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Perception on Roles

Running head: PERCEPTION ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Board Members' Perception on Their Roles and
Responsibilities in Developing Policy That Affects Student
Achievement

James D. Hutsell

May, 2009

A dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of
Lindenwood University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

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 here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: James Derrick Hutsell

Signature: James Derrick Hutsell Date: 7/21/09

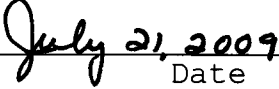
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' PERCEPTION ON THEIR ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES IN DEVELOPING POLICY THAT AFFECTS STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT

James D. Hutsell

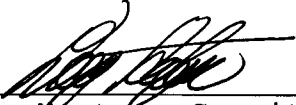
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Doctor of Education
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Dr. Terry Reid, Dissertation Chair



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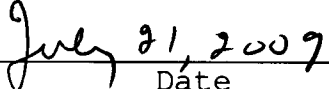
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Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my family. Without their encouragement and support this accomplishment would not be possible. I would like to thank my parents for having the instinct to push me to reach my potential and to pursue my goals in education. Lastly, I want to thank my wife Cindy and my four children for being patient while I spent multiple hours completing the study. Their love and dedication has made this entire process worthwhile.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine how school board members perceive their individual roles with regard to individual student achievement. The study participants were public schools that have completed the fourth cycle Missouri School Improvement Program in Missouri. With the accountability movement that is facing every public school system, the school board's involvement must be accounted for in that process of increasing student achievement. The traditional school board has taken a lesser role in the student learning process and has spent the majority of its time on management of policy and facilities. A clear understanding of the board's role and responsibilities in the new age of accountability is a must for the success of individual school districts. The school board typically can use policy to effect and drive student learning. The school board can also use policy to clarify their priorities within the school district. Thus, sending a message to staff, parents, and community on what they value in their local educational system. Data collected from surveys were analyzed using the Paired samples t-test. The findings were that those districts of education whose school boards were

highly involved in assessing student data were more likely to be "accredited in distinction" and have higher standardized test scores.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The concept of the local school board originated in New England, where citizens controlled school directly through town meetings (Black, 2007). By 1926, a separate school committee detached from the rest of local government originated in Massachusetts (Good, 1998). Today the model of elected school board members is prevalent with more than 97,000 school board members working with approximately 15,000 superintendents nationwide (Kruger, 2008). Political pressures placed on school boards to raise test scores and comply with No Child Left Behind and other state accountability mandates have filtered down to the superintendent and school board (Glass, 2007). Superintendents are in the difficult position of having to produce better student achievement with the same or less funding than any other time in past history.

America's founding fathers agreed that the Republic would not last if citizens were not properly educated (Good, 1998). Thomas Jefferson eloquently argued for local control of public school whose central purpose was political socialization (Good). As a rural agricultural nation with dispersed families and small towns, it made

economic sense to establish a school in every community. The evolution of the public schools and the empowerment of local School Boards of Education and school officials (superintendents, principals, and teachers) are a direct result of shared beliefs and common ideology (Good, 1998). Through the transition of all of the school reform in public education, the school board has remained the one constant governing body for public education. With this notion in mind, it is imperative to develop clear lines of responsibilities between the school board and superintendent, when dealing with accountability and increasing student achievement. Bryant and Houston (2002) reported

Team Leadership for Student Achievement outlines how the board and the superintendent should go about working together in setting a vision for the schools, establishing standards and identifying the assessment process to be used to measure student success.

Together they must recognize that this work forms the accountability system, not only for the board to assess the superintendent and for the superintendent to assess the principals and teachers, but also for the community to assess the board. (p.40)

"Society today has been forged to a great extent by the experiences of school of yesterday. While the present system of schooling strives to sustain itself, society tomorrow remains just as dependent" (Hood, 2002, p. 7). According to Douglas Reeves (2004); no discussion of educational accountability would be complete without consideration of the educational policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels. In the early years of the 21st century, the federal government has become involved in the educational accountability at a higher level than ever before. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), was passed by a majority of both political parties, which proves that the federal government is going to be involved in the influence of teaching, learning, and curriculum. Much of the publicity surrounding state-level accountability plans is focused on federal legislation, local and state policymakers remain enormously influential in the local establishment of educational policy. (p. 83)

Local boards are empowered by state legislatures and are ultimately responsible to the public. Although provided with extensive powers over teaching and learning, expertise is not required for board service. Qualifications for

school board service are minimal, which is consistent with local control. However, in states such as Missouri, state agencies have adopted regulations to implement programs to improve the abilities of individual board members to function in their position of control. The Missouri Outstanding School Act required that "all school board members elected or appointed after August 23, 1983 will be required to complete 16 hours of training and orientation their first year of service" (Missouri School Boards' Association, 1994). The demands for board members to make informed decisions in an era when school law is dynamic and ever-changing places a tremendous responsibility on board members to understand the complexity of their roles and responsibilities in increasing student achievement. Additionally, school boards are feeling ever-increasing pressure from national legislation to increase student achievement in their local population. In a study done by the Tennessee School Boards' Association, it was concluded that the mandatory training had a major impact on board members' decision making in the eyes of both the superintendent and board members (Grissom, 2006).

Just as board members are to accept responsibility for the operation of schools, superintendents must accept

responsibility for increasing student achievement. School districts must ultimately design the trust culture between governance (board of education) and administration (superintendent). When developing a school vision, all stakeholders must be incorporated into the team. An effective superintendent must collaborate with the board to establish core beliefs, vision, and goals; formulate a theory of action; develop policies; allocate resources; and oversee effective policy implementation and management systems (Black, 2007). These responsibilities belong to the board to carry out, not the superintendent (Cavanna, 2007). Each state has developed a prescribed program of study to be completed by those who seek licensure as superintendents. The demands put on superintendents continued to change as the accountability increased. In a study of boards of education in Washington D.C., board members said that "they involve themselves too much in day-to-day management of schools and have weak procedures for handling conflicts with their superintendents" (Olson, 1998, p. 10).

Statement of the Problem

The board and the superintendent are jointly responsible for achieving the highest possible performance

by schools and students. Clear communication on roles and responsibilities of each must prevail in the governance of the school. Boards and superintendents can work together as a high-performing team to effectively redesign their school systems. The overarching objective of the school board must be to create a system in which all students perform at high levels to be prepared for college or the workforce (Cavanna, 2007). According to Hood (2002),

So much is at stake that it is perhaps inevitable that board members and superintendents occasionally raise questions and concerns about the roles and responsibilities of the other. At issue is the proper recognition by both administrators and boards of education of the boundaries and limits of control of the individual schools district. The superintendent is expected to demonstrate excellence as an instructional leader, administer the laws, secure financial obligations, and administer the district in an effective manner. (p. 8)

It is not surprising that the relationship between superintendents and boards of education has become frayed. "The current pressures to improve schools and increase their accountability to the public have been one of this

century's longest and most sustained periods of national attention," according to Stanford Professor, Larry Cuban (as cited in Goldstein, 1992, p. 15).

The major responsibility of the school board is to establish policy that governs student achievement. The school board must develop conversation among the board members that is consistent with the overall mission of the school district to improve student achievement. The accountability of schools is going to be measured by student achievement through the mastery of the standardized state tests. With the accountability issue higher than any other time in history, it is crucial for school boards to understand their role in developing policy that will impact student achievement. School board members must be well versed in new strategies and school reform. School boards must pay attention to three priority areas to make their school districts more effective. The first is to develop a focus on improving student achievement; the second priority is to agree on the role of the board handling internal conflict; and lastly to ensure regular and honest review of the board's own performance (Castallo, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the current board of education members' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in developing policy that affects student achievement. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was to determine individual responsibilities of school board members, and their impact on student achievements. The study identified Missouri School districts that were accredited in distinction and compared them on their roles in developing policy, versus school board member districts that were only accredited in the state of Missouri.

Importance of the Study

The importance of this study is that it addresses topics that would aid in the selection of future superintendents, create longer tenure for superintendents, and impact learning in the local school district. In 2006, the average superintendent tenure was only 2 years and 6 months, and today the turn-over for superintendents is seventeen percent each year (Glass, 2007). Long-term tenure of superintendents has been shown to improve student achievement in several noted studies. Sharing the responsibility of student achievement with the school board will increase the awareness and responsibility of the local

school board. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has started to offer seminars for aspiring superintendents to prepare them for the shortages the state is dealing with and deal with accountability in school districts.

An increased understanding, clear expectations, and a line of communication between school boards and superintendents must be recognized. It is essential for boards and superintendents to reach an understanding of what is expected from one another (Hymes & McCurdy, 1992). This knowledge will enable superintendents to focus on the development of skills in the areas identified as important roles for superintendents. It is imperative for all board members and the superintendents to have a clear understanding of the legal boundaries of their working relationship and increasing awareness in effecting student achievement.

