

## Vita

Leonard Orr

### EDUCATION

- 2010 Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana  
Ph.D. in Educational Administration
- 2004 Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana  
Ed.S. in Educational Administration
- 1988 Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana  
Administrative License in School Administration and Supervision
- 1978 Northwest Missouri State University Maryville, Missouri  
M.S. in Education
- 1975 University of Denver, Denver, Colorado  
B. S. in Education

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2004-present Southwest Parke Community School Corporation, Montezuma, Indiana  
Superintendent of Schools
- 1989-2004 Covington Community School Corporation, Covington, Indiana  
Principal
- 1987-1989 Covington Community School Corporation, Covington, Indiana  
Assistant Principal/Athletic Director
- 1986-1987 Mutual Federal Savings and Loan, Terre Haute, Indiana  
Sales Consultant
- 1983-1986 Laredo Junior College, Laredo, Texas  
Head Basketball Coach/Instructor
- 1981-1983 Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana  
Head Basketball Coach/Instructor
- 1977-1981 Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, Missouri  
Assistant Basketball Coach/Instructor
- 1975-1977 South Newton Community School Corporation, Kentland, Indiana  
Teacher/Coach

WHAT INDIANA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS LOOK FOR WHEN  
HIRING A SUPERINTENDENT

---

A dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

---

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

---

by

Leonard Orr

November 2009

© Leonard Orr

Keywords: Indiana School Board Hiring Superintendent

**Committee Members**

Committee Chair: Dr. Robert Boyd

Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations

Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana

Committee Member: Dr. Terry McDaniel

Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations

Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana

Committee Member: Dr. Tonya Balch

Assistant Professor of Counseling

Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine whether there are any differences in what school board members look for in the areas of personal characteristics and professional skills when hiring a superintendent. A sample population of school board members who were serving at a school that had an opening for a superintendent during the 2007–2008 school year was used. A survey with 24 questions was e-mailed to school board members. Results from this group indicated that there were no major differences between large school corporations and small school corporations when it came to personal characteristics and professional skills for a superintendent. Likewise there was no large spread between means among rural school corporations and urban/suburban school board members or between school board members who had served on the board four or less years compared to those who served on the board for 5 to 16 years or over 16 years.

The results indicated that the school board members had high expectations in every category they were questioned about. The premise was that superintendents should be generalist rather than specialist and that they should be well versed in all areas of superintendency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

There have been many people along the way that have provided me with the inspiration and courage to attempt and complete this doctoral program. The wisdom I have gained through the process has been tremendous.

To the faculty and staff of the Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations, for their help and encouragement, particularly Sandy and Denise!

To the Southwest Parke Community School Board who supported me, encouraged me and genuinely cared about how I was doing. Their willingness to let me be a part of the Wednesday Residency Program is something I appreciate immensely.

To my cohort group from the Wednesday Doctoral Program, I enjoyed the comradeship, companionship and friendships I developed along the way. The group always challenged my thinking and to make me think.

To my Southwest Parke Administrative Staff members and Central Office Staff who pitched in and helped whenever they could. That made it possible to be gone every Wednesday and know that the school corporation was in good hands.

To my four daughters who always encouraged me to do my best. They understood the demands of what I was attempting and supported me in every way they could. Their interest in how I was doing was always much appreciated.

Thanks to my parents who raised eight children and are very instrumental in the success of all of the “Orr” kids. Their kindness, nurturing and loving support has helped me become the person I am today.

A special thanks to Marsha who was always there for me. Your encouraging words, enthusiasm, and your constant belief in me was especially kind. I could not have completed the program without your love and support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |      |
|--|------|
| <b>Committee Members</b> .....                 | ii   |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b> .....                          | iii  |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....                   | iv   |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....                    | viii |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....                      | 1    |
| <b>Purpose of the Study</b> .....              | 3    |
| <b>Process</b> .....                           | 3    |
| <b>Research Questions</b> .....                | 4    |
| <b>Null Hypotheses</b> .....                   | 4    |
| <b>Definition of Terms</b> .....               | 5    |
| <b>Limitations of the Study</b> .....          | 6    |
| <b>Delimitations of the Study</b> .....        | 7    |
| <b>Summary</b> .....                           | 7    |
| <b>Review of Literature</b> .....              | 9    |
| <b>Historical Perspective</b> .....            | 12   |
| <b>Leadership Traits</b> .....                 | 24   |
| <b>Superintendent/Board Relationship</b> ..... | 28   |
| <b>Methodology</b> .....                       | 36   |
| <b>Null Hypotheses</b> .....                   | 37   |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Participants</b> .....  | 38 |
| <b>Method</b> .....  | 39 |
| <b>Data Analysis</b> .....   | 40 |
| <b>Analysis of Data and Findings</b> .....                                 | 42 |
| <b>Research Questions</b> .....  | 42 |
| <b>Null Hypothesis</b> .....   | 43 |
| <b>Statistics</b> .....  | 46 |
| <b>Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications for Future Research</b> ..... | 58 |
| <b>Discussion</b> .....  | 62 |
| <b>Implications</b> .....  | 64 |
| <b>Conclusions</b> .....   | 65 |
| <b>Future Research Recommendations</b> .....                               | 68 |
| <b>Summary</b> .....   | 68 |
| <b>References</b> .....  | 70 |
| <b>APPENDIX A: LETTER TO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER</b> .....                     | 77 |
| <b>APPENDIX B: LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT</b> .....                          | 78 |
| <b>APPENDIX C: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SURVEY</b> .....                        | 79 |
| <b>APPENDIX D: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION</b> .....                   | 83 |
| <b>APPENDIX E: INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST</b> .....                          | 84 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1 <i>Frameworks</i> .....   | 25 |
| Table 2 <i>Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards and Practices</i> .....                         | 35 |
| Table 3 <i>Returned Survey Demographics</i> .....   | 45 |
| Table 4 <i>Statistics for Experience on Professional Skills</i> .....   | 47 |
| Table 5 <i>Statistics for Location on Professional Skills</i> .....   | 47 |
| Table 6 <i>Statistics for Enrollment on Professional Skills</i> .....   | 48 |
| Table 7 <i>Statistics for Experience on Personal Characteristics</i> .....  | 49 |
| Table 8 <i>Statistics for Location on Personal Characteristics</i> .....  | 50 |
| Table 9 <i>Statistics for Enrollment on Personal Characteristics</i> .....  | 50 |
| Table 10 <i>Statistics for Highest Rated Responses Within the Professional Skills Category</i> .....                | 53 |
| Table 11 <i>Statistics for Highest Rated Responses Within the Personal Characteristics</i><br><i>Category</i> ..... | 54 |
| Table 12 <i>Inferential Statistics for Null Hypotheses</i> .....  | 55 |

## CHAPTER 1

### **Introduction**

The focus on school accountability has become more intense to school systems through the No Child Left Behind Act. With that, it is becoming increasingly more important that the selection of a superintendent become a process that is based on best practices. Over the past several years there have been an unusually large number of superintendent vacancies in the state of Indiana. In 2007–2008 there were over 40 vacancies for superintendents in Indiana school corporations out of a possible 293. The purpose of this research study was to determine what personal characteristics and professional skills are deemed most important with the selection of a school superintendent in the state of Indiana and whether there are any significant differences between large school corporations and small school corporations.

According to Carter and Cunningham (1997), “The superintendent is the chief educational leader and spokesman for the school district. To ensure quality education, the school district must be managed and led by an effective school superintendent” (p. 21).

The position of superintendent has been called several things by authors of educational writings. Konnert and Augenstein (1990) call the superintendent “the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the school system” (p. 137). Carter and Cunningham (1997) cited in a foreword written by Houston, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators, who stated “In my more cynical moments, I have often thought of school superintendents as

bearing the same relationship to the community as fire hydrants bear to dogs” (p. xi). With such a wide spectrum for this important position one must wonder what personal characteristics and professional skills a superintendent needs to secure a position. In addition, does the size of a school corporation dictate what personal characteristics and professional skills a person needs to become a superintendent?

According to Konnert and Augenstein (1995) the superintendency is “more than ‘how to do’; it is ‘how to think’ and ‘how to feel’ ” (p. xv). Hayes (2001) wrote about his experiences when teaching a freshman *Foundations of Education* class and the responses he received when he asked the students how many of them wanted to be a superintendent some day. It was common that only a few hands would go up. He would then proceed asking why so few. Two common themes came from most classes. They do not want to be *hassled* by parents, teachers, community members, and the media, and they did not get into education to be a politician but would rather work with children. Hayes argued that while not everyone is capable of becoming a superintendent, it was still important that some of the best and brightest did aspire to become a superintendent.

Occasionally a small group of university people will be used by school corporations to help during the initial stages of hiring a superintendent. This group is often referred to as the university search committee and comprises one educational leader from the four state higher education institutions in Indiana: Ball State University, Indiana State University, Indiana University, and Purdue University. This group works with the school board to determine what characteristics the board would like their next superintendent to possess. The collection of this information is done mostly through conversation between the board and the university search group.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to determine what personal characteristics and professional skills are deemed most important with the selection of a school superintendent in the state of Indiana. The researcher searched for any significant differences between large school corporations and small school corporations, between rural and urban/suburban location of school corporations, and between years of service of the school board members.

**Process**

The process of collecting the data necessary to determine what personal characteristics and professional skills are deemed most important with the selection of a school superintendent in the state of Indiana and whether there are any significant differences between size, location, and experience of school board members was collected through a survey instrument. An e-mail was sent to the superintendent of the school corporations who had an opening for a superintendent during the 2007–2008 school year. The purpose of the e-mail was to inform the superintendent about the study and to ask the superintendent to complete a form with the names and the e-mail addresses of the school board members who were on the school board at the time of the superintendent opening. After receiving the requested information from the superintendent the school board members were then e-mailed a letter with the survey included. The letter introduced the board members to this researcher's study and asked them to participate in an anonymous survey. The school board members who agreed to participate in the survey were then asked to complete the anonymous survey.

## **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was for future candidates for superintendent positions to better understand what is expected from them prior to accepting a position. Specifically this study identified the answers to the following eight research questions:

1. Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills?
2. Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills?
3. Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills?
4. Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board member's perceptions of importance with professional skills?
5. Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?
6. Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?
7. Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics?
8. Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?

## **Null Hypotheses**

The null hypothesis is assumed to be valid unless the actual behavior of the data contradicts this assumption. Thus, the null hypothesis is contrasted against another or alternative

hypothesis. Statistical hypothesis testing, which involves a number of steps, is used to decide whether the data contradicts the null hypothesis. The following null hypotheses will be tested as part of this study:

**H<sub>0</sub>1.** There is no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>2.** There is no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>3.** There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>4.** There is no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>5.** There is no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>6.** There is no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>7.** There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>8.** There is no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study the following terms will be used and are defined by Neufeldt's (1988) *Webster's Dictionary*, Maranell (1974), and from class notes taken during the Wednesday Residency classes.

*Characteristic* is a distinguishing trait, feature, or quality; peculiarity (Neufeldt, 1988).

*Large Schools* is a school corporation that has over 2,000 students in grades K – 12.

*Likert Scale* is a “summated rating scale focused upon measuring subjective phenomena specifically opinions and attitudes” (Maranell, 1974, p. xiv).

*Personal Characteristics* is personal; peculiar to a certain person; private; individual (Neufeldt, 1988).

*Professional Skills* is being engaged in or worthy of the high standards of a profession, skills; great ability or proficiency; expertness that comes from training, practice, etc. (Neufeldt, 1988).

*School Board* is a local board of education in charge of a public or private school or school system (Neufeldt, 1988).

*School corporations (Districts)* is a geographical division, with specified limits, whose school or schools are administered by a local board of education (Neufeldt, 1988).

*Small schools* refers to a school corporation that has fewer than 2,000 students grades K-12.

*Superintendent* is a person in charge of a department, institution, etc (Neufeldt, 1988).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that set parameters on the application or interpretation of the results of the study. That is, the constraints on generalizability and utility of findings that are the result of the devices of design or method that establish internal and external validity. The following are limitations of this study:

1. The scope of the study included only school corporations in Indiana that had an opening for the position of superintendent during the 2007–2008 school year.

2. The scope of the study included only school board members from school corporations in Indiana that had an opening for the position of superintendent during the 2007–2008 school year.
3. The scope of the study included surveying only school board members who are still sitting on the school board.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The following are characteristics that limit the scope of this study. This list is not all inclusive; however, it is intended to allow the reader to better understand the purpose of the study.

1. The time frame established during which data were collected was the 2007-2008 academic year.
2. The study confined itself to surveying school board members of school corporations which had and filled superintendent openings during the 2007-2008 academic year with a qualified superintendent.
3. The study had a mix of small and large school corporation and came from rural, suburban, and urban school communities.
4. The study surveyed only school board members who were still sitting school board members.

### **Summary**

There are many ways to determine the personal characteristics and professional skills necessary for an applicant to be successful in obtaining a superintendent position. Many books and articles have been written over the past 150 years in regard to the expectations school board members have with the position of superintendent. This diverse grouping of expectations has

made it very difficult for candidates to be as prepared as they need be when applying, interviewing and accepting new superintendent positions.

During the course of trying to identify as many surveys as possible for this study this researcher discovered only one survey instrument that could be found in the state of Indiana to survey school board members on what they believe to be important personal characteristics and professional skills necessary to be a superintendent.

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the study's introduction, a purpose of the study, the process used to collect data, research questions, null hypothesis, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, and a summary.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature. This review demonstrated from the creation of school corporations how diverse the expectations of school board members are. Chapter 3 presents information about the sample, the instrument used, and methods of analysis. Chapter 4 presents findings. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and a discussion of the findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Review of Literature**

This review of the literature attempts to cover many aspects of the position of the superintendency in K–12 schools in the United States. This includes an historical perspective, from where the position of superintendent began and how it has evolved into what it has become today. This review of literature also addresses the concept of leadership. What are the leadership skills necessary to become a superintendent? How important is leadership to the superintendency? The relationship between the school board and the superintendent is also researched.

“It is often said that the most important role of the board of education is to hire its superintendent” (Sharp & Walter, 1997, p. 1). The word superintendent has a Latin derivative. It comes from the Latin words *super*, meaning over, and *intendo*, meaning direct. This fits the description of the responsibilities of the early superintendents, which were to oversee and direct the early school operations; however, the derivative does not address functions of leadership and change. Perhaps history, and even the name itself, serve to make the leadership and change functions so difficult for today’s superintendent (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

Carter and Cunningham (1997) stated:

America's future is inextricably linked to the quality of its public schools, its K–12 educators, and the leadership of its superintendents. Our schools are the cornerstone of progress in the free world; they must be prepared for the new millennium. (p. 236)

Sharp and Walter (1997) discovered that “If the job of superintendent had a wrapper, it might be marked ‘Hazardous to Your Health’ or at the least ‘Dangerous to your Career.’ Everyone in education knows this. Those who become superintendent know there is a risk” (p. 18). The superintendent is the “chief educational leader and spokesperson for the school district. To ensure quality education, the school district must be managed and led by an effective school superintendent” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 21).

Hoyle and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Commission on Standards for the Superintendency (1993) stated:

To a great extent, the quality of America's schools depends on the effectiveness of school superintendents. These executives of our nation's schools have complex leadership responsibilities, and those who hold the position must be among the brightest and best our society has to offer. Their vision and performance must focus on creating schools that will inspire our children to become successful, caring Americans, capable of becoming contributing citizens of the world.

The superintendency requires bold, creative, energetic, and visionary school leaders who can respond quickly to a myriad of issues ranging from dealing with social changes, diverse student populations, and demands for equity to improving school quality for every child and making effective use of technologies. (p. 3)

It is important to realize that each individual is unique with respect to the combination of personal characteristics and professional skills that are brought to the superintendent position. These unique combinations are very influential in determining how each individual behaves in the superintendency setting and how others react to the superintendent; thus, no two individuals will react the same in the milieu of the superintendency (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995). Primary responsibilities of the superintendent are to provide leadership in establishing a vision for the educational organization and then converting this vision into a set of goals and priorities for the organization (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

The superintendent search and selection process varies considerably by district size. The most prevalent method used by about 54% of the members of the search and selection process, however, is for a local school board to form its own committee to designate several of its members to work with district staff that help manage the process (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). In very large districts nearly half (46%) of school boards hire private search firms to conduct the superintendent search (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). A significant part of how individuals view a superintendent search and selection process has been because of their personal qualities and characteristics. In a study done by Glass (1992), two-thirds of superintendents sampled indicated that they were hired because of *personal characteristics* (including the image they projected or a role model they presented during the interview process) combined with information that the search committee members gleaned through contacts with their counterparts and knowledgeable citizens in the candidates' districts (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). By 2000 that number dropped to 40% of those who thought they were hired because of personal qualities and characteristics (Glass, 2000.)

The superintendency is a position fraught with a wide range of problems. As a consequence, local boards of education seek to hire superintendents who are viewed as change agents capable of improving learning and teaching, increasing management efficiency, and effectively responding to community demands (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005).

Few issues on the American scene engender more experts and more controversy than does education. Consequently, the nature of the superintendency is to “confront a perpetually changing set of conflicting expectations” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 34).

### **Historical Perspective**

History is “an unending dialogue between the past and the present” (Carr, 1961, p. 35). A knowledge of history helps one understand the present. Contemporary attitudes toward and expectations of the superintendent are products of the history of the superintendent (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995). The school superintendency evolved with little guidance from legislative directives. School codes in only about half the states contain certain language defining the relationship between the board of education and the school superintendency. “This lack of legislative guidance has resulted in confusion regarding the status, authority, and responsibility of the superintendent of public education” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 22).

In 1642, the Massachusetts School Ordinance was passed which provided that every town would choose men (often called selectmen) to manage the important affairs of learning, such as deciding local taxes, hiring teachers, setting wages, and determining the length of the school year (Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, & Usdan, 1990). The Plymouth Colony Act of 1677 and the Connecticut Laws of 1650 followed this ordinance. The Connecticut Law went so far as to allow the selectmen to take children out of homes of parents who were not educating their children

adequately and put them with acceptable masters with whom they would serve apprenticeships (Campbell et al., 1990).

Although public schools were established as early as 1640, the superintendency was not created until the mid-1800s (Griffiths, 1966). It was between 1837 and 1850 that 13 urban districts established the position of superintendent. By 1890 most major cities had followed that lead (Kowalski, 2006). The need for school systems to have a top executive stemmed from myriad conditions including the development of larger city school districts, the consolidation of rural school districts, an expanded state curriculum, the passage of compulsory attendance laws, demands for increased accountability, and efficiency expectations (Kowalski, 2003). This was not fully supported by the political bosses who feared that school superintendents would amass their own power base and then be able to stand apart from the entangled mechanism of big city government (Kowalski, 2006). It was during this time that the role of the superintendent was changing, as it began as a “*clerical* position and was moving to a *master educator* position” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23).

The superintendent position moved from managing day-to-day details to a position of instructional leader. Also, during this time it was evident that politics and professionalism were on a collision course. This caused distrust between the political bosses and the superintendents who attempted to use professionalism as a shield against their political machines (Kowalski, 2004). Cuban (1976) noted that heated debates were waged on the topic of the responsibilities of a superintendent. “The lines of argument crystallized over whether the function of a big city superintendent should be separated into two distinct jobs, i.e., business manager and superintendent of instruction” (Cuban, 1976, p. 17). In fact it was during this time that some of the larger school systems had appointed dual superintendents, one for education and one for

business. It was during this time that America was changing from an agrarian society to an industrial society. This movement caused a demographic chain reaction, first producing urbanization which in turn produced larger school systems. School board members focused more in resource management which worked its way into the school administration (Callahan, 1962). By 1920, the role transformation had been officially completed; superintendents were expected to be scientific managers—individual who could improve operations by concentrating on time and efficiency (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). “It was the era of the four Bs: bonds, busses, budgets, and buildings” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23). As the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued and the Russian spaceship Sputnik was launched it became apparent that the emphasis quickly shifted from the four Bs to the three Rs: reading, writing, and arithmetic. “This shift ushered in the current view of the superintendent which is that of the *chief executive officer for the board*” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 24).

For the most part, the school superintendency paralleled the development of the graded school. One room schools were replaced with graded schools organized into local districts; some of the major responsibilities of the superintendent became the writing of a uniform course of study that could be implemented in all schools in the system (Kowalski, 2006). Spring (1994) wrote:

The development of the role of the superintendent was important in the evolution of the hierarchical educational organization. The primary reason for creating the position was to have a person work full-time at supervising classroom instruction and assuring uniformity in the curriculum. (p. 119)

“While the duties of the early superintendent certainly varied from district to district, it is fair to say that the primary responsibility was to be the instructional leader of the school” (Sharp

& Walter, 1997, p. 3). Some of the more rapidly developing urban school systems established normative standards for public elementary and secondary education, and their superintendents were viewed as master teachers (Callahan, 1962). Much of their time was devoted to supervising instruction and ensuring curricular uniformity (Spring, 1994). They frequently authored professional journal articles about philosophy, history, and pedagogy (Cuban, 1988) and some subsequently became state superintendents, professors, and college presidents (Peterson & Barnett, 2003). The teacher-scholar characterization of a superintendent was summarized in an 1890 report of urban superintendents:

It must be made his recognized duty to train teachers and inspire them with high ideals; to revise the course of study when new light shows that improvement is possible; to see that pupils and teachers are supplied with needed appliances for the best possible work; to devise rational methods of promoting pupils. (Cuban, 1976, p. 16)

During the formative years in which school administration was being shaped as a distinctive field, the most highly respected scholars were superintendents or former superintendents (Willower & Forsyth, 1999). Characteristics of school administrators circa 1809 to 1920 were directly aligned with the teaching profession, and they were the most influential members of the National Education Association.

Many were reluctant to broaden their practice beyond instructional leadership, fearing the public would view them as managers or politicians if they did so. They often tried to protect themselves from ambitious mayors and city council members who wanted to usurp their authority over curriculum and instruction by claiming professionalism (Callahan, 1966).

Political elites often saw superintendents who defined themselves as professional educators as manipulative individuals driven by two motives: amassing power and remaining

independent of local politics (Kowalski, Bjork, & Otto, 2004). The concept of a teacher-scholar superintendent began to diminish around 1910 although it never became irrelevant. Peterson and Barnett (2003) while summarizing the literature pointed out that the concept of the superintendent as an instructional leader has been challenged for various reasons that range from politics to position instability to school board member's expectations. Zigarelli (1996) used data from the *National Education Longitude Study* for 1988, 1990, and 1992 to conclude that the evidence did not support a claim relationship between the district administrator and schools improved instruction. Other studies have painted a different picture. Peterson and Barnett (2003) using seven studies (Bredsen, 1996; Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Herman, 1990; Morgan & Pertersen, 2002; Murphy & Hallinger, 1986; Petersen, 2002; Petersen, Murphy, & Hallinger, 1987) of superintendents stated one "can influence the views of school board members and others by articulating and demonstrating involvement, a sincere interest in the technical core of curriculum and instruction and viewing it as their primary responsibility" (p. 15).

The first official superintendent was assigned to be a *school inspector* in 1837, in Buffalo, New York (Brunner, Grogan, & Bjork, 2002). It was during this time that superintendents had very little authority and often times spent their time doing routine tasks assigned to them. They also assisted the school boards ensuring state requirements were being met (Kowalski, 2006). The evolution of an association composed of only superintendents began at the National Teachers Association meeting held in 1865. It was there a group of superintendents met and decided that they should meet in February 1866 for the purpose of forming the National Association of School Superintendents.(Konnert & Augenstein, 1995) This group joined forces with the National Education Association (NEA) and remained with that

group until 1937 when it became known as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) (Konert & Augenstein, 1995).

“The situation in American education after 1911 demanded leaders who were oriented toward the business side of education, not the social or philosophical side” (Callahan, 1962, p. 180). Callahan (1962) also pointed out, for the school executive this new professionalism helped with the relationship with the school board, increased the pay, and was a source of personal satisfaction and provided social and professional recognition. Two groups were opposed to fashioning the superintendent into an industrial manager. One group was the many mayors, city council members, and other political bosses who feared that casting superintendents as managers would increase their stature, influence, and power of this position (Callahan, 1962). On the other side were some leading educators who opposed the management conceptualization because they thought it was counterproductive to the principle of local control. More precisely they feared that business and government power elites would act in concert with superintendent-managers to seize control of public education, thus diminishing participatory democracy (Glass, 2003). The superintendent as a manager became a dominant role expectation in the early 1900s. Budget development and administration, standardization of operation, personnel management, and facility management were the first tasks assumed (Callahan, 1962). Overall fiscal affairs, school building construction, and maintenance of the schools did not become the normal superintendent responsibilities until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Moehlman, 1940, as cited in Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

A professional milestone occurred in 1923 with the first release of a yearbook entitled *The Status of the Superintendency* by Strayer, professor of education administration at Teachers College, Columbia University (as cited in Glass & Franceschini, 2007). The rationale for the

first yearbook was that “one must know facts before he can determine procedure” (Strayer, 1923, as cited in Glass & Francheschini, 2007, p. 3). A second rationale for the first yearbook was the collection of data used by Strayer and Cubberly of Stanford University regarding best practices used by superintendents. This information was later used in textbooks to prepare future administrators (as cited in Glass, 2003). The University of Chicago and Harvard University began offering courses in educational administration after Columbia University had begun offering courses. In the 1927 the Harvard catalogued the superintendent of schools as the professional “general manager of the entire school system” (Callahan, 1962, pp. 198-199) and stated that the job compared favorably with the best jobs in the older professions in business and industry (Callahan, 1962). It was during this era professors took the opportunity to establish education administration as a respected specialization by separating administration from teaching. It was at that time that, in the eyes of the public, administration (principals and superintendents) became managers and teachers were relegated to a subordinate role (Callahan, 1962).

As the 1930s came along and the great depression was in full swing the image of the superintendent as a manager was tarnished. Many local school district patrons were overtly protesting the level of power that administrators had acquired; most felt disenfranchised by the bureaucratic structure that had been imposed on the local district (Kowalski, 2003). Some of the leading progressive educators of that time, Counts for one, intensified their criticisms, arguing that business values imposed on public education were incongruous with the core political values of a democratic society (Van Til, 1971). While studying the evolution of the managerial role, Glass (2003) observed the size of the district and the context of the district have been critical issues. Smaller district superintendents who have little or no support staff have a heavy emphasis

placed on the fiscal management relative to their responsibilities than a larger district. Veteran superintendents recognized that leadership abilities have little value if the budget is not balanced, the school facilities are deemed to be not safe, and/or personnel problems routinely result in litigation (Glass, 2003). Superintendents within larger enrollments and more affluent districts could often relegate managerial responsibilities to their staff, but even those able to do so were held accountable for efficient and productive operations (Kowalski, 1999). Kotter commenting on contemporary school leadership noted that superintendents must be both effective leaders and effective managers (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). Kotter's observations demonstrate the reality that faces a superintendent that of establishing equilibrium between these two essential roles (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005).

Some believed the role of the superintendent equated with statesmanship. The origins of statesmanship were traced by Bjork and Gurley (2003) from Plato to Alexander Hamilton. It was Plato's belief that in order to control and direct societal functions a statesman acted unilaterally and paternalistically. Hamilton viewed a statesman as a true politician who juggled the interests of the common people and the interests of the economic elite while remaining an aristocrat (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). Callahan's (1962) historical analysis of the period between 1930s and mid 1950s was not in total agreement with either of these perspectives. Rather he centered his analysis on the political leadership in a democratic context. Bjork and Gurley (2003) concluded that the term statesman "is not and may never have been an appropriate role conceptualization for the American superintendency, inasmuch as the role has never been about a stately patriarch, ubiquitously and benevolently guiding school systems single-handedly" (p. 35). They viewed the superintendent's role as one of an astute political strategist.

It was during the 1930s, due to the scarce financial resources, that school officials were forced to engage more directly in political activity primarily lobbying state legislatures. Prior to this time the behavior of highly political superintendents was regarded as unprofessional (Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Kowalski, 1999). With the necessity of public schools to compete with other governmental agencies for state funding this unprofessional conviction faded. About the same time this was happening several prominent educators were advocating to restore participatory democracy in local school districts (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). One of the more vocal members of this educational group was Melby, former dean of education at Northwestern University and New York University (Callahan, 1966). It was Melby's (1955) belief that because of the infusion of business values superintendents had become less reliant on its greatest resource, the local community. Melby (1995) urged superintendents to "release the creative capacities of individuals and mobilize the educational resources of the community" (p. 250). In essence, democratic leaders were expected to galvanize policymakers, employees, and other taxpayers to support the district's initiatives (Howlett, 1993).

By the mid 1950s, engagement in democratic administration met with disfavor. The public believed that democratic administration produced problems for organizations and those who embraced it (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). In their eyes, everyday problems of superintendents were economic, social, political knowledge and skills, not philosophy, were necessary to solve them (Kowalski, 1999). The ideal of democratic administration became less prominent in the 1950s, but it never died. It has reemerged over the past twenty years, not only in public education but also in all types of organizations, largely because of a mix of changing values and economic realities (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). Even the best educational policies prove to be ineffective when they are unacceptable to the public (Hanson, 2003; Wirt & Kirst, 2001). Joined

in a democracy are politics and policy which promotes democratic administration. Perhaps more now than in the past, ideological and moral differences among community factions require facilitation and conflict management (Keedy & Bjork, 2002).

Viewing a superintendent as an applied social scientist is another role conceptualization that developed through a mix of societal and professional forces. Callahan (1966) identified the following four as the most influential:

1. Growing dissatisfaction with the democratic leadership after World War II. The notion of democratic leadership was perceived as overly idealistic. The thought of shared authority and decision making exacerbated political, social, and economic problems rather than solving them.
2. Rapid development of the social sciences in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The social sciences were developing rapidly during this time. Scholars believed that the social sciences were at the core of administrative work.
3. Support from the Kellogg Foundation. More than \$7 million in grants were given by the Kellogg Foundation primarily to eight universities to support the research of school administration professors in the social science area.
4. A resurgence of criticism of public education in the 1950s. There were many social and political concerns at this time. People moving to the suburbs; the end of school desegregation seemed apparent, post World War II babies were entering public schools, and the escalating cold war with the Soviet Union were a few of these issues. It was concluded by many policy makers and public opinion shapers that the local superintendent was not prepared to deal with these issues. (as cited in Kowalski, 2006, pp. 44-45)

In addition to these four factors at least two others appear to be equally influential. Efforts to make school administration an established academic discipline equal to business management and public administration were intensifying (Culbertson, 1981). The redefining of administrators as applied social scientists and infusing the social sciences into the curriculum for preparing school administrators were viewed as positive steps toward that goal (Crowson & McPherson, 1987). The second factor was the practice of administration focused largely on internal operations, but system theory was gradually employed to demonstrate how external legal, political, social, and economic systems affected organizations (Getzels, 1977). By the mid 1980s, 82% of states had promulgated laws or policies that required school administrators to complete a prescribed program of graduate study and subsequently obtain a state issued license (or certificate) to be employed as a district superintendent (Kowalski, 2006). More recently there has been a push for deregulation of preparation and licensing coming mostly from outside the education profession. The most recent attack is found in the publication *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto*, published by the Broad Foundation and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). Clearly, no issue is currently more crucial to the future of the position of school district superintendent than the battle being fought over professional preparation and state licensing (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). During the 1990s superintendents faced challenges based upon “economic, political, social, family, or religious values, with challengers showing less interest in academic impacts” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 32). This has caused superintendents to be immersed in “vague and uneasy harmony of opposing forces” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 33). The superintendent’s decision should be based on “well-grounded core values and policies, not reaction under pressure” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 36). A superintendent has to have a working knowledge of many things:

personnel, finance, facilities, public relations, curriculum, instruction, collective bargaining, and other areas. The superintendent cannot be an expert in one area and ignore the others (Sharp & Walter, 1997). One of the areas recently included in educational administration is that of ethics. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (n.d.) states “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (p. 20). Ethical leadership must come from within the administrator, based on his or her feelings and beliefs (Sharp & Walter, 2004).

In describing the important role of superintendents in building effective schools, Murphy (1991) noted that “the chief executive officers of reformed schools act, not as they traditionally have, as directors and controllers, but as coordinators and ‘enablers’—their job is to facilitate, not dictate” (p. 224). Murphy went on to state, “Without the superintendent’s endorsement and support, their willingness to commit valuable tangible and intangible organizational resources, the seeds of restructuring are likely to fall on barren ground” (1991, p. 224).

Glass (1992) in a study entitled *The 1992 Study of the American School Superintendency* identified the criteria used by school boards to evaluate superintendents are, in rank order: general effectiveness, board/superintendent relationship, management functions, budget development and implementation, educational leadership/knowledge, community/superintendent relationship, staff/superintendent relationship, personal characteristics, recruitment and supervision of personnel, and student/superintendent relationship. Glass found the superintendent was not really evaluated by these standards but rather a sense of whether the superintendent is doing a good job and has a good relationship with the school board and/or community leaders.

## Leadership Traits

The success of the school district ultimately resides with leadership that is pro-active, not reactive; that is inspired, not simply functional; and that looks to the short-and long-term consequences of actions on future generations for whom the present is held in trust.

(Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 240)

One way to look at the desired qualities of a superintendent is through the lens of leadership. What are some of the characteristics that a superintendent needs to have or recognize to be a successful superintendent? Bolman and Deal (1991) completed an initial study in the early 1990s, which identified four frames of leadership. It is important to note that each of these four leadership frames is unique to the situation that the superintendent is placed in. An educator considering entering into the superintendency should reflect on his or her leadership style and where he or she fits in the framework concept. The four frames are: “structural framework (the design and implementation of a process or framework), human resource framework (a manager type), political framework (understands the political reality), and symbolic framework (visionary leader)” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 1). It is important to identify characteristics specific to each frame to better understand how leadership impacts the characteristics of a successful superintendent.

**The structural framework.** The *structural* manager attempts to design and implement a process or structure appropriate to the problem and the circumstances (ISLLC, n.d.). This would include clarifying organizational goals, develop a clear structure appropriate to the task, and clarify lines of authority, etc. This approach works best when there is little conflict, goals and information is clear, etc.

**The human resources framework.** The human resource manager views people as the heart of the organization (ISLLC, n.d.). They attempt to be responsive to needs and goals to gain commitment and loyalty. This leader will confront when necessary but will do it in a supportive manner. This approach is appropriate when morale is either high or low.

**The political framework.** This leader understands the political reality of the organization and can deal with it (ISLLC, n.d.). He or she recognizes the major constituencies and develops ties to his or her leadership.

Table 1

*Frameworks*

| Planning   | Decision Making  |
|--|--|
| Structural: set objectives and coordinate resources                      | Structural: rational   |
| Human relations: promote participation                                   | Human relations: open process to produce commitment                  |
| Political: arenas to air conflict and realign power                      | Political: opportunity to gain or exercise power                     |
| Symbolic: ritual to signal responsibility                                | Symbolic: ritual to provide comfort and support until decisions made |
| Reorganizing   | Evaluating   |
| Structural: realign roles and responsibilities to fit tasks              | Structural: formal control system for distributing rewards           |
| Human relations: maintain a balance between human needs and formal roles | Human relations: process for helping people grow and improve         |
| Political: redistribute power and for new coalitions                     | Political: opportunity to exercise power                             |
| Symbolic: maintain an image of accountability and responsiveness         | Symbolic: occasion to play roles in shared rituals                   |

Table 1 (continued)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Conflict Resolution   | Goal Setting   |
| Structural: authorities resolve conflict                                | Structural: keep organization headed in the right direction                    |
| Human relations: develop relationships                                  | Human relations: keep people involved and communications open                  |
| Political: develop power by bargaining, forcing, or manipulating others | Political: provide opportunities for people and groups to make interests known |
| Symbolic: develop shared values   | Symbolic: develop symbols and shared values                                    |
| Communication   | Meetings   |
| Structural: transmit facts and information                              | Structural: formal occasions for making decisions                              |
| Human relations: exchange information, needs, and feelings              | Human relations: informal occasions for involvement, sharing feelings          |
| Political: vehicles for influencing or manipulating others              | Political: competitive occasions to win points                                 |
| Symbolic: telling stories   | Symbolic: sacred occasions to celebrate and transform the culture              |
| Effective Leadership  | Effective Leadership Process   |
| Structural: social architect  | Structural: analysis and design  |
| Human relations: catalyst and servant                                   | Human relations: support and empowerment                                       |
| Political: advocate   | Political: advocacy, coalition building  |
| Symbolic: prophet and poet  | Symbolic: inspiration, framing experience                                      |

Table 1 (continued)

---

| Ineffective Leadership  | Ineffective Leadership Process                   |
|---|--|
| Structural: petty tyrant  | Structural: management by detail and fiat        |
| Human relations: pushover   | Human relations: management by abdication        |
| Political: hustler  | Political: manipulation                          |
| Symbolic: fanatic, fool   | Symbolic: smoke and mirrors                      |
| Organizational Change   | Motivation                                       |
| Structural: change causing confusion and need to realign  | Structural: economic incentives                  |
| Human relations: change can cause people to feel incompetent, powerless, need to develop new skills, involvement, support | Human relations: growth and self actualization   |
| Political: change creates winners and losers; need to create arenas where issues can be negotiated                        | Political: coercion, manipulation, and seduction |
| Symbolic: change creates loss of meaning and purpose; people form attachments to symbols, need symbolic healing           | Symbolic: symbols and celebrations               |

---

**The symbolic framework.** The leader views vision and inspiration as critical; people need something to believe in. Symbolism is important as is ceremony and ritual to communicate a sense of organizational mission. (Boleman & Deal, 1991). Each of the four frameworks approaches to management tasks is reflected in Table 1.

There are times when any of the four frames is appropriate: if commitment and motivation are important, one should look into the Human Resources and Symbolic Frames. If there is ambiguity and uncertainty, look at the Structural Frame. If resources are scarce, look at the Structural, Political, and Symbolic Frames. When there is conflict and diversity, the Political and Symbolic Frames are best. If there is a top down approach, look at the Structural and Human Resources Frames (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

Schlechty (as cited in Marx, 1996) offers these steps to system leaders to maintain a future orientation while simultaneously dealing with the realities of the present:

focus on the future, maintain direction, act strategically, create a results-oriented management system, encourage a pattern of participatory leadership, foster flexibility in the use of time, people, space, knowledge, and technology, encourage innovation, provide for continuity, and provide training, incentives, and social and political support for continuous improvement. (p. 3)

Twenty-first century superintendents must become the leaders of the system, not the keepers.

### **Superintendent/Board Relationship**

As was stated earlier the most important role of the board of education is to hire its superintendent. While most boards would agree with this statement, they might not agree on what that superintendent should do or what the board itself should do (Sharp & Walter, 2004).

Of all the relationships a superintendent will develop within the district, his or her work with the board of education will perhaps be the most challenging. The goal must be to develop a relationship that emphasizes the superintendent and the board as a team.

(Hayes, 2001, p. 61)

The superintendency is perhaps most clearly defined by its relations with the school boards. Kaufhold (1993) stated, “you have no idea what it is like to be superintendent until you get into an executive session of a school board meeting” (p. 41). This is the forum where the superintendent must convince laypeople—who most often have never taught a day in their lives and have little experience working with children—what is best for the education of children within the school district (Kaufhold, 1993). To paraphrase Machiavelli, “there is nothing more difficult, more perilous, or more uncertain of successes than to take the lead in introducing a new order of things” (as cited in Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 93).

Most studies of superintendent—board relationships conclude that communication, trust, and understanding role differences are the main factors influencing their effectiveness. In a survey by McCurdy (1992) numerous comments stressed how they had worked together constantly—using good communication skills, sharing information, and seeking agreement on mutual expectations—to form healthy and trusting relationships.

A new superintendent has the luxury of working with the school board that hired him or her. This luxury might not last long because of a rapid turnover of board members. Due to this rapid turnover, the relationship of a new superintendent and the school board is “a dynamic one, and sometimes the changes are dramatic” (Hayes, 2001, p. 55). The support the board has with the superintendent can never be taken for granted. Developing a positive relationship with the board president is critical. This relationship can be helpful if another board member is causing a problem for the superintendent or other board members (Hayes, 2001). It is safer to do too much than it is to do too little. Although most boards can forgive a superintendent for trying too hard, very few accept halfhearted effort. “The superintendency is one job that demands full attention,

and superintendents must be highly motivated to make an impact” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 99).

In general, the board has been given the freedom to determine the level of trust placed on the superintendent’s judgment to guide the direction of the schools. This discretionary power has made it essential for the effective superintendent to maintain a good relationship with the board (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). An informal contact by the superintendent might well begin the relationship on a positive note. Hayes (2001) pointed out that “once a new board member is elected there should be a formal, personal orientation to discuss such things as the role of the school board, employee contracts, minutes of the latest meetings, mission statement and current objectives” (p. 56).

Of all the issues that can cause problems in a district, the question of the appropriate roles of the board of education and the superintendent is perhaps the most volatile. If all parties can reach such an understanding, it is going to help the district to function more effectively. This objective is easier to identify than it is to implement (Hayes, 2001).

It is important that a superintendent and the school board members communicate effectively. In fact Hayes (2001) stated “It is a good idea to begin communications with the board of education candidates as soon as they complete their petitions” (p. 56).

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) at times has expressed concern over the ambiguous role of the superintendent.

AASA believes there is a vital relationship between effective school district leadership and successful schools and learners. This relationship is clearly enhanced when roles and responsibilities between superintendents and boards of education are clearly defined and implemented. Therefore AASA shall lead efforts to define the roles, responsibilities, and

qualifications of superintendents and boards of education. (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23)

One of the cardinal rules that a superintendent must remember is never to take sides or to get involved in the election or the appointment of school board members or the board president, because any one of the members may become the next president. “It is both foolish and professionally suicidal to become involved in board politics and try to manipulate or control the board membership” (Sharp & Walter, 1997, p. 140).

The relationship between the board of education and the superintendent is crucial not only for the job security of the superintendent, but also for the efficient management of the school district (Sharp & Walter, 1997). The working relationship and lines of authority between school boards and superintendents have changed over the past century. Before 1900, superintendents were viewed as supervisors and administrators responsible for carrying out board of education policies. After the turn of the century, however, “many superintendents advocated the adoption of business ideology and management models, advancing the idea that CEOs should be highly trained professionals who make administrative decisions” (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005, p. 26).

Three of the leading educators in the field of educational administration, Morphet, Johns, and Reller (1974) listed the following as demonstrative of school board duties:

- The selection of the superintendent of schools;
- The establishment of policies and procedures, in accordance with the educational services administered and a range of programs developed;
- The establishment of policies, relating to planning improvements and to accountability;

- The adoption of the budget and the enactment of provisions for the financing of the schools;
- The acquisition and development of necessary property and the provision for supplies;
- The adoption of policies regarding, and the appointment of, necessary personnel to staff the varied services; and
- The appraisal of the work of the schools and adoption of plans for development. (as cited in Sharp & Walter, 1997, pp. 111-112)

While leadership is important there are some researchers who will argue other things are more important. Kelleher (2002) states that “the key responsibility of the superintendent is the relationship between the superintendent and the school board and that curriculum and instruction are responsibilities that need to be delegated” (p. 28). Campbell et al. (1990) reported on a study on what superintendents actually do. The superintendents who were studied were

spending 80% of their time talking with others, dealing with technical information, legal rules and regulations, past activities of the district, preferences of different people and possible consequences for different people. The activities seemed to be largely deskwork, phone calls, and scheduled and unscheduled meetings. (Campbell et al. 1990, p. 251)

In another study Willower and Fraser (1980) found 50 superintendents who stated that they “deal with a wide range of problems, are irked by the paperwork demands of the state and federal agencies, regret not being closer to the classroom, and feel pressure of the job but are ready to do it over again” (p. 2).

In a study of successful and unsuccessful superintendents, it was found that

superintendents who have tenure of 12 years or more in a district identify open communication with the school board and community as one of the most important leadership attributes. The board members interviewed where superintendent turnover has been the norm identified lack of open communication as the primary reason for superintendent change. Finance was also listed as an area of importance by both groups as were such issues as personnel and public relations. Clearly, those who enjoy a long tenure and are viewed as successful strive to communicate fully with the community as well as the board. It is evident that the superintendent who does not succeed fails to practice open communication. They do not strive for an understanding with the board and often are more autocratic than democratic. The result is that the local school board, school district, and community and school staff are constantly in a crisis mode in any substantial interactions with the superintendent. (Chance, 1992, as cited in Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 36)

Hayes (2001) noted that it is important for a superintendent to be an active participant in the community dialogue concerning education. There are many methods to be an active participant: such things as being a guest writer in the local newspaper or a guest speaker at a civic meeting are but two.

As an administrator we need to remember the African proverb that Hillary Clinton used as the title of her book, *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*. Superintendents must be leaders in bringing communities together to meet this important responsibility. (Hayes, 2001, p. 106)

Hayes (2001) stated, “Perhaps the most important aspect of the relationship between the superintendent and the board of education members is that it be even-handed. The superintendent cannot be seen as one who plays favorites” (p. 58).

During the 1990s the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership (Van Meter & Murphy, 1997). A set of six standards was developed. Each of these standards identifies the qualities and/or characteristics that a superintendent should have or aspire to have. Each of these standards supports the notion that the educational leader promotes the success of all students by doing each of the six standards. In addition, each of these standards has a set of standards to better operationalize the standard. Table 2 presents those standards.

What does leadership entail and how can it make a difference? One of the ways to answer these questions is to look at the lives and careers of effective leaders. In the United States, most historians would agree that Abraham Lincoln would be such a leader. His career is replete with failures, but at each juncture in his life, he learned and grew. (Hayes, 2001, p. 129)

Table 2

*Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards and Practices*


---

| Standard                             | Practice Includes   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Standard 1 is a shared vision.       | Developing, articulating, implementing, and stewardship of the vision of learning. Once that happens the superintendent shares the vision and is supported by the community |
| Standard 2 is a culture of learning. | Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional development.                          |
| Standard 3 is management.            | Management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.  |
| Standard 4 is family and community.  | Collaboration with families, and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs that and mobilizing community resources.                            |
| Standard 5 is ethics.                | Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.  |
| Standard 6 is societal context       | To understand the profile of the community and responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.                          |

---

Source: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (n.d.)

## CHAPTER 3

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to determine the necessary personal characteristics and professional skills desired by school board members for hiring a new school superintendent. During the 2007-2008 school year there were over 40 openings for school superintendents in the state of Indiana. The school corporations that had openings were identified using one of the state associations, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents (IAPSS), as well as the University Search Team comprising one member of the faculty at Ball State University, Indiana State University, Indiana University, and Purdue University. The study identified results from large and small school corporations. For this study it was determined that school corporations over 2,000 students were considered large school corporations. The school corporations that had under 2,000 students were considered small school corporations. The numbers of students identified were the recommendation written in a report by Kernan and Shepard (2007). The report stated that the optimum school size was 2,000 students.

The purpose of this study was for future candidates for a superintendent position to better understand what is expected from them prior to accepting a position. Specifically this study identified the answers to the following research questions:

(a) Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills? (b) Is there a difference across levels of

location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills? (c) Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills? (d) Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board member's perceptions of importance with professional skills? (e) Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics? (f) Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics? (g) Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics? (h) Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?

### **Null Hypotheses**

The null hypothesis was assumed to be valid unless the actual behavior of the data contradicts this assumption. Thus, the null hypothesis was contrasted against another or alternative hypothesis. Statistical hypothesis testing which involves a number of steps was used to decide whether the data contradicts the null hypothesis. The following eight null hypotheses were tested as part of this study:

**H<sub>0</sub>1.** There is no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>2.** There is no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>3.** There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>4.** There is no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**H<sub>0</sub>5.** There is no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>6.** There is no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>7.** There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>8.** There is no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

### **Participants**

The population for this study was determined by the openings for a superintendent during the 2007-2008 academic school year indicated by the IAPSS and the Indiana Search Team. There were over 40 school corporations that had an opening during the time indicated. An e-mail was sent to the superintendents of the school corporations that had an opening for superintendency during the 2007-2008 school year. The purpose of the e-mail was to inform the superintendent about the study and asked the superintendent to complete a form with the names and the home e-mail addresses of the school board members who were on the school board at the time of the superintendent opening. After receiving the requested information from the superintendent the school board members were then sent an e-mail with the survey included. The e-mail introduced the board members to this study and asked them to participate in an anonymous survey.

The school board members who agreed to participate were told that the purpose of the study was to determine what personal characteristics and professional skills are important in the selection process. After the selection of candidates to be interviewed, what were the personal characteristics and professional skills required to fill the superintendent position? The results of the study were not generalized to the general population of school boards within the United States, but could provide some information regarding school board expectations in Indiana.

The school board members were told that their responses would be as anonymous as possible. The intent of anonymous responses was to allow them to be open and honest with their responses. Anonymity was done through the use of a survey instrument that only indicated their demographic information as well as their responses to the 24 survey items. No name or any personal information was asked nor given.

## **Method**

A survey instrument was utilized to collect the data necessary to determine what personal characteristics and professional skills are most important with the selection of an Indiana school superintendent and if there were any significant differences between large and small school corporations.

The survey instrument items were generated beginning with the six Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards and then narrowing down the standards to sub-standards of four items per survey item. This was done with the assistance of Dr. Robert Boyd, Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana. Within the survey were demographic questions to assist me to categorize responses from the large school corporations and the small school corporations. This was necessary to determine whether there were differences between the small school corporation

school boards and the large school corporation school boards when looking at personal characteristics and professional skills of the superintendent.

The 24 survey items were selected from a group of sub-standards generated by the group of six standards in the ISLLC described above that are appropriate to the research. I determined that three of the six ISLLC Standards dealt with Personal Characteristics (Standards 4, 5, and 6) and that the other three standards dealt with Professional Skills (Standards 1, 2, and 3). A Likert Scale was used for each of the 24 items, with a one being *not important* to a five being *extremely important*. Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method, measuring either positive or negative response to a statement.

An initial e-mail was sent to the superintendents of the school corporations who had an opening for a superintendent during the 2007-2008 school year (Appendix B). The purpose of the initial e-mail was to explain the study to the superintendents, assure them the board member responses would remain as anonymous as possible and that the information would be treated with confidentiality. The e-mail also stated the results would not include any identifying information for either the participating school board member or school corporation. The e-mail included the directions for completing the survey and contact information to reach the researcher or the Indiana State University staff should the school board member require additional instructions or request further information regarding the study. The school board members who agreed to participate in the survey were then surveyed utilizing an electronic survey instrument (Appendix C).

### **Data Analysis**

For this study both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data. The size of the school corporations was the dependent variable. Size of the school

corporation, location of the school corporation, and years of service on the school board were the independent variables. Descriptive statistics were used to report the means of the survey instrument. A two way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to calculate interