied responses emerged. While some personal aspects were noted, such as S1 mentioned, "family sacrifices," and "I have not learned how to balance my time yet," the most consistent input revolved around the management of financial resources and the need for knowledge and training in this area. Additional examples included: S2 cited, "financial uncertainty" and "how to allocate resources;" S3 replied, it "depends on the school size," but that currently, "maintaining effective fund balances" and "trying to improve our academics is my biggest focus right now;" S4 responded, "finances and budgeting" and "lack of training in all the different forms and everything that has to be done and turned in (to MO-DESE);" S5 mentioned, "finances and personnel are the two biggest challenges that are faced by superintendents and probably any CEO of any organization;" "S6 answered, "building relationships with the board," and S7 responded, "keep the focus on teaching and learning while understanding the fiscal component."

An additional disincentive is the often-tenuous relationship with the local school board. S5 responded, "You are at the whim of seven people that might not understand what education is all about." S8 replied, "Managing the relationships between diverse groups" was among the most challenging aspects of his position. S8 further elaborated:

> Well always, the biggest challenge is moving the vision forward, [with] the Board of Education being first and foremost. [Being able to] communicate with them so they feel connected to what it is that is happening and the good things that are happening in the building so they do not have a tendency to want to micromanage what is happening.

In summary, the responses regarding challenges and disincentives centered around organizational management rather than instructional leadership, notably the need for financial knowledge and training and the ability to please the local school board.

Superintendent Preparation Programs

Superintendent preparation programs have received an inordinate amount of criticism over the past decade in regard to both quality and relevancy (Shelton, 2011). The licensing and level of preparation required vary widely from state to state (Shelton, 2011). Critics of these programs believe that many superintendent applicants without professional backgrounds in education are unjustly passed over, and perhaps as a result, nearly half of all states have some type of alternative licensing/certification for school superintendents (Kowalski et al., 2011). A handful of states, of which Missouri was the first, require a passing score on a state examination in order to be fully certified (Beem, 2007). Nine states have dropped all superintendent certification requirements (Kowalski et al., 2011).

The professional background of the eight respondents was similar, with all coming from the ranks of public school administration. Of their most recently-held positions, four had been assistant superintendents, one had been an elementary principal, one a high school principal, one had been a curriculum director, and one an assistant high school principal (S1, the principal/superintendent). The AASA survey collected data on prior administrative positions held for at least one year, with the most common prior administrative position being high school principal, at 47.6%. The superintendent respondents also had at least one year prior experience as district-level directors/coordinators (44.9%), elementary school principals (40%), and middle school principals (38%) (Kowalski et al., 2011).

In regard to the academic preparation of the eight respondents in the present study, five had completed an educational specialist program leading to superintendent certification, and three had completed a doctorate degree. Of the five with a specialist degree, three indicated they had begun or planned to begin a doctoral program. Of the three with a completed doctorate, two (S7 and S8) were in the largest district size category, and the other was S5, in the second-largest district size category. This reflects data collected by the AASA survey, which revealed that overall, 85% had completed a traditional university preparation program, but that number dropped as the districts became larger; while 89% of superintendents with 300 or fewer students and 87.5% of superintendents with 3,000 or fewer students had completed a traditional program, only 67% with 25,000 or more students had completed a traditional program, indicating large districts hire more alternatively certified superintendent candidates. (Kowalski et al., 2011).

District size also correlated with an earned doctorate, with just 14% in districts with 300 or fewer students and 24% in districts with 3,000 or fewer students having earned a doctorate, compared to 52.5% in districts with 25,000 or more students. Overall, the percentage of superintendents earning a doctorate has risen from 29.2% in 1971 to 45.3% in 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011). In summary, superintendents in large districts were less likely to have completed a traditional superintendent preparation program but much more likely to have an earned doctorate.

In regard to coursework completed in their academic preparation program, the respondents were given a copy of the interview questions, which included a list of subject areas typically included in a superintendent preparation program. The list included coursework in community relations, school finance, technological applications, principal/school leader evaluation, school board relations, school law, development of mission/vision, working with the media, leading change initiatives, differentiating for struggling students, strategies for continuous quality improvement, maintenance of facilities, initiating/managing bond issues, and other related coursework. The respondents were asked which of these subjects they found the most beneficial as they assumed the superintendency, but were not limited to just one response in the interview. Six of the eight responded that school finance was the most beneficial class, with school law and community relations coming in second, with three citing these courses as beneficial.

Also mentioned was coursework related to leading change initiatives and developing a mission/vision. S1 responded, "Everything you have listed there, but I double-checked school finance and school law. I needed every one of them, but the

school finance should have been twice as long as it was, as well as the school law." S3 commented, "Obviously school finances and then law, certainly. I think there needs to be more focus on supervision." S4 commented that "more in-depth finance" training was needed. S5 said, "The most beneficial piece for me was public relations." S6 mentioned, "I think probably the most beneficial is the law and the finance class." Compared to the 2010 AASA survey, school law was rated as *extremely important* (73%) and school finance was rated the second (64%). Following law and finance, there was a substantial drop in the *extremely important* rating, will all other subjects falling to 50% or below on the *extremely important* rating (Kowalski et al,. 2011).

In a 2011 study on educational leadership programs conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the recommendations were similar to the comments made by the respondents. The respondents commented on some aspects of their programs they found beneficial, which included a cohort-style model, appreciated by S1, and S5 commented that his program was "little theory and heavy on practice," and that the coursework was "taught by experienced, practicing superintendents." The NCSL recommendations for best practices in school leader preparation programs included establishing targeted selection procedures for students, creating partnerships with local school districts, developing a problem-based curriculum, creating cohorts of students, and formalizing mentoring and coaching by experienced school leaders (Shelton, 2011).

When asked about their satisfaction level with their superintendent preparation program, with choices being *very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied,* or *not satisfied*, three indicated *very*, four responded *satisfied*, and one reported being *not satisfied*. In comparison, just over three-fourths of superintendents in the AASA survey

rated their preparation program as *good* or *excellent* overall (Kowalski et al., 2011). The most favorable ratings came from superintendents who were new or had completed their program in the last five years, which is noteworthy considering most new superintendents are in small districts with less support staff (Kowalski et al., 2011).

Seven of the eight respondents completed some type of internship as part of their preparation program. Three of the seven respondents indicated the internship was a valuable experience, while four reported it was not a beneficial part of their program or helpful to them upon assuming the superintendency. S1 shared that her internship allowed her to "spend time other principals, other directors, and other people that I would never have met or gotten to spend time with," allowing her to learn about different areas of the district. S3 commented, "There wasn't much to [the internship]" and could not recall the content or duration. His "bosses just signed off on it," and he "did not think it was rewarding."

S5 also could not recall anything meaningful from his internship and felt "it was just a hoop to jump through." S6 completed a year-long, 240-hour internship that she found beneficial yet, "that the benefit was directly related to the effort put into it." S7 did not find the internship beneficial and commented, "The concept of an internship as it plays out, I think, in most doctoral programs in education, is really smorgasbord." S8 found his internship "very interesting and very beneficial" because it was "project oriented" and "real life." None of the eight respondents' superintendent preparation programs included any kind of formal or informal partnership with a local school district.

Other miscellaneous areas the respondents cited as beneficial included the use of a cohort model, coursework in program evaluation, and an emphasis on public relations. S1 commented:

> I really like the cohort style, because most all of our instructors started off the first twenty minutes so we could talk about things. We can discuss things in class that pertained to what was going on in our professional lives in our schools. It was always; whatever we discussed stays right here in this room. It was such a learning time because it was things that were really happening to us right then, and right there, and things we learned – I learned so much from those things.

S7 particularly enjoyed being able to study data analysis related to the evaluation of programs:

> I think the program of evaluation as a discipline, which was probably about twenty-four hours worth of combination of statistics, survey analysis, and forecasting trend analysis. That data piece and the thinking process of the use of data effectively was probably the most effective that came from education.

S5 benefitted most from an examination of public relations (PR) practices:

> PR was by far the most beneficial piece of course work that I had. Now, because obviously, I need to know about personnel and I need to know about finance – I am in a little bigger district. We have people in our district that are hired to do those things, so I just basically have to know enough about it to oversee them, and ask the proper questions, and make sure that I know what is going on. But, the number one course work that helped me probably the most in this job is public relations.

Supports for First-Year Superintendents

The respondents felt, regardless of their satisfaction with their preparation program, supports such as mentoring and networking were especially crucial to being successful on the job. Seven of the eight respondents reported participating in the MASA-sponsored mentoring program, and those seven reported mentoring as crucial to their first year on the job. S1 responded, "I definitely have a mentor, and I chose someone that is also a K-8 school administrator," and "I don't know what I would do without my mentor." S3 explained the relationship between him and his mentor:

> The guy who is my mentor I have known him since we were in high school. He is
> the superintendent at the district eight miles away, and went to school there. We
> played ball against each other. [We] went to college together so I have known
> him for, heck, thirty-five years.

S8 mentioned, "Yes, I am a training mentor. Even as a deputy superintendent [I served as a mentor], but I also went through the required mentor/mentee work with MASA that they sponsor." S7 responded, "I think you need a mentor the rest of your life, frankly," and "I seek out mentorship constantly." She went on share, "I had a wonderful mentor who was available on phone, but she could have just like followed me around all day. That would have been all right." When asked whether mentoring was beneficial to her, S6 shared, "It's very [beneficial], yeah, because you're the superintendent; you don't really have anybody else to talk to." State superintendent associations were cited as the most common source for continuing education and mentoring in the AASA survey, followed by state government and AASA, with the value of these sources of continuing education rated as *very useful* by 44% and *useful* by 39% (Kowalski et al., 2011).

Missouri has adopted the New York Leadership Academy model for the superintendent Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP). The New York City Leadership Academy, a program instituted in 2003 by schools chancellor, Joel Klein, to guide the development of a massive influx of new/inexperienced administrators in NYC schools, begins with a self-assessment by the mentee (Missouri Center for Career Education, 2010). The Leadership Performance Planning Worksheet for New Leaders is the tool through which mentees assess their knowledge and skills on a five-point scale in nine leadership dimensions, including personal behavior, resilience, communication, student performance, situational problem-solving, ongoing learning, supervision of staff, management and technology (Missouri Center for Career Education, 2010). In turn, these nine leadership dimensions are tied directly to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, which define both superintendent certification examinations and the curriculum of many superintendent preparation programs.

Missouri has taken these ISLLC standards and applied them as guidelines for a quality mentoring program. The standards include setting a widely shared vision for learning; developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; ensuring effective management of the organization; operation and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; collaborating with faculty and community members; responding to diverse community interests, and mobilizing community resources; acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner; and understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts (Missouri Center for Career Education, 2010).

In addition to participating in mentoring, all of the respondents reported participating in networking activities with fellow superintendents. S1 responded,

> Oh, definitely. I keep in touch [with a local superintendent]. There are several I keep in touch with. I think it is just always smart. Besides, he has a lot of experience on me and can answer just about anything I ask.

Although he participates in the MASA mentoring program, S2 commented that "unofficial mentoring is just as important," and that he regularly communicates with other area superintendents. In fact, all of the respondents were members of their respective local area superintendent group that met regularly to discuss job-related issues. S3 mentioned,

> That's where you get your best information. We have our conference, and then we have all the schools in [a nearby county] that I know and visit [frequently]. We have different meetings there, and then we're in constant phone contact and also with some of the surroundings counties.

S5 reiterated the value of networking by saying, "I think the networking is very important. I think making sure you really understand issues that are going on in the State of Missouri is very important." S7 attended both a local superintendent group and a regional group: "In neighboring counties, we get together once a month. There is also a regional kind of superintendent group, a large group. That is more of a kind of a macro-level sort of get-together." S8 has taken networking to yet a higher level with an interstate consortium: "I have been invited to participate in a Midwest Association of School Superintendents that has like eight different states, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. They meet at different places within that group every year, and it shows

best practices that transcend your state." Topics for ongoing professional development that were cited as the most valuable in the AASA survey were school law, followed by school finance and personnel management (Kowalski et al., 2011).

The respondents were also asked about other miscellaneous sources of support, although there were no substantial similarities. Three of the eight respondents cited MO-DESE as their other primary source of support. S1 responded, "Oh, you bet. I have my husband. He is awesome." S1 also relied heavily on her MO-DESE area supervisor. She also cited her secretary, who "is awesome. She has been here twenty years, and I don't know what in the world I would do without her." S5 mentioned, "I get many magazines, and I get many periodicals," which keeps him abreast of current trends. S3 mentioned that he "monitors the MASA website. They have videos that they put up once a week, [which are similar to] the legislative update. If I call the school attorney, he will stick it to me. If I call up to MASA, it is free."

Superintendent Supply and Future Plans

Six of the eight subjects responded there is an adequate supply of future superintendents. S1 responded, "Oh, my goodness. I would say, yes. I would say anytime there is an opening announced there are thirty, thirty five, or more applications. So, I would say yes, there are plenty of candidates." S8 was not as optimistic about the future supply of superintendents:

> [There are] probably not [enough candidates]. I am a product of succession
> planning. I was hired about seventeen years ago here as an assistant principal at
> the middle school, and then I have been fortunate enough to work with people that
> have helped me.

S7 believed the current state of the economy will have an impact on turnover and supply:

> I always like to look at what is out there in terms of vacancies. I just think it helps
> you be aware of what the needs are and also what the perception is. There is a lot
> of consistency in terms of what people are looking for, for superintendents. I
> have to think that because of the number of positions that are posted and also a
> fairly quick turnover in some communities, that probably there is some question
> about what the pool of people really are. I will be curious as to how the change in
> the economy is going to impact the longevity of people wanting to continue to
> work as a superintendent. I think that is an unknown.

S5 had strong opinions about superintendent candidates:

> Well, if the universities keep offering degrees in the superintendency or doctoral
> degrees in administration that certifies somebody to be a superintendent [then,
> yes, there will be enough candidates]. I mean a lot of it has to do with what the
> universities are offering and how many people are going to take advantage of it. I
> am going to tell you, and then again, this is personal bias and personal opinion.
> This job is not for everybody. I am going to tell you, there are a lot of people out
> there that may think they want to be a superintendent, and I will say to you what a
> university professor told me when I was taking these classes. Be careful what you
> wish for, because I am going to tell you what, the average life expectancy of a
> superintendent, I mean on the job, is three years. Turnover is extremely high and
> so, you do not have tenure as a superintendent. You don't have tenure as an
> administrator. So, what ends up happening is that based on new board members
> that come in, you are at the whim of seven people that might not really understand

what education is all about. Basically, it is your job to communicate with those people. It is your job to rather sway those people to your way of thinking [and] to try to mold those people into being a good cohesive unit that makes good sound decisions. Again, another important role of the superintendent is working with the board and knowing how to handle the Board of Education, because the quickest way to lose your job is to get the board to go against you.

Seven of the eight respondents planned to remain in the superintendency five years from now. S1 responded, "Yeah, here or somewhere else. I would also like to be teaching college classes." S8 commented, "Yeah, yeah, I am doing it. It is more fun than I thought it was going to be quite honestly. It is challenging, don't get me wrong. But that is part of what it is supposed to be." The exception was S5, who responded, "No, no. I am going to be retired five years from now." A unique answer came from S4, who plans to eventually return to the classroom: "I want to be a superintendent for about ten years and then possibly go back to the classroom. I've got about 15 more years before I can retire."

Summary

There were a wide range of answers to the questions from the respondents, but also clear themes emerged. Much of the input gleaned from the survey mirrored aspects of both the recent literature as well as the input received from large, national superintendent surveys. Superintendents in larger districts seemed to take on more of an organizational manager role with the corresponding delegation of responsibilities, such as instructional leadership spread out among others. The superintendents in smaller districts had more responsibility as the district instructional leader.

Incentives for pursuing the superintendency included making a difference in student learning and acting as an agent for change. In regard to their preparation programs, the first-year superintendents most valued coursework in school finance and law. The respondents who valued their required internships were the ones who were presented with real-world problems/projects. None of the respondents' programs involved a partnership with local school districts. All but one were involved with the state mentoring program, and all especially valued the networking opportunities available as they completed their first year in a most demanding position.

In Chapter Five, findings and conclusions were summarized. Implications for practice were discussed for aspiring superintendents, practicing superintendents, and higher education program coordinators. Recommendations were also provided for future research.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year superintendents in Missouri regarding their graduate preparation programs. Superintendent preparation programs theoretically mold future practice. Therefore, this qualitative study also examined perceptions regarding requisite knowledge and skills and what types of supports new superintendents seek. These questions were posed to the interviewees through the conceptual lens of the superintendent as primarily an organizational manager versus primarily an instructional leader. Eight first-year superintendents from various-sized school districts were interviewed, and their responses compiled. Four main research questions guided this study:

1. What are the best practices in the content and delivery of preparation programs for aspiring superintendents?

2. What are the requisite knowledge and skills of new superintendents?

3. How do individual perceptions of the role – business manager versus instructional leader – influence practice?

4. What types of support do first-year superintendents need?

This chapter included an introduction, a summary of findings, conclusions to be drawn from the study, implications for practice, and potential areas of future research.

Summary of the Findings

The transcripts from the interviews were analyzed to determine categories and themes. The process used to address the research questions involved an analysis of the review of literature in Chapter Two and the qualitative data in Chapter Four.

1. What are the best practices in the content and delivery of preparation programs for aspiring superintendents?

The primary themes that emerged from the interviews included an increased emphasis on school district finance and school law. There was also feedback regarding the structure and delivery of graduate programs, including less theory-based coursework and more real-world problem solving. First-year superintendents are often thrust into this new position feeling that they are not adequately prepared for the financial and legal situations that await them. There is an ongoing debate in higher education about placing an emphasis on managerial coursework such as finance, law, and personnel management as opposed to an emphasis on instructional leadership and curriculum (Kowalski, 2005). This debate was reflected in the interview responses, with consistent mentions about increased training in budgeting and legal requirements, but also recognizing the importance of leading a learning organization.

The first-year superintendents found real-world problem solving activities as the most beneficial and educational theory as the least beneficial. They appreciated coursework taught by practicing or retired superintendents as opposed to academic researchers, and cited a cohort-style delivery model as appealing. Seven of the eight interviewees were satisfied with their graduate school experience.

2. What are the requisite knowledge and skills of new superintendents?

The primary themes that emerged from the interviews were a solid foundation in school law and school finance and an ability to initiate change. The interviewees felt the ability to be a change agent and facilitate initiatives was the main skill required in the superintendency. Other skills that were mentioned included effective time management, the ability to allocate resources, financial knowledge, and the ability to build relationships with the school board and the community.

3. How do individual perceptions of the role – business manager versus instructional leader – influence practice?

The primary themes that emerged from the interviews were an association with district size, the level of autonomy delegated to building principals, and gender role. Six of the eight interviewees regarded their primary role as an organizational manager. In general, the larger the district, the more the interviewees saw themselves as a manager. With more students, superintendents are farther removed from the classroom and tend to have central office staff who supports various functions such as curriculum and instruction. Superintendents in larger districts must focus more on delegating and developing autonomy in their staff. Superintendents in smaller districts are more directly involved in teaching and learning and must focus more on multi-tasking. Female superintendents tended to perceive themselves as more of an instructional leader whereas males leaned toward organizational management.

4. What types of support do first-year superintendents need?

Mentoring and networking with other superintendents were cited as the most beneficial supports. Seven of the eight were actively participating in the state-sponsored

mentoring program and reported frequent visits with their mentors. All cited the

mentor/mentee relationship as being very valuable. Networking with other practicing

superintendents via national, state, and local organizations was frequently cited as

beneficial and supportive. Utilizing these networks to keep abreast of legal issues and to

learn about various aspects of the job was mentioned as a crucial part of their new role.

Conclusions

Overall, the data collected in this study reflected the body of research regarding

superintendent preparation programs. Shelton (2011) reported superintendent preparation

programs have received increasing criticism over the past two decades, mostly due to the

perception that school leaders have not been accountable for floundering student

achievement. Politicians, business leaders, the media, and even some members of

academia have often made the assumption that school leaders are ill-prepared for

assuming the challenging role of the superintendency (Kowalski et al., 2011). Others

have contended that superintendent preparation programs are irrelevant, and that real-

world leadership experience in business or the military is the most important asset a

potential superintendent can bring to the job. Regardless of the ongoing debate over

preparation programs, those superintendents who have actually completed a program are

fairly consistent in their assessments of the quality of their preparation programs.

In regard to general satisfaction, seven of the eight respondents in this study were

satisfied or *very satisfied* with their preparation program. In comparison, just over three-

fourths of superintendents in the 2010 AASA survey rated their preparation program as

good or *excellent* overall (Kowalski et al., 2011). The most favorable ratings came from

superintendents who were new or had completed their program in the last five years,

which is noteworthy considering most new superintendents are in small districts with less support staff (Kowalski et al., 2011). District size did not have a significant correlation with level of satisfaction (Kowalski et al., 2011). There was also very little change in satisfaction level of superintendents surveyed in 1982, 1992, 2000, and 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011).

School finance is a subject area that needs to be emphasized in preparation programs. Three fourths of the respondents cited school finance as the most valuable course they had, yet still expressed a lack of preparation and knowledge when dealing with financial issues. The feedback from the respondents was that school finance should receive extra emphasis. The 2010 AASA survey reflected this, with 64% citing the course as *extremely important* and 29% citing it as *moderately important*. Only 7% considered school finance to be *unimportant* (Kowalski et al., 2011). School law, school board relations, and community relations were also mentioned in both this study and the AASA survey as important courses. Peterson, Fusarelli, and Kowalski (2009) found similar results in their study of first-year superintendents in Missouri, North Carolina, California, and Ohio, where school finance and law were deemed the most valuable coursework.

Another conclusion from this study is that preparation programs should have an emphasis on real-world problem solving. Peterson, Fusarelli, and Kowalski's 2009 study revealed the major weaknesses in superintendent preparation programs were too much theory-based coursework and a lack of superintendent experience among the instructors. Similarly, Glass (2006) cited not enough hands-on experience and no link between content and practice as major issues in preparation programs.

A primary avenue for presenting real world problems to aspiring superintendents is the inclusion of internships. Seven of the eight respondents in this study had completed an internship, but only three cited it as valuable. Those who perceived the internship as beneficial did so due to the opportunity to tackle projects that were relevant to the superintendency. Internships that were loosely structured and/or having little relevance to the superintendency were cited as not beneficial, as "a hoop to jump through," or "a waste of time." Fry, Bottoms, O'Neill, and Walker (2007) found that while almost all superintendent preparation programs include an internship component, they often fail to address relevant superintendent issues and problems. Similarly, Levine (2005) found that internships are too often disconnected from practice.

Related to the point that preparation programs should emphasize real world problem solving is the additional conclusion that the professors or instructors in superintendent preparation programs should have significant experience as an actual superintendent, as opposed to strictly research and/or academia. Peterson et al. (2009) found that a lack of superintendent experience among instructors was a primary weakness of superintendent preparation programs. Half of the respondents cited their appreciation for the experience and guidance provided by practicing-superintendent instructors. Over 80% of the 2010 AASA study respondents rated their professors' credibility as *good* or *excellent*, with the most favorable responses coming from first-year superintendents. Ratings were also slightly higher from superintendents in smaller districts (Kowalski et al., 2011).

Some final conclusions regarding preparation programs are related to the delivery model. The research cites utilizing a cohort model as a preferred method of course

delivery because it forms ongoing relationships among the students, who in turn learn from each other (Robicheau & Haar, 2008). Another recommendation is the utilization of partnerships between graduate schools of education and local school districts. Bjork, Kowalski and Browne-Ferrigno (2005) found that these partnerships provide aspiring superintendents with rich opportunities for real-world problem solving and engaging in relevant projects. Robicheau and Haar (2008) also cited the valuable learning opportunities that a formal partnership can provide to superintendents-in-training by providing a setting for carrying out relevant projects. None of the respondents in this study participated in a formal partnership between their university program and a local school district.

Regarding requisite skills for a superintendent, it can be concluded from this study that financial knowledge and the ability to make change are crucial to the success of the superintendent. Also very valuable are general communication skills, particularly with the community-at-large and the local school board. While finance is a universal course offering in superintendent preparation programs, managing change initiatives is not as formalized, instead appearing as facets of other courses.

Regarding ongoing supports sought by first-year superintendents, it can be concluded from this study that mentoring and networking are the most beneficial. The National Staff Development Council cited mentoring as crucial to the retention of all educators, particularly when it is job-embedded (Darling et al., 2009). Sweeny (2009) also found that mentoring improves retention among school leaders. McCord (2008) cited mentoring as beneficial in combating the sense of isolation that many superintendents experience. Seven of the eight respondents in this study participated in

formal mentoring and cited it as extremely beneficial. This reflected the 2010 AASA study, where 83% of superintendents surveyed cited mentoring as *very useful* or *useful* (Kowalski et al., 2011).

Regarding the superintendent as instructional leader versus an organizational manager, based on this study, it can be concluded that district size is the primary variable in how superintendents view their role. Superintendents in small districts were more likely to wear multiple hats, which included serving as the primary instructional leader for principals and teachers. Superintendents in larger districts were more likely to have central office support staff who led instructional initiatives, while the actual superintendent functioned in more of a general overseer role. Superintendents in large districts have to effectively delegate more often and tend to focus on community and school board relations (Lamkin, 2006).

Other than some deficiencies with financial and public relations training in their graduate programs, the respondents in this study felt generally prepared for the challenges of both instructional leadership and organizational management. Peterson et al. (2009) discovered in their study of first-year superintendents that nearly 85% agreed they were prepared to be an instructional leader, perhaps based upon their previous experience as a building administrator, whereas 78% felt prepared to organize and manage district resources.

Based upon information gathered in this study and in the body of existing research, it can be concluded that female superintendents tend to perceive themselves more as an instructional leader than an organizational manager. The two respondents in this study who view themselves as primarily an instructional leader were female.

Kowalski et al. (2011) reported that female superintendents were generally older when they assumed the role and were much more likely than males to have extensive experience in the classroom before moving into administration. Kowalski et al. (2011) reported that female superintendents in the 2010 AASA study cited the ability to be an instructional leader as the primary reason they were selected for their position. Katz (2008) reported that women often struggle when assuming a role such as the superintendency, which has been heavily masculinized. Perhaps lending itself to a perception of instructional leadership, Katz (2008) reported that women view the role of power differently than men, utilizing more relationship building strategies in the superintendency than their male counterparts.

Regardless, female superintendents have dramatically increased in number over the past two decades, reaching 24% in 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011). Lane-Washington and Wilson-Jones (2010) reported mentoring and networking as the primary reasons more women have ascended to the superintendency. They found that female superintendents have stronger ties to their communities and their churches than males (Lane-Washington & Wilson-Jones, 2010). Overall, 97% of female superintendents reported being very satisfied in their position, and 88% reported they would choose the same path (Kowalski et al., 2011).

Implications for Practice

This information gathered in the research points to several implications for practice for aspiring superintendents, practicing superintendents, and superintendent preparation programs in higher education. These implications for practice are varied for these different populations. There are, however, some consistent themes throughout.

First, aspiring superintendents should carefully gauge the graduate programs they are considering. Based on this research study, factors that aspiring superintendents should consider include the model of delivery of the coursework (i.e. a cohort-style program as opposed to a traditional course rotation schedule), the types of courses required for completion, course make-up as evidenced by sample syllabi, and who is actually teaching the courses. A particular emphasis on financial training should be evident in the coursework.

Other preferred courses include school law, personnel management, community/school board relations, and training in leading change initiatives and developing a mission/vision. Opportunities for superintendent-applicable problem solving should be available via internships and evident throughout the coursework. Ideally, a partnership between the graduate program and a local school district would provide additional opportunities for aspiring superintendents to delve into applicable projects. The instructors should preferably be a mix of academic researchers and practicing or recently-retired superintendents to further reinforce the real-world aspects of the program.

For practicing superintendents, it is important to focus on delegation skills and building capacity. Those superintendents who lead small districts and who have no additional central office staff to support them should focus on building capacity within the existing staff, while superintendents in larger districts should focus on appropriately delegating. Marzano and Waters (2009) reported that when superintendents provide autonomy to principals in areas tied to overall district goals, there is an increase in

student achievement. It is evident that leading a small district as opposed to a large one is a very different position.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the data collected in this study and a review of the existing literature, recommendations for future research would focus on two main areas. The first topic would be how superintendents in large districts appropriately and effectively delegate to central office staff and building principals. The second topic would be a more in-depth exploration of how the perceptions of female superintendents influence practice.

Both areas of future research would need to carefully delineate between *first year* superintendents and *first time* superintendents (Peterson et al., 2009). Peterson et al. (2009) reported these terms have been used interchangeably in the research, which has led to confusion. First-year superintendents could potentially have had previous superintendent experience but are in their first year in a given district. First-time superintendents, or novice superintendents, are clearly in their first year in the role of school superintendent. The term *novice superintendent* would be the preferable term used in future research.

Regarding the delegation of authority, both the level of delegation and the types of work to be delegated warrant further study. Within the framework of instructional leader versus organizational manager, which types of work should the superintendent delegate to central office staff and building principals? Principals work more directly with classroom teachers, and therefore, assume the role of instructional leader within their specific buildings. Conversely, central office staff members are have the big-picture

district viewpoint, which lends itself to the delegation of organizational management-type activities.

The body of research and the perceptions from superintendents in this study substantiate the relationship between district size and the level of delegation. There is also a clear association between principal autonomy within parameters of clearly-defined goals and student achievement. Taking this a step further to explore the specific areas of curriculum and instruction; professional development; and personnel and financial management that are delegated, and to whom, would perhaps reveal additional relationships to student achievement.

Regarding the perceptions of females in the superintendency, there appeared to be a relationship between females and a stronger emphasis on teaching and learning (i.e. interpersonal skills), which appeared to reinforce the increasing numbers and also align with the goals of many school districts. Haar, Raskin, and Robicheau (2009) recommended certain practices for school boards that would increase the chances of attracting females to the superintendency, including the establishment of gender-neutral standards for leadership, the assessment the local community standards and support for female leadership, the assessment of required skills needed to implement reform, and the recognition of in-house female leaders who could be promoted to the top job.

An analysis of these four areas of perceived female strengths and the related variables of community and school board support would yield a new body of research. This research would perhaps support more direct recruiting efforts of women to the superintendency. Females' individual perceptions of their own leadership and power are additional variables to consider. While it has been historically been a masculinized role,

it is clear from the literature and from the perceptions of superintendents in this study that women bring a valuable set of skills and a viewpoint that promotes student success.

Additionally, the interview respondents had a plethora of advice to offer in regard to preparing for a successful superintendency, much of which could be areas for future research.

Respondent S8 shared:

I think the thing that I have learned the most is, or I struggle with the most is, I can just work all the time. There is always more work, and walking away is more difficult… I have one more hour, and I can get two more things done. Pretty soon, it is six o'clock, and I have to get home. That kind of thing. [It is difficult] to learn how to distribute duties more and trust more and to not spend so much time at it.

The second thing is to become aware of the fact that you really have little control over what happens. I mean you cannot possibly know everything that goes on within the district. So, the comfort or discomfort with not having that knowledge and controllability is interesting because you are always on call. Never off duty. You can kind of be that way if you are an assistant principal or principal of a building. You are not on all the time. So, my advice would be to be prepared to lead differently. Be more accepting of the things, and understand there are certain things you cannot change, or it will take longer periods of time to change than what you can affect in a building. That is the part that is most fun but also most frustrating. You are more of an ambassador for the district, and you are engaged

in more community relations or more things that are not directly related to instructional improvement of a pretty good portion of your day.

Based on the perceptions of this superintendent, areas of future research would focus on time management and aspects of affecting change over time.

Respondent S4 shared:

Yeah, I think going back to what I said earlier about public relations. I said basically, I think the biggest issue that a lot of us face is how to handle people. I think the communication piece, public relations piece, is so important. One of the things that I have heard and seen in the district, that I am in a constant concern, is a lack of information coming from central office. Do not be afraid to share information with your staff. Obviously, there is some stuff you cannot share. We all know that. There is stuff that goes on in executive session that you cannot share. The other thing that I think is very important is be visible. Be visible in buildings. One of the things that helped me tremendously this year is getting out in the buildings, in the classrooms, and showing people that you care and you care about what they are doing. Participate in community events. Join the Chamber of Commerce. Go to those meetings.

I think just being visible, being out there. Open communication, good public relations. I am going to tell you what; you know you want to be a superintendent for a long time. That is what you have to do. The other stuff is nice to know and good to know and important to know in your job, but I am going to tell you what, if you want to be stick around for a long time, you really have to be able to do those things. That comes from guys who taught me in my graduate classes. Guys

who have been superintendents for twenty-five years, twenty-six years,

[discussing] how they survived that long.

Based on this superintendent's perceptions, areas of future research would focus on

community relations and the role of the superintendent in the community-at-large.

Respondent S3 shared:

Basically, to learn the school district that you're going to be going into or where

you would like to go. And then look at all the different opportunities that are

available for that school district. The other one would be to get on the [MO]

DESE website and know it inside out.

Based on this superintendent's perceptions, areas of future research would focus on how

to best capture district demographics and utilize other data in the interview process when

applying for superintendent positions.

Respondent S1 shared:

Yes, I was always scared to death of [MO] DESE, and so it is, don't be afraid to

call and ask [MO] DESE for help. Don't be afraid to ask other superintendent and

principal friends for help, because I can remember when I was the assistant

principal down at [nearby district], I would have to call for references on teachers,

and, oh, my gosh, if I had to call and talk to a superintendent, oh, that just made

me sick.

Based on this superintendent's perceptions, areas of future research would focus on

utilizing state-provided resources, including human resources and data. An additional

area would be to look at the concept of networking among superintendents and how to

maximize those ties.

Respondent S7 shared:

> I think aspiring superintendents need to look around, regardless of what position
> they are in, and look for models that are not specifically to help them step into a
> job, but to help them grow their leadership capacity wherever they are, and the
> rest will come naturally. I see too many people out there trying to pick political
> people to get close to. When really, it is a skill development area. It is who can
> help with that, and it may be a variety of people.

Based on this superintendent's perceptions, areas of future research would focus on
leadership models that are designed to grow capacity within themselves and among staff.
Building capacity is directly related to the concepts of principal autonomy and the
delegation of tasks by the superintendent.

Respondent S5 shared:

> If it is your passion, certainly, go for it. We need strong leaders who are willing
> to implement change. It is a tough time to be in it right now, with school finance
> situations. I don't know what your district is like that you are in, but everybody in
> this area faces significant cuts. I mean, you have to have the guts to make some
> tough decisions. I had to cut [personnel], and again, we are a small district. We
> have 70 people, total, working for us. I had to cut five people loose this year for
> next year.

Based on this superintendent's perceptions, areas of future research would focus on
implementing change with fewer resources. The financial aspect of the superintendent
role has been discussed at length, but a review of literature did not yield much

information on best practices in personnel cuts. The management of personnel-related responsibilities is an area rife with potential research opportunities.

Summary

The summary of findings from this study yielded some conclusions that appeared to support the review of related literature. The perceptions of first-year Missouri superintendents regarding the content and delivery of superintendent preparation programs was in direct agreement with the body of research, including emphases on school finance, personnel, and opportunities for real-world problem solving. There were additional similarities in the perceptions of requisite knowledge and skills, including a thorough understanding of financial and legal responsibilities and the ability to initiate and sustain reform efforts. The first-year superintendents in this study relied heavily on mentoring and networking strategies for support, which was also substantiated by the review of literature.

The debate regarding the superintendent as primarily an instructional leader versus organizational manager was not so clear cut. While there was a relationship between district size and delegation of tasks in organizational management, there are additional variables, such as gender, that deserve additional research. In reality, the superintendent is *both* an instructional leader and an organizational manager, and the ability to wear both hats is a balancing act.

Appendix A:

Interview Questions

1. What is the primary role of the superintendent?

2. Is it more important for the superintendent to be an effective manager of resources or the primary instructional leader? Why?

3. Why did you become a superintendent? Potential incentives include:
    - o Compensation ___
    - o Prestige of the position ___
    - o Leading learning ___
    - o Making a difference for public education ___
    - o Managing the organization ___
    - o Working with students ___
    - o Working with staff ___
    - o Addressing challenges ___
    - o Building a team ___
    - o Promoting accountability ___
    - o Other (please describe):

4. What are the biggest challenges? Potential disincentives include:
    - o Long-term financial security issues ___
    - o School board relations and challenges ___
    - o Salary low in comparison to level of responsibility ___
    - o Local politics ___
    - o Funding of public schools ___
    - o Labor relations ___
    - o Personal family sacrifices ___
    - o Press and public relations challenges ___
    - o Accountability pressures such as high-stakes testing ___
    - o Community relations ___

5. Do you believe that there is an adequate supply of candidates for the superintendency? Why?

6. What type of educational leadership program did you complete? When?

7. What is your background prior to becoming a superintendent?

8. What other licensure requirements have you completed?

9. Were you satisfied with your preparation program? Why?

10. What changes, if any, would you make to the program?

11. As a new superintendent, do you feel prepared to develop a collaborative culture in your district?

- o Building shared vision – what are your strategies?
- o Team learning – building the capacity of the staff - what are your strategies?
- o How will you facilitate time to collaborate in order to reflect and study practices?
- o What data will you collect and utilize to reflect and study practices?

12. What topics/coursework should be included in superintendent preparation programs?
- o Community relations ___
- o School finance ___
- o Technological applications ___
- o Principal/school leader evaluation ___
- o School board relations ___
- o School law ___
- o Development of mission/vision ___
- o Working with the media ___
- o Leading change initiatives ___
- o Differentiating for struggling students ___
- o Strategies for continuous quality improvement ___
- o Maintenance of facilities ___
- o Initiating/managing bond issues ___
- o OTHER

13. What was the make-up of the internship component? Duration? Content?

14. Did your university program have any kind of formal or informal partnership with local school districts?

15. What subject area content was most important to your new position?

16. As a new superintendent, are you participating in a formal mentoring program? If so, what is the format and how often do you see/talk to your mentor? Was it a district-sponsored or state-sponsored program?

17. How important is mentoring?

- o 1 – not important
- o 2 – somewhat important
- o 3 – very important
- o 4 - crucial

18. Do you participate or gain support from a formal or informal network of superintendents? If so, what does that look like?

19. How important is formal and informal networking to your position?

   o   1 – not important
   o   2 – somewhat important
   o   3 – very important
   o   4 - crucial

20. What other avenues of support do you seek?

21. What are your plans for the next five years?

22. What advice would you offer other aspiring superintendents?

23. Any other closing comments….

Appendix B

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>,

This is an invitation for you to participate in a research study entitled,

First-Year Superintendents' Perceptions of Preparation & Practice. Your participation

would involve responding to interview questions regarding your perception of

superintendent preparation programs, the requisite knowledge and skills of the position,

and the types of supports available. All personal information will remain confidential.

Names and locations will remain anonymous. Data collected will be secured in a locked

cabinet for a period of five years, then destroyed.

I am completing this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a

doctorate in Educational Administration through Lindenwood University. If you would

like to participate in this study, please reply. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Brady Quirk
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix C

Lindenwood University

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

First-Year Superintendents' Perceptions of Preparation & Practice

Principal Investigator: Brady Quirk
Telephone: 417-830-2151   E-mail: bquirk@spsmail.org

Participant_____
Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Brady Quirk under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is gather perceptual information from first-year superintendents in Missouri regarding their university preparation program.

2. a) Your participation will involve answering questions in a telephone interview.

    b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be 30-60 minutes.

    c) Eight, first-year superintendents will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about how to best prepare aspiring superintendents.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Brady Quirk at 417-830-2151 or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore at 417-881-0009. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____

Participant's Signature   Date

_____

Participant's Printed Name

_____

Signature of Primary Investigator   Date

_____

Investigator's Printed Name

Appendix D

Lindenwood University
Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

To: Brady Quirk
CC: Dr. Sherry DeVore
IRB Project Number 11-47
Title: *First-Year Superintendent' Perceptions of Preparation and Practice*

The IRB has reviewed your application for research according to the terms and conditions below, and it has been approved.

IRB Approval Date: 2/14/2011
Expiration Date: 2/14/2012
Type of Review: Expedited
Research Risk Level: Level 1- Minimal Risk

The Lindenwood IRB complies with Federal regulations 45 CFR 46, 45 CFR 164, 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56, which allows for the use of an expedited review procedure for research which presents no more than minimal risk to human participants and meets the criteria for one or more of the categories of research published in the Federal Register . All actions and recommendations approved under expedited review are reported to a Full Board meeting.

Changes in the conduct of the study, including the consent process or materials, require submission of an amendment application which must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation of the changes.

According to Federal regulations, this project requires IRB continuing review. As such, prior to the project expiration date above, you must submit either a Renewal through the abbreviated application form or a Final Report.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact the Chair.

Ricardo Delgado   2/28/11
Institutional Review Board Chair   Date

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