The study was important because it informs the general public, as well as educators, universities and policymakers of the role the school board plays in developing policy in the state of Missouri. Secondly, this study may identify problems in role perceptions that might be reduced or eliminated through proper education of the school board in

areas of student achievement. Finally, insights gained in this study may be utilized by board members and superintendents in creating parameters of operation to guide in the decision-making process within the school district. By developing parameters with specific roles and responsibilities, districts could more effectively operate. The end result is to develop a win-win attitude, high trust culture, and a positive relationship of trust to help individual school districts survive in a high accountability era.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in the study:

1. Does the school board perception of academics influence student achievement?
2. Do districts with school boards with high expectations for student achievement have higher Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores?
3. Do districts with school boards that focus on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP) experience improvement on Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) student performance indicators?

4. Do districts with boards that discuss student performance on a regular basis have higher performing schools?
5. Do districts with board members that feel accountable for student achievement have higher MAP scores in their district?
6. Do districts with school board members who implement changes as a result of analysis of student performance data have higher performing schools?

Null Hypotheses

Null hypothesis # 1. There is no significant correlation between school board perception of academics and student achievement.

Null hypothesis # 2. There is no significant correlation between school board expectation and student achievement.

Null hypothesis # 3. There is no significant correlation between the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and the Missouri School Improvement student performance indicators.

Null hypothesis # 4. There is no significant correlation between school board frequent discussion of student performance and actual performance of schools.

Null hypothesis # 5. There is no significant correlation between school boards accountability and student achievement.

Null hypothesis # 6. There is no significant correlation between school boards that implement change and performance of the school district.

Design of the Study

The research methodology used for this study was quantitative descriptive in nature. Survey questions used a five-point Likert scale to gather information regarding the perceptions of roles and responsibilities of boards of education. The questions were developed from the MSIP Fourth Cycle Advanced Questionnaire for boards of education in the Missouri School Improvement Plan survey. The data was disseminated by the author and compiled from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of Missouri. The survey included items that were clearly identified by experts as responsibilities of school boards. The items were generated from investigation of related topics and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Simple statistics were determined using the SPSS system of determining frequency counts and order of ranking in the analysis of the data collected.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to:

1. Elected board of education members in Missouri.
2. Schools that have completed Fourth Cycle MSIP.
3. The validity and reliability of the survey.
4. The interpretations of collected data.
5. The number of surveys returned.
6. The bias of the author.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Accountability - a definitive national measure of student achievement. The legislative action enacted with "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) on all public education institutions.

Educational governance-the process of governing the local educational system by the school board through policy, oversight, and employment of a superintendent (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2000).

Perception - how an individual looks at his/her job expectations. The interpretation that one gives to the environmental stimulation. Perception is a

process whereby the mind interprets and recognizes what the body has sensed.

Responsibility - expected behavior that pertains to public education.

Role - expected behavior pattern of individuals involved with public education.

School board member - an elected "director" who works with a board to carry out the educational obligations at the local level (MSBA, 1994).

Superintendent - manager, CEO, oversees day-to-day operations (MSBA). A paid executive who serves as the chief administrative officer of the school district and directs and oversees the entire operations of the school district.

Working Relations - a productive relationship that is firm, objective, and fair, can be trusted, provides sound management principles, provides input in decision making, and provides for a quality education system (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2000, p.56).

Summary

School boards were developed on the belief system that citizens should control the policies and educational

direction of the local schools. That is the simple way of looking at their responsibilities. Most schools boards spend a tremendous amount of time on crisis management and operational details instead of spending time on their intended educational purpose, which is to strategically plan, develop policy, and increase student achievement. At the Institute for Educational Leadership, a study was completed with 50 Iowa superintendents to assist superintendents in opening communication, building understanding, and resolving conflict with school boards. Six topics were listed for in-depth discussion by the superintendents: building trust, developing roles/responsibilities, building a shared vision, creating communication channels, reaching effective decisions, and developing positive links with the community.

The challenge for all school districts is to develop a system that fits the needs of the community, provides a quality education to students, and uses the resources available with equal appropriation among programs. The key factor to this study is how well the school boards are able to function in a professional focus, with time and energy spent on increasing student achievement while maintaining a

balance of their roles and responsibilities as school board members.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into several subgroups of information. The review will begin with a look at the historical development of the school board and superintendent's position. Secondly, the review of literature will explore the governance tasks performed by the school board and the superintendent. At this point, the review will also detail the specific roles and responsibilities of the school board and superintendent. Thirdly, the review of literature will focus on effective leadership and research several respected leadership philosophies. Lastly, the review of literature will explore the various reasons for which superintendents leave their positions and the major stressors between the superintendent and the local school boards as they relate to the No Child Left Behind legislation and accountability of schools with their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).

A review of the literature reveals that there are several areas that the school board and superintendent need to develop more fully to enhance and create a positive working relationship. The collected literature indicates the importance of a clear line of communication and a

trusting relationship between the school board and the superintendent. "The successful operation of schools requires a close, effective working relationship between the board and the superintendent. The relationship must be one of trust, honesty, good will and candor" (Yakima School District Board of Directors, 2003). The historical development of the school board, relationships between the superintendent and school board, and superintendent governance issues were well documented in the literature. Several studies have been conducted that look at the reasons for superintendent turnover; this literature review will try to discover the underlying perceptions of school boards and superintendents in regards to their roles and responsibilities in developing policy that have a positive impact on student achievement.

Historical Development of School Boards and Superintendent

"Public schools of the 19th century were structured and operated much differently than the public schools of the 20th century. The evolution of public schools and the empowerment of local Boards of Education and school officials (superintendents, principals, and teachers) are a direct result of community beliefs and common ideology" (Hood, 2002). From the beginning of education in the United

States, the people of a local community traditionally have directed the governance of the public school. The conflict between the superintendent and the board of education developed with the first superintendent position in the 1800s. In the 1800s the concept of the local school board originated in New England, where citizens controlled schools directly through town meetings.

It is not surprising that the relationship between superintendents and boards of education has become frayed. The current pressures to improve schools and increase their accountability to the public have been one of this century's longest and most sustained periods of national attention. (Else, 2003)

By 1826, a separate school committee detached from the local government and created the first school board in Massachusetts. The school board model spread rapidly throughout the nation (Kirst, 1991). In 1837, the first superintendents of schools were hired in Buffalo, New York, and Louisville, Kentucky. Thus began the sometimes-controversial relationship between boards of education and superintendents that has existed in varying degrees for more than a century and a half (Kirst, 1991).

American founding fathers agreed that the Republic would not last if all citizens were not properly educated. Thomas Jefferson argued for local control of public schools whose central purpose was political socialization (Bryce, 1988).

It is reasonable to assume that without local control, Americans would not have developed the school system that we use today for public schools. As a rural agricultural nation with dispersed families, it made economic sense to establish one school in each community. The beginning of the one room schoolhouse that served as the gathering place for town meetings, education, and church was established. Thus the "common school" came into being, wherein all children, boys and girls, rich and poor, Baptist and Lutheran, were all educated. (Cubberly, 1914)

Henry Bernard described the schools of the 19th century as a miscellaneous collection of elite academics, sectarian schools, charity schools for the poor, and schools for ethnic enclaves. Differences in schools were due mostly to community wealth, region, ethnicity, and religion. As settlers moved across the country, schools maintained the same institutional character and common curriculum.

According to early authors, similarities of schools, although there was no governmental control, must be attributed to a common Protestant and Republican ideology.

Governing Tasks of School Boards and Superintendents

Some of the most influential leaders of the 19th century were Horace Mann, Henry Bernard, John Swett, and Calvin Wiley. Horace Mann's creative vision of developing a network of common school systems for America has fueled public education since the beginning of the nation (Houston, 1992). The aforementioned had minimal formal powers; for the most part, these leaders could only persuade the public to do what was needed for the public school systems. These leaders illustrated the power of ideas to develop educational reform and build institutions. They constantly reminded citizens of the importance and personal obligations for the education of children and inspired people with visions of public schools of the future. The local board is required, by law, to design a process whereby the school district develops a shared vision of education in the community by involving all constituents in the process through strategic planning and Comprehensive School Improvement strategies. The accountability of No Child Left Behind has forced most

school districts to balance the community values with the federally mandated proficiency targets set by the federal government. The governing responsibilities have not changed for the local school boards from the early years, but accountability for student achievement has been moved to the forefront of expected responsibilities of current boards. The majority of citizens still agree with early leaders such as Mann, who stressed the importance of developing a common school system run by the local constituents. Local control is vital to maintaining the traditional school board system.

“During the 20th century, many forms of local governance steadily diminished from decentralization to centralization” (Hood, 2002).

Research has consistently articulated that a poor relationship between the superintendent and the board of education deters school improvement, affects the quality of educational programs, weakens district stability and morale, negatively influences the superintendent’s credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness with board members, impedes critical reform efforts, such as district restructuring, collaborative visioning and long range planning and

eventually results in an increase in the revolving door syndrome of district leaders. (Loring, 2005)

One-room schools disappeared as numbers of schools declined from hundreds of thousands to approximately 16,000 schools nationwide. The federal government, courts, and state departments of education have assumed an increasing activist role in establishing school guidelines and policy. This centralized form of public schools was designed to promote greater efficiency and accountability of school systems. Most superintendents are more likely to take the lead in developing new policies and directions for their schools districts, but an increasing percentage said they believed policy development was a shared responsibility with the school board. Authority and control of local schools still remain greatly entrenched in the community. The governance of the state has impacted the way schools are governed, but local beliefs are used to decide how to interpret which direction the school is actively pursuing. "Although school boards are representative bodies, they are expected to defer to the expertise of the superintendent and choose the 'best' educational policies regardless of community preferences" (Danzberger, 1992, p.220).

Specific Roles of School Boards and Superintendents

Early school boards were not limited to legislative affairs but also had administrative and supervisory responsibilities. The first indicator of a potential problem is thinking that one's election to the school board qualifies one to lead. The second symptom is *believing* that one's election to the school board qualifies one to lead based on the fact that they were elected to the position of school board member. All details of operating the schools belonged to the board. Little by little, school boards relinquished administrative functions and later to the headmasters and later to the superintendents. The great growth of public education hastened the process of superintendent share of governance.

The first half of the 20th century marked a movement toward the concept of the school board as a policy-making, legislative body, with the superintendent as the executive officer of the school system. This change came about because of the realization on the part of school boards themselves that only specially trained, full-time professionally trained staffs could successfully administer such a complex enterprise.

(Bannach & Bannach, 2004)

The American public school superintendency has gone through four major stages since its inception (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). The role has shifted from clerical to master educator, expert manager, and finally, chief executive officer for the board of education (Carter and Cunningham). A variety of factors have been responsible for shaping the current superintendents role including the internal operation of the schools; social, economic, political, and legal forces external to the schools; professors of educational administration who prepare those seeking the superintendency; the expectations and values of the public; and finally, the individuals themselves who have held the office, including their perceptions of the job, their views of the role of public schools in American society, and their own backgrounds, values, and personalities (Jackson, 1995).

The superintendent emerges as the chief executive officer with the burden of the school district resting on his/her shoulders. Through research and practical experience, a superintendent incorporates some tangible resources for decision-making that, if properly used, can increase administrative influence over educational decisions. Most importantly, the chief administrator is full-time and able to devote total energy and attention to

matters within the schools. On the other hand, school board members can be distracted by concerns with family, friends, and occupation. Thus, the superintendent and staff resolve almost all routine decisions and leave the board to develop policy and be liaisons between the community and the school district. Whereas each routine decision, taken individually, may be of no concern to board members, collectively such decisions constitute the majority of school district business. As Else stated in his monograph, to strengthen relationships "a key factor in developing this type of system is committing time and energy to nurturing positive relationships between and among the superintendent and board members." (2003)

Additionally, the routinization of decisions allows the superintendent to maximize another resource: a detailed knowledge of the organization and the operation of the district unequaled by any group or individual in the community. Most superintendents will outmatch competition for knowledge about budget, curriculum requirements, personnel standards, facilities, and legal requirements of a school district.

The balance of power between the district superintendent and their school boards varies according to the type of issue or policy question faced (Boyd, 2006).

The balance of power in most local systems is strongly in favor of the superintendent of schools and of the administration in general. This is primarily because of the lack of adequate information, expertise, and experience of the board members with public school entities. "The board agenda also provides a framework mechanism for structuring a district's ideology and locus of power as well as providing an important source of coalition building within a district" (Peterson & Short, 2002, July).

As various studies have pointed out, the administrator is in a position either to promote board participation in decision-making and creativity on the part of individuals in the organization or to run a tight ship and discourage the effort of any of the board members to rock the boat. The administrator does more than set the climate for the participants of the organization. The superintendent establishes certain goals, relocates resources, and develops the criteria for selection of personnel and is the bridge between the organization and the school board.

It has been primarily superintendents who have experienced the pressures associated with today's educational woes. Superintendents who survive difficult challenges during their tenure develop conflict management skills that will carry them through future times of

conflict. Conflict resolution, professional relationship building, and problem solving skills are among the key characteristics that a superintendent needs to develop in order to have a long-term success in a district (Innaccone, 1967).

Within this general framework, school boards have specific responsibilities that are outlined from the American Association of School Administrators. (Appendix A)

Boards of education annually evaluate the superintendent's performance in specific areas of district management. These evaluations should not reflect on the person in the position, but rather, measure the district's progress toward established goals and objectives and strengthen working relationships between the superintendent and the board. "Evaluations should provide commendations in areas of strength and recommendations for improving effectiveness, thus clarifying the superintendent's role and giving the board and superintendent an opportunity to jointly identify priorities among the superintendent's many responsibilities" (Chino Valley Unified School District, 1995). In keeping with the division of effort, superintendents have specific responsibilities (Appendix B) that describe responsibilities as identified by the American Association of School Administrators.

"What these investigations also illustrate is that the district superintendent has influence but is also influenced by administrators, teachers, parents, and members of the board of education in focusing on the technical core of curriculum and instruction" (Petersen, 2001). Superintendents understand the importance, complexity, and conflict of their leadership role in curriculum and instruction. Recent research on the instructional leadership of superintendents has outlined instructionally oriented skills and behaviors for district leaders. "They [superintendents] must also possess and model visionary leadership and build and organization through instructional personnel, instructional planning, and evaluation that supports the parameters of their instructional vision" (Peterson, 2001).

With the accountability of No Child Left Behind (2002), the increase of responsibility has taken on a new form for both the superintendent and the local school board. The increased expectation that NCLB has created produces an increased focus on student achievement and an interest in researching what specific factors will impact academic growth. School leadership and school culture are two factors that are recognized by most educational research (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Today's school boards must wear a myriad of hats and possess knowledge of curriculum, teaching strategies, and understand the dissemination of collected data.

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of being a school board member is ever increasing with the addition of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The accountability has forced all school districts to develop new ways of collecting pertinent data to make educational changes in their curriculum.

Another aspect of board involvement is in developing school culture. A culture of learning is cultivated from the top down approach. School culture serves as a major variable between leadership and student achievement (Sergiovanni, 2000). The fact that culture can have an impact on student achievement implores the relevance of effective leadership. Leadership will have a direct impact on student achievement and should be cultivated among the superintendent and school board. Leadership has an effect on student achievement and is important since leaders are, more than ever, being held accountable for the results of the students in their school districts (Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). Because leadership has an effect on student achievement, there is a direct need for leadership training

among school boards and superintendents that goes far beyond the sixteen hours of required training.

Leadership Philosophy

In looking at leadership philosophy, the literature review focused on several of the most recognized organizational leadership authors. The following authors will be studied in this review of literature: Stephen Covey, Jim Collins, John Maxwell, and Robert Marzano.

The first is Stephen Covey who is well known for *The Seven Habits* and also *The Eighth Habit-From Effectiveness to Greatness*. In this review of literature, the main focus is going to be around the leadership philosophy in *The Eighth Habit* book.

About nineteen years ago, Dr. Stephen Covey wrote *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. It has become an international phenomenon with over 15 million copies sold worldwide. Dr. Covey has been involved with many of the country's leaders and improved the lives of millions by applying the seven principles involved in the first book. Dr. Covey also realized that the world is an ever-changing place and that the complexities we all face are of an entirely new order of magnitude. Our effectiveness is no longer merely an option; it is a requirement to survive in today's world. Dr. Covey realized that to survive in what

he calls the "Knowledge Worker Age", everyone must move beyond effectiveness and reach for greatness. The eighth habit is based on the new era of what Dr. Covey calls "fulfillment, passion, execution, and significant contribution. The book is based on a change in mind set that requires a major change in thinking around a whole new tool set to face the challenges of today. The book is based on a totally new habit: "to find our voice and help others find theirs" (Covey, 2004).

The eighth habit represents the human spirit that is full of hope and intelligence. The eighth habit encompasses a balance of talent, need, conscience, and passion (Hamby, 2006). The ultimate balance ends up with voice which reveals our uniqueness and strength. The needs are still present for vision that drives what we do and who we become. The overall key to obtaining voice is being able to stay continually focused on our passion that drives our inner spirit. Dr. Covey describes this inner voice as your soul's code, the place that "rises out of need, taps your talents, and fuels your passion." Dr. Covey describes that most people are stuck in the paradigm that they are unneeded and underappreciated which cause inner pain for acceptance and creates an ineffective workforce. Some of

the statistical data collected focused on key industries and revealed employees felt:

- Only 37 percent said they have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why.
- Only 1 out of 5 was enthusiastic about their team's and organization's goals.
- Only half were satisfied with the work they have accomplished at the end of the week.
- Only 15 percent felt they worked in a high-trust environment.
- Only 20 percent fully trusted the organization they worked for.
- Only 10 percent felt the organization held people accountable for results.
- And, only 13 percent have high-trust, highly cooperative working relationships with other groups or departments.

The study showed that there needs to be a major emphasis put on helping people find their voices and reasons for being involved with different organizations. The data is sobering, but it is an accurate measure of what we face in education (Covey, 2004, & Hamby, 2006).

Peter Drucker said, In a few hundred years, when the history of our time is written from a long-term perspective, it is likely the most important event those historians will see is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first time- literally-substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. And society is totally unprepared for it (Covey, 2004).

Stephen Covey outlines the progression of human work over the past centuries from hunter/gatherer to farmer, from farmer to factory worker, and from factory worker to knowledge worker. Each transition has increased the productivity of the worker but it did not come easily or without pain. Each transition and shift in labor focus was accompanied by downsizing of the previous age. Current statistics reveal that only 3% of Americans are farmers. Covey predicts that a similar decline in industrial workers has already begun. Each new age requires a new mind set, skill set, and tool set, and those who refuse or conform are typically left behind. The management practices born from this age treated people as if they were things that

were expendable. The old philosophy of the "carrot and the stick" worked well in the industrial setting but works very poorly in the knowledge age. Many educators and leaders are still trying to use the Industrial age model to lead people in a high informational society (Hamby, 2006). The results tend to be organizations that result in low-trust cultures, with high litigation and high unionization. Albert Einstein (Covey, 2004) said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them" (p. 201).

Covey talks about addressing the whole person paradigm. The foundational fact to this paradigm is that people are not things that need to be controlled and motivated. Covey says they are four dimensional: body, mind, heart, and spirit. He also holds that we all have an innate desire to live, love, learn, and leave a legacy. He summarizes that the whole person paradigm of management should provide each person with fair pay, kind treatment, opportunities to be creative, and opportunities to serve human needs in a principled way (Covey, 2004 & Hamby, 2006).

Henry Thoreau states, "There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root" (Anderson, 1997). The solution lies in striking at the

root of the significant problems we face. Covey outlined the problems as being deeply embedded paradigms or traditions in the workplace. We have some deeply embedded traditions in our school systems that have their roots deeply embedded in the industrial age. It is time for educational change and a paradigm shift from mediocrity to sustained excellence. Our organizations are built and perfectly aligned to get the results we are getting. We must realize that change comes one person at a time and from the inside out rather than the outside-in. Covey believes that organizations of today must help each person recognize and realize their talents and develop a vision for what they can accomplish. Covey advocates that there are two roads in life that force us all to choose. One is the broad, well traveled road to mediocrity. The other, less traveled road, leads to greatness and meaning. The following paragraph is taken directly from the eighth habit book:

The path to mediocrity straightjackets human potential. The path to greatness unleashes and realizes human potential. The path to mediocrity is the quick fix, short cut approach to life. The path to greatness is a process of sequential growth from the inside-out. Travelers on the lower path to

mediocrity live out the *cultural* "software" of ego, indulgence, scarcity, comparison, competitiveness and victimism. Travelers on the upper path to greatness rise above negative cultural influences and choose to become the creative force of their lives. One word expresses the pathway to greatness-Voice. Those on this path find their voice and inspire others to find theirs. The rest never do. (Covey, 2004)

The greatness Covey talks about can be revealed in how we treat other people and make a conscious choice to live a life of greatness and contribution. To inspire means to breathe life into another and help him/her become contributors. It doesn't do any good to read, talk, or discuss this type of change if a person is not willing to apply it to what he/she does on a daily basis. The solution lies within our grasp if we apply the principles to our lives and live by them through our school systems, school boards, and superintendent value systems (Hamby, 2006).

The next author in leadership is Jim Collins. The book Good to Great describes the necessary attributes of successful leadership. Jim Collins' belief system encompasses the premise that good is the enemy of great.

Jim Collins' five-year quest yielded many insights, a number of them surprising and quite contrary to conventional wisdom, but one giant conclusion stands above the others: "We believe that almost any organization can substantially improve its stature and performance, perhaps even become great, if it conscientiously applies the framework of ideas we've covered" (Collins, 2001).

Harry S. Truman once stated that a person can accomplish anything in life, provided that he/she does not mind who gets the credit. Jim Collins used the research to uncover a phenomenon of Level 5 leaders. These leaders build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great organization. It's not that the Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest they are indeed incredibly ambitious-but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves. These high level leaders consistently demonstrates that their ambition for the organization was subordinated to any personal or financial gain. The author clarifies the Level 5 leaders are also fanatical about bringing a successor who will have greater success in succeeding generations for the organization. Level 5 leaders demonstrate an unwavering

resolve to do whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult(Collins, 2001).

Jim Collins discusses building a culture of discipline with an ethic of entrepreneurship. Thus, creating a system of super-discipline drives every educational decision that is made. Most organizations lack discipline to stay with the hedgehog concept, that is, to understand what they can be best at in the world and stick with it. Several times in education we tend to be chasing the popular fad and we forget about being disciplined in that area in which we are already capable of being the best. The hedgehog concept is focused on sustained results in decision making that fanatically adhere to the willingness to turn down opportunities that do not align with beliefs and values. Great organizations had no name for their transformations, no miracle cure, or defining moment, but a quiet deliberate process of figuring out what needed to be done to create the best future results for the organization and then taking those steps one by one and continuing to push in a focused direction (Collins, 2001).

Mr. Collin's believes that it all starts with Level 5 leaders. Great leaders are leaders who naturally gravitate towards accomplishing the goals of the organization and are less interested in flashy programs. Leaders must have

strong discipline to make good decisions, even under tremendous pressure from people within the organization. The ultimate goal of leadership is to instill a disciplined thought pattern that permeates the educational organization. This culture will create people with disciplined thought, disciplined action, and a disciplined life. The school board should be made up of influential leaders in the community who value education and improving student achievement (Collins, 2001).

The next leadership philosophy focused on the research of John C. Maxwell. Maxwell calls for a transformation of leadership theory from a leader working to change the thinking from, "I want a position that will make people follow, to a leader whom people will want to follow." Maxwell believes people who will follow leaders they know, if they know the leaders cares for them as individuals. A leader must have character before people will trust him/her to make difficult decisions (Maxwell, 2005).

Maxwell has developed the leader's daily dozen to incorporate into the daily routine of every organizational leader. One is to place high value on people in an organization. Most leaders focus on two things: the vision and the bottom line. The vision is a focal point to look towards, but the bottom line is driven by how people

interact and pay attention to individual people in the organization. If a leader forgets about the people, the bottom line will show up and overshadow the outcome of not properly treating people with dignity and fairness (Maxwell, 2005).

Maxwell believes that resources are needed to develop future leaders within the organization. The building leaders' philosophies, needs to be incorporated to develop leaders in the organization. This is a rampant process within the organization in order to be successful. People who place a high value on leadership will be more prepared than their counterparts in leading change. A good leader constantly is looking for potential leaders that will enhance the organization or school district. Potential leaders have several common characteristics:

- They make things happen.
- They see opportunities.
- They influence the opinions and actions of others.
- They add value to leaders and the organization.
- They draw winners to them.
- They equip other people to lead.

- They provide ideas which help the organization.
- They possess an uncommonly great attitude.
- They live up to their commitments.
- They show fierce loyalty to the organization and the leader (Maxwell, 2005).

Maxwell looks for potential leaders who possess the attributes listed above and the ability to provide people with leadership experiences to further develop their own leadership skills. Great leaders are never satisfied with the status quo and will reward innovation in the workplace. A great leader must provide a safe environment where people are not afraid to ask challenging questions, share ideas, and take educational risks in developing curriculum. Maxwell also places a major emphasis on growing people within and attracting high potential people into the circle of influence, which will sustain the culture in the organization. "When the top leaders are lid lifters for the leaders in the middle, then those leaders become load lifters for the ones at the top" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 60). The best leaders are those who other people barely know exist and they help others succeed. They lead, empower their workers, and then get out of the way so the new

empowered leaders can maintain the culture of effective leadership.

The next leader in educational reform that will be researched is Robert J. Marzano. Marzano uses researched-based strategies to help teachers impact student achievement. Marzano analyzed research from more than 100 studies on classroom management that show a direct impact on student achievement. This research is vital for every school board member to understand and encourage the teaching staff to utilize in their individual districts. The focus of Marzano's research is based on effective classroom management, establishing effective rules and procedures for the students, and developing appropriate disciplinary interventions. The research is also focused on fostering productive student-teacher relationships and developing a positive learning environment through adopted school wide measures. With the student behavior and effective discipline a growing concern in public schools, Marzano has developed some useful strategies to help teachers in setting the tone for their individual classroom management.

The focus of this literature review has been on student achievement. Marzano adds another component to sustained improvement. Schools performing as learning

organizations focus on improving their school districts in long lasting reform. One initiative that is supported by Marzano is *School-wide Positive Behavior Supports* (SW-PBS). This initiative was used as an application model for grounding the concepts and tenets of building leadership capacity and sustaining successful improvement. The implementation of PBS was a change initiative designed to provide schools with an approach to prevention and early intervention for student behaviors (Lewis, 2005). Public school teachers are held accountable to deal with every child who walks into their classrooms, yet those children often bring with them staggering array of serious issues that can interfere with social and academic development (Marzano, 2003). The PBS initiative offers a comprehensive approach to address behavior concerns of students but also represents an organizational approach to prevention.

Sergiovanni (2005) describes the leaders of change initiatives as leaders having the ability to know and focus on what was critical and who "cared deeply about their work, learn from their successes and failures, take calculated risks, and are trustworthy people" (p.112). Additionally, Marzano, when looking at the factors that supported successful change or led to failed change, found that the leadership was the integral piece to sustain the

change. Consequently, it is essential for change leaders to understand the magnitude of change and the change process that affect their organizations. The leaders in this review exemplify leadership in sustaining organizations and implementing change.

Accountability Factors and Occupational Stressors

Superintendents are especially driven to excellence because they are responsible not only for the children in their charge, but also for public education as a social institution (Kirst, 1991). The Chief Executive Officer faces many day-to-day challenges. The Chief Executive Officer must acknowledge the responsibility and the ethical character needed in order to be truly effective in the superintendency. Most superintendents site stress and lack of resources as the reason for leaving the job. The length of tenure of school superintendents has been decreasing for several years (Danzberger, 1994). Despite the turnover due to superintendent's stress, personal reasons, and micromanagement from states, Capasso (Marzano) and others cite "...the removal of tenure has caused an increase in superintendent turnover rates and compensation packages while diminishing the quality of the applicant pool for future superintendents" (2003, p. 35). Non-tenured superintendents face an increased number of grievances from

subordinate staff in their districts with whom their relationships are altered. There tends to be a growing concern about the non-tenuring of superintendents, resulting in many cases in earlier retirement from the position. Danzberger (1994) stated that superintendencies are high-risk employment opportunities. This high-risk status is perhaps the result of, as Cuban (1998) maintained, conflict being the "DNA of the superintendency" (p.28).

Various researchers have provided several suggestions for superintendents so they may remain in their position for several years. Career superintendents are becoming commonly rare. "The crucial leadership time for the superintendent occurs during the first four years. If a superintendent made it to the sixth year, he/she was likely to maintain the position indefinitely" (Parker, 1996, p.64).

Danzberrger (1994) proposed that part of the reason for turnover in the superintendency was change on school boards. The more a school board's membership changes, the more likely the superintendent was to be replaced. Most superintendents felt that pressure from the board and its interference with daily administrative functions were factors that had significant impact on their employment.

Yock's (1990) survey of 12,000 school board members identified three reasons that boards used for termination of a superintendent: loss of confidence in the superintendent's integrity; loss of faith in the superintendent's leadership; and evidence of mismanagement of school finances.

When asked what would cause them to leave the superintendency, many superintendents stated lack of district fiscal resources (Glass, 1992). One of the reasons given for lack of effectiveness was not enough time to get everything done. Even with time management as a planning tool, responsible management cannot sufficiently avert all of the pressures caused by a lack of funding needs (Goldstein, 1992). The lack of funding is a constant burden for the fiscal management of school entities. If budget troubles multiply in the current year, more stress will be placed on current superintendents. The current economic downfall will undoubtedly have a negative impact on educational funding. The state of Missouri is showing millions of dollars in tax revenue shortfalls because of the drastic changes in the economic situation. Superintendents are struggling to meet accountability standards with less revenue in public schools all over the state of Missouri.

The complexity and stress of the superintendency can sometimes overshadow, blur, and rigidify one's actions if time is not taken to put everything into perspective (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). In stressful situations, successful superintendents must have the poise to remain in charge of their emotions and think clearly through the situation. If a superintendent does not achieve the intended result, have a good sense of humor, and accept the fact that all things can be resolved with hard work and time then stress will prevail.

In dealing with stress with the school board, one study revealed that the one thing that was the key to all outcomes was the desire to communicate with the board. Giving the board relevant information in a timely manner was crucial for board communication. Keeping the board informed was listed as one of the top priorities for a good board/superintendent relationship.

Current levels of stress are great, but the recent study, superintendents indicated that they feel very fulfilled in their jobs, which suggested that stress is an occupational hazard they are willing to tolerate (Glass, 2007). Most individuals saw the superintendency as a moderately stressful occupation, but few saw it as being a job in which stress became completely disabling (Goldstein,

1992). What seems to be important is that superintendents recognized the stress producers in the job and found specific mechanisms for releasing and disseminating stress (Carter and Cunningham, 1997).

Summary

Superintendent-school board working relationships are very complex. The complexity can be very detrimental to the entire organization. The working relationship must constantly be monitored to alleviate possible confusion due to lack of communication.

School boards have the advantage going into the relationship because they can "check behind" superintendents in their previous work environments. Superintendents, on the other hand, usually have to take Boards at face value and explore the individual personalities and group dynamics after formalizing the relationship. (Magann, 1993)

This review of literature looked at the history of the creation of school boards and superintendent positions. This review also looked at several areas that could help future school board members and superintendents improve student performance through communication.

According to the Ohio School Boards Association (1999):

Historically, local school boards, as lay governors of the school system, believed that their role was not to substitute their own views on matters of pedagogy for those of professional educators. Rather, they perceived their role to be supportive in nature, approving the budget, placing their stamp on legal documents, dealing with constituents, receiving reports, campaigning for bond issues, and providing cover on politically sensitive issues.

This review of literature also reviewed the typical roles or governance tasks of both the superintendent and the collective school board. Both roles require great responsibility, but in order for each to be successful, the lines of communication between the two factors is of high necessity. In a report done by the Centerburg School District (2003) states that:

The Board is responsible for determining the success of the Superintendent in meeting the goals established by the Board through annual evaluations of the Superintendent's performance. The Board, in formulating its position with regard to the performance of the Superintendent, shall rely,

whenever possible, on the objective outcomes of its evaluations rather than on subjective opinions.

Many factors have been determined to be critical to the success or failure of administrators and the boards with which they work. The literature reviewed suggests that this success or failure in reality lies in how well the superintendent communicates his/her vision to the board. The school board and superintendent must work together as a team to engage all necessary parties (Bryant & Houston, 2002). There is no cure-all for effective leadership. Clear communication, trust, empathy, and common goals are all necessary for a proper board/superintendent relationship. Magann states that the superintendency is somewhat akin to a marriage between an individual (the superintendent) and a Board that, in theory, represents a community (Magann, 1993).

The findings of this study will provide guidance to aid in the development of duties and responsibilities between the school board and the school superintendent. "A board of education's job is to govern those aspects of the education system that, under legislation or through practice, fall under its jurisdiction" (Else, 2003). When the proper school board-superintendent relationship is

established within a district, efficient, business-like procedures for the management of all school operations will soon follow. The optimal goal would be the school superintendent and school board being focused on the needs of the student and student achievement and with a common overall mission for continuous improvement. "The challenge for all school leaders is to develop a system that effectively and efficiently delivers the highest quality education to students with the resources available" (Else, 2003).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to investigate how school board members and school superintendents view each other's role in terms of the operation of schools in the state of Missouri. School boards are ultimately held responsible to the public for performance of public schools and thus have extensive powers over policy and the teaching and learning that takes place. However, the expertise needed by school board members to govern schools greatly exceeds the requirements for election of members to the board of education. Missouri requires school board member training upon newly elected board members and requires them to participate in 16 hours of board training. Still, the accountability that is placed on public schools to make informed decisions when dealing with the complexity of educational issues that face public schools today is a tremendous burden on the lay service of board members.

Just as board members are to accept responsibility for the governance of schools, the superintendents must accept responsibility for student achievement. Superintendents are expected to demonstrate excellence as educational leaders, have knowledge of school laws, and administer the district

in an efficient manner with limited funding. Conflict may arise when boards of education disregard the professional advice from the superintendent. A high trust culture must exist for the benefit of the organization. The culture that is maintained by the school board and superintendent will permeate the entire organization. If there is a strain in the relationship between the school board and the superintendent, the organization will not be effective due to the lack of confidence in the administration. A proper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each functioning member will help eliminate problems in communication and help the board focus on student achievement.

Many states have no definite rules and regulations that delineate the duties between school board members and superintendents; the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National School Board Association (NSBA) have provided guidance in defining respective roles in the governance of schools. The state of Missouri has delineated the difference in the role of the superintendent and the school board within the Missouri School Board Association (MSBA). MSBA has played a major role in developing high functioning school boards by providing quality training and implementation of the board

training material. This study was designed to investigate the extent to which both school boards and superintendents have appropriate perceptions of the others' respective roles and responsibilities in developing policy that affects student achievement.

Participants in the Study

Participants in this study were school board members in Missouri public schools who served school districts that have achieved an accreditation of "Distinction in Performance." The data were collected from 120 school boards from public school districts in Missouri that achieved the 'distinction in performance' status and compared to a random sample of 191 school boards whose districts in Missouri held the status of accredited. The participants were all school board members in public schools in the state of Missouri.

Design of the Study

The survey questions were derived from the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) 4th cycle questionnaire. School board members were used as the basis for the research. Six specific questions pertaining to student achievement were chosen from the MSIP questionnaire and used for the research project. The questions were then disseminated and correlated to the high achieving school

districts utilizing the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Collection of Data

Data collection was conducted in the Fall of 2008 with the assistance from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE). The six questions were in direct correlation with student achievement and derived from the 4th cycle MSIP questionnaire from school board members in public schools in Missouri. The data were compiled and disseminated to find any correlation between the two groups of school board members. The initial data groups were of school board members in districts who had received the accreditation of "distinction in performance" as rated by (MDESE). This sample group was compared to boards of education members whose schools received accreditation in the state of Missouri, but did not reach the level of performance as their counterparts. The data was analyzed using the SPSS statistical package and were utilized to obtain a valid interpretation of the data. The paired sample t-test was used for comparison of the data to determine the correlation of the two group samples.

CHAPTER IV

Introduction

The importance of this research study was to determine the extent to which school board members perceive their roles and responsibilities can have an impact on student achievement. More specifically, the purpose of the study is to determine how school board members view their respective roles in the operation and administration of public schools in Missouri. The importance of this study would address topics that would aid in the selection of future superintendents, create longer tenure for superintendents, and impact learning in the local school district.

Analysis of the Data

This chapter is organized to present the results of the data analysis from this correlational study. The data in this project are analyzed by using casual-comparative descriptive statistics. The research used the mean, which indicated the average performance of the group on a specific variable compared to each other. The data also be used the standard deviation, which indicated how spread out a set of scores is around the mean, and the research used the t-test to determine whether the means of the two groups were significantly different from one another.

Research Questions

Research question 1: Does the school board perception of academics influence student achievement?

To address Research Question 1, data were collected from 191 public school board members in Missouri. The null hypothesis was that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of school board members in high achieving school districts will have an impact on student achievement. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction of performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance. When reviewing the data, the mean was 4.7445 with a standard deviation of .50538 on the first variable. Variable one was the perception of board of education members from schools that were accredited in distinction. The variable was the perception of board of education members whose school districts did not meet the performance expectation of accredited in distinction of performance. The variable of comparison had a mean score of 4.8092 with a standard deviation of .41849. The paired sample using a t-test correlation was a .003 correlation showing no significant difference.

The research data shows the comparison of the two population groups. It can be determined by the data that the comparison of board perceptions regarding student achievement in high achieving schools does not show a significant difference. Therefore null hypothesis #1 was accepted.

Table 1 - t-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1	BOE-Acc	4.7445	587	.50538	.02086
	BOE-WD	4.8092	587	.41849	.01727

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Q1	BOE-Acc & BOE-WD	587	.587	.941

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Q1	BOE-Acc - BOE-WD	-.0647	.6552	.02704	-.1178	-.0116	-2.394	586	.017

Research Question 2: Do districts with school boards with high expectations for student achievement have higher MAP scores?

To address research question 2 the same data were collected from boards of education in Missouri. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction of performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance. The null hypothesis is that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of school board members in high achieving school districts will have an impact on student achievement on MAP scores if the school district raises expectation from the board level.

The variable for boards of education with distinction in performance had a mean of 4.5976 with a standard deviation of .60838. In comparison, the boards of education that are accredited had a mean score of 4.5348 and a standard deviation of .67830. The paired sample using a t-test correlation was a $-.001$ correlation showing no significant difference.

The research data shows the comparison of the two population groups. It can be determined by the data that the comparison of board expectations regarding student

achievement in high achieving schools does not show a significant difference. Therefore the null hypothesis # 2 is accepted.

Table 2 - t-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q2	BOE-Acc	4.5348	589	.67830	.02795
	BOE-WD	4.5976	589	.60838	.02507

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Q2	BOE-Acc & BOE-WD	589	-.001	.980

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Q2	BOE-Acc - BOE-WD	-.0628	.91164	.03756	-.1366	-.0110	-1.672	588	.095

Research Question 3: *Do districts with school boards that focus on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP) experience improvement on Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) student performance indicators?*

The data were collected for research question three from the boards of education in Missouri. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction of performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance. The null hypothesis states that boards that focus on improving the CSIP have no impact on MSIP student performance indicators.

The variable for boards of education with distinction in performance had a mean of 4.2935 with a standard deviation of .71792. In comparison, the boards of education that are accredited had a mean score of 4.2457 and a standard deviation of .69996. The paired sample using a t-test correlation was a $-.011$ correlation showing no significant difference.

The research information shows the comparison of the two population groups. It can be determined by the data that the comparison of board perceptions regarding student achievement in high achieving schools does not show a

significant difference. Therefore null hypothesis # 3 is accepted.

Table 3 - t-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q3	BOE-Acc	4.2457	586	.69996	.02891
	BOE-WD	4.2935	586	.71792	.02966

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Q3	BOE-Acc & BOE-WD	586	-.011	.788

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Q3	BOE-Acc - BOE-WD	-.0478	1.0082	.04165	-.1296	.0340	-1.147	585	.252

Research Question 4: Do districts with school boards that discuss student performance on a regular basis have higher performing schools?

The data for question four were collected from boards of education in Missouri that have filled out the advanced

questionnaire for the 4th cycle MSIP program. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction of performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance. The null hypothesis is school board discussion of student performance has no effect on performance of schools.

The variable for boards of education with distinction in performance had a mean of 4.5612 with a standard deviation of .64048. In comparison, the boards of education that are accredited had a mean score of 4.5408 and a standard deviation of .62326. The paired sample using a t-test correlation was a .041 correlation showing no high significant difference using the $>.05$ distinguishing factor.

The research data shows the comparison of the two population groups. It can be determined by the data that the board perceptions regarding student achievement in high achieving schools does not show a significant difference. Therefore null hypothesis # 4 is accepted.

Table 4 - t-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q4	BOE-Acc	4.5408	588	.62326	.02570
	BOE-WD	4.5612	588	.64048	.02641

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Q4	BOE-Acc & BOE-WD	588	.041	.325

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Q4	BOE-Acc - BOE-WD	-.0204	.87532	.03610	-.0913	.0505	-.565	587	.572

Research Question 5: *Do districts with board members that feel accountable for student achievement have higher MAP scores in their district?*

The data for question five were collected from boards of education in Missouri that have filled out the advanced questionnaire for the 4th cycle MSIP program. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction of performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance. The null hypothesis is school boards that feel accountable have no effect on student achievement. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction in performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance.

The variable for boards of education with distinction in performance had a mean of 4.6440 with a standard deviation of .54095. In comparison, the boards of education who are accredited had a mean score of 4.6184 and a standard deviation of .57910. The paired sample using a t-test correlation was a .001 correlation showing no high significant difference using the $>.05$ distinguishing factor.

The research data shows the comparison of the two population groups. It can be determined by the data that board perceptions regarding student achievement in high achieving schools does not show a significant difference. Therefore null hypothesis # 5 is accepted.

Table 5 - t-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Q5	BOE-Acc	4.6184	587	.57910	.02390
	BOE-WD	4.6440	587	.54895	.02266

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig
Q5	BOE-Acc & BOE-WD	587	.001	.975

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Q5	BOE-Acc - BOE-WD	-.0256	.79741	.03291	-.0902	.0391	-.776	586	.438

Research Question 6: *Do districts with school board members who implement changes as a result of analysis of student performance data have higher performing schools?*

The data for question six was collected from boards of education in Missouri that have filled out the advanced questionnaire for the 4th cycle MSIP program. The comparison is between boards of education that are accredited in distinction of performance versus districts that are accredited in Missouri, but not accredited in performance. The null hypothesis is school boards that implement change due to analysis of student data have no impact on the performance of the school district.

The variable for boards of education with distinction in performance had a mean of 4.3077 with a standard deviation of .67058. In comparison, the boards of education who are accredited had a mean score of 4.2872 and a standard deviation of .69212. The paired sample using a t-test correlation was a -.010 correlation showing no high significant difference using the >.05 distinguishing factor.

The research shows the comparison of the two population groups. It can be determined by the data that board perceptions regarding student achievement in high

achieving schools does not show a significant difference.

Therefore null hypothesis # 6 is accepted.

Table 6 - T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q6	BOE-Acc	4.2872	585	.69212	.02862
	BOE-WD	4.3077	585	.67058	.02773

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Q6	BOE-Acc & BOE-WD	585	-.010	.811

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Q6	BOE-Acc - BOE-WD	-.0205	.96847	.04004	-.0992	.0581	-.512	584	.609

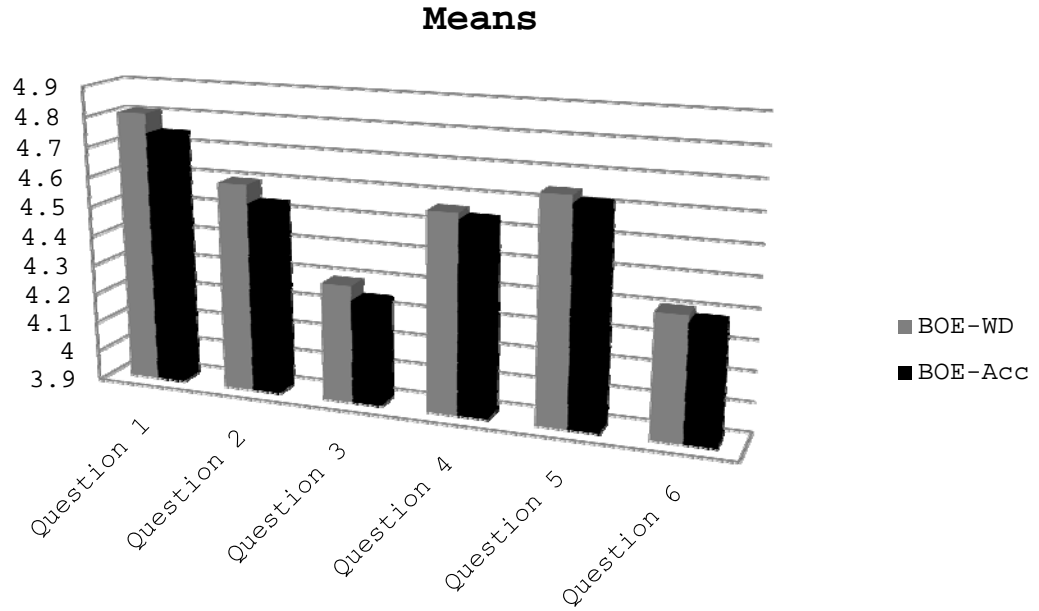


Figure 1. Average Means

Summary

The research supported all six null hypotheses which is a major surprise to the researcher. Although the research data did show slightly more student performance from boards that had a particular focus on student achievement, there was no major statistical difference between school boards that did not spend as much emphasis on student achievement in the MSIP survey and those that did spend considerable amount of emphasis on student achievement. The average mean score for all of the six questions were closely correlated in their responses.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview of the Study

As education continues to become more scrutinized by the public, more strains are placed on school boards and administrators. There is no easy answer or quick fix in dealing with educational change. The most promising direction for strengthening public education is in strong leadership from superintendents and school boards that are focused on student achievement.

Leaders who understand the need for effective support and successful school change have utilize leadership practices that promoted learning within the school organization (Sergiovanni, 2005). Researchers have extensively studied the long-lasting impact of leaders within the organization. Lambert (2003) described leadership that promoted long lasting school change as actively focused on creating conditions for learning, in that "leadership is the cumulative process of learning through which we achieve the purposes of the school" (p.3). Sergiovanni (2005) reiterated this concept stating that "leadership inevitably involves change, and change inevitably involves learning" (p.122).

Fullan (2003) describes a culture of change as activities that resulted in direct impact and interaction with other team members in a creation of sustained culture and a culture of renewal. Sergiovanni (2005) further stipulated that innovative leaders create conditions for change by emphasizing a collaborative culture. School culture serves as a liaison between the school board and student achievement. Several studies have been conducted that show superintendent leadership has an effect on school culture. Leaders in schools successfully engaged in educational change have developed systems to support the change while involving the stakeholders who are charged with sustaining the educational change. While developing these strategies for implementing change in a learning organization, the leader seeks to pursue and achieve changes that are supported by the staff (Retallick & Fink, 2002).

In order for school districts to function effectively and improve student achievement, the school district superintendent and school board need to have a positive working relationship. The accountability of the public is pushing the need for definite collaboration between the two entities.

The focus of this study was to examine the extent in which school board members perceive their roles and responsibilities can have an impact on student achievement. This study also examined the relationship between the superintendent and school board and the impact they both have on improving student achievement. The majority of the research was focused around high achieving school districts and the impact their individual boards have on student achievement.

The study examined the following questions regarding school board perceptions impact on student achievement. The following research questions were derived from the fourth cycle MSIP questionnaire developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

1. Does the school board perception of academics influence student achievement?
2. Do districts with school boards with high expectations for student achievement have higher Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores?
3. Do districts with school boards that focus on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP) experience improvement on Missouri School

Improvement Program (MSIP) student performance indicators?

4. Do districts with boards that discuss student performance on a regular basis have higher performing schools?
5. Do districts with board members that feel accountable for student achievement have higher MAP scores in their district?
6. Do districts with school board members who implement changes as a result of analysis of student performance data have higher performing schools?

Hypotheses

This study examined the following hypotheses regarding the involvement of school board members' perceptions and expectations that impact student achievement. The null hypotheses used the correlation indicator of $p > .05$ as the distinguishing factor.

Null Hypothesis # 1: School board perception has no impact on student achievement.

Null Hypothesis # 2: School board expectation has no impact on student achievement.

Null Hypothesis # 3: School boards that focus on improving the CSIP have no impact on MSIP student performance indicators.

Null Hypothesis # 4: School board discussion of student performance has no effect on performance of schools.

Null Hypothesis # 5: School boards that feel accountable have no effect on student achievement.

Null Hypothesis # 6: School boards that implement change due to analysis of student data have no impact on the performance of the school district.

The sample used in this study was selected from public school districts in Missouri that had achieved the exemplary status of "Distinction in Performance." The status is given to schools who maintain high student performance in student achievement on standardized testing in the state of Missouri. The school board members of 120 identified districts participated in the study by completing the Advance Questionnaire for Boards of Education that specifically addressed six student achievement questions. This group of 120 school districts was compared to 191 randomly chosen school district that were accredited but not with distinction in Missouri.

The analysis procedures used in this study included a set of descriptive statistics, which presented the means and standard deviations of the scores.

Conclusions

This section presents the findings that resulted from the analyses of the data. The data were collected from 120 public school districts that completed the fourth cycle Missouri (MSIP) review and received accreditation in distinction for performance. The school board members from the 120 school districts were surveyed on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being "strongly agree" and 1 being "strongly disagree".

The data indicates that district leadership makes a measurable difference in student achievement but not to the extent the author had hypothesized. In six out of six questions, there was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups when looking at student academic achievement and school board perception. In districts with higher levels of achievement, the local boards of education were aligned with the district goals for achievement and instruction. The research revealed that high achieving school districts that are "accredited in distinction" have close to the same perceptions as board

members from school district that did not meet the performance standards.

Marzano (2005) found five district-level leadership responsibilities that statistically correlate with student achievement. They are as follows:

1. The goal-setting process
2. Non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction
3. Board alignment with and support of district goals
4. Monitoring the goals for achievement and instruction
5. Use of resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction

The research also found that school boards that focus on student achievement and routinely discuss student performance have higher performing schools. When dealing with change in education, the boards that implemented change as a result of analysis of student performance data were more likely to have higher performing schools. The evidence from this research concludes that school boards need to focus on student achievement and not as much in the day-to-day governance of the school district. It is not unusual that individual board members pursue their own individual interest and expectations for the district which is why they were elected. However, when individual board

member interests and expectations detract from board-adopted achievement and instructional goals, they are not contributing to district success but, in fact, may be working in opposition to the over-arching goals of the school district (Marzano, etal., 2005).

The superintendent also plays a major role in the performance of the school district. This study indicated district leadership has a high correlation to student achievement. The tenure of the superintendent was also mentioned in the research as an indicator for high performing schools. The positive working relationship between the school board and the superintendent was indicated in this study as one of the most influential factors in improving a culture of teaching and learning. The ability of the superintendent to foster a high-trust culture that is focused on continuous improvement is essential to sustaining a long-lasting culture of high performance.

It is in defining the roles of both superintendents and school board members in creating a solid working relationship that will help schools reach their goals by providing solid leadership focused on increasing student achievement. Graduate studies offered in Masters and

Doctorate (Ed.D and Ph.D) programs need to spend a considerable amount of time developing skills in relationship-building to ensure a smooth transition when they become leaders of their organizations. The training required should include discussing different types of leadership styles in their programs of study.

Missouri schools are facing a difficult time ahead with a tremendous expected turn-over in district level leadership. It is a time of financial turmoil, not only for schools, but for the entire nation. Schools must find a way to fill these positions with quality people who have resources in building relationships with school boards to eventually have an impact on student achievement by providing visionary leadership.

Limitations

Limitations are inevitable in any study even when every attempt is made to minimize them. Those limitations in this study are discussed below.

The population was limited to elected board members from public school systems in Missouri. All school board members were members of school district in Missouri that have completed the fourth cycle Missouri School Improvement Program. All school board members were sent a research

study instrument, but some districts had only a few school board members who returned the research study.

Behavioral studies, such as this one, deal with perceptions on which it is sometimes hard to place a value. The researcher can only interpret the data obtained from the participants and generalize the data beyond the surveyed area. A researcher cannot be certain that the participants accurately answered the questions developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Implications for Future Research

This section describes the implications of this study for future research. Maintaining a highly collaborative relationship between the superintendent and the local school board is extremely important in developing an effective organization. Developing a high-trust culture should be studied further to develop an understanding of the components necessary for implementing this type of culture of effectiveness. Developing leadership styles should be further implemented into training programs for administrators. Open communication, trust, collaboration, vision, and long-range planning are all key characteristics

that should be studied further to offer insights to future superintendents.

The state of Missouri requires 16 hours of individual board training for all school board members. More professional development for school board members should be developed to focus their attention on teaching and learning. Specific training in understanding the dissemination of data would be beneficial for board members when dealing with state testing data.

The information provided by these additional studies would further enhance the development of future superintendents and school board members. The empirical effect would be more productive public school districts that focus on improving student achievement. Additional studies could also offer information needed for professional development of specific training needed for potential school board members. The benefits could be exponential in improving student achievement across the state of Missouri.

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APPENDIX A

School Board Responsibilities

(Taken from Hood, 2002, American Association School Administrators, National School Board Association, 1992)

1. To make clear that the board's primary role is the establishment of policy in furtherance of its function of governance as the epitome of the American institution of representative governance of public elementary and secondary education in our free democracy.
2. To work with the superintendent and the community to develop a vision for the school.
3. To establish a structure and create an environment that will help the school system achieve its vision.
4. To develop academic standards based on high expectations and an assessment system to measure academic performance toward the achievement of such standards, so that the school board can be accountable to the people of the community.
5. To formulate strategies to help students who are not performing up to standards attain their maximum potentials.
6. To engage in advocacy on behalf of the students and then school and promote the benefits of a public education system to the community.

7. To support the superintendent in all decisions that confirm to board policy, other decisions made by the board, or recognized professional standards.
8. To hold the superintendent responsible and accountable for the administration of the schools through regular, constructive, written and oral evaluations of the superintendent's work. Performance evaluation is an ongoing effort and should be linked to goals established by the board with the advice and counsel of the superintendent.
9. To provide the superintendent with a comprehensive employment contract.
10. To provide fair and adequate compensation that will attract and retain excellent people in all circumstances.
11. To give the superintendent the benefit of individual board members' expertise, familiarity with the local school system, and community interests.
12. To hold all board meetings with the superintendent or a designee present.
13. To consult with the superintendent on all matters, as they arise, that concern the school system, and on which the board may take action.
14. To develop a plan for board-superintendent communication.

15. To channel communications with school employees through the superintendent, especially if any action is suggested, and to refer all applications, complaints, and other communications, oral or written, first to the superintendent. Doing so ensures that such communications can be processed in the coordinated fashion that is responsive to students and patrons.
16. To take action on matters only after hearing the recommendation of the superintendent.
17. To include in board policies a specific policy on the effective management of complaints against district personnel.
18. To provide the superintendent with administrative assistance, especially in the area of monitoring teaching and learning.
19. To exercise continued oversight of all education programs.
20. To work closely, where appropriate, with other government agencies and bodies.
21. To collaborate with other school boards through state and national school board associations to let state legislators, members of Congress, and all other appropriate state and federal officials know of local concerns and issues.
22. To mandate and provide resources for high quality board and professional development programs, using qualified trainers that will enable school leaders to have the knowledge and skills needed to provide

excellent policy leadership for the school systems. In some cases, boards and superintendents should engage in joint training.

23. To provide for self-evaluation of the board's own effectiveness in meeting its stated goals and performing its role in public school governance.
24. To work to ensure that the district has the necessary funds and that a balance is maintained between needs and resources in the distribution of available monies.
25. To delegate to the superintendent responsibilities for all administrative functions, except those specifically reserved to the board's presiding officer through board policy. Those reserved areas include establishing a regular time for the superintendent and the leader of the school board to meet for discussion of school board policy matters and joint preparation of each meeting agenda, conducting board meetings and certain public hearings, approving the agenda and minutes of board meetings, and engaging in other activities related to serving as the presiding officer of the board.
26. To ensure board members understand that, under law, the school board acts as a board and that individual board members have no independent authority.

APPENDIX B

Superintendent Roles and Responsibilities

(Taken from AASA, NSBA, 1992)

1. To serve as the school board's chief executive officer and preeminent educational adviser in all efforts of the board to fulfill its school system governance role.
2. To serve as the primary educational leader for the school system and chief administrative officer of the entire school districts professional and support staff, including staff members assigned to provide support service to the board.
3. To serve as a catalyst for the school system's administrative leadership team in proposing and implementing policy change.
4. To propose and institute a process for long-range and strategic planning that will engage the board and the community in positioning the school district for success in ensuing years.
5. To keep all board members informed about school operations and programs.
6. To interpret the needs of the school system to the board.
7. To present policy options along with specific recommendations to the board when circumstances require the board to adopt the new policies or review existing policies.

8. To develop and inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy.
9. To develop a sound program of school/community relations in concert with the board.
10. To oversee management of the district's day-to-day operations.
11. To develop a description for the board of what constitutes effective leadership and management of public schools, taking into account that leadership and management are the result of effective governance and effective administration combined.
12. To develop and carry out a plan for keeping the total professional and support staff informed about the mission, goals, and strategies of the school system and about the important roles all staff members play in realizing them.
13. To ensure that professional development opportunities are available to all school system employees.
14. To collaborate with other administrators through national and state professional associations to inform state legislators, members of Congress, and all other appropriate state and federal officials of local concerns and issues.
15. To ensure that the school system provides equal opportunity for all students.

16. To evaluate personnel performance in harmony with district policy and to keep the board informed about such evaluations.

17. To provide all board members with complete background information and a recommendation for each school board action on each agenda item well in advance of each board meeting.

18. To develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media.

VITA

James Derrick Hutsell was born in Houston, Missouri, in June of 1966. He is the son of J. D. and Wilma Hutsell of southwest Missouri. Upon receiving his high school diploma, he entered undergraduate school at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. Derrick received his undergraduate degree in 1989 with an emphasis in agricultural education. While working at the Willow Springs R-IV School District, he attended graduate college, again at Missouri State University. He holds a Masters Degree in Secondary Education and a Specialist Degree in Superintendency from Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri. His Educational Doctorate degree was earned in 2009 from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri.

Derrick's professional career has been spent as a professional educator, teacher, and administrator in the southwest Missouri region. His career began in 1996 in Willow Springs, Missouri, as an agricultural education teacher, and it progressed into administration where he currently holds the position of Willow Springs R-IV Superintendent of Schools. During his third year as school superintendent, he was awarded the new superintendent of

the year from Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) for southwest Missouri in the spring of 2009.

Outside of his educational occupation, he spends time with his family's activities and is actively involved in the family farming operation. He enjoys spending time with his family on the Bull Shoals' Lake in Theodosia, Missouri. Derrick was married to Cindy in 1990, and they have four children: Kelsie, Kamryn, Kyla, and Jace. The Hutsell family resides on the family farm north of Mountain Grove, Missouri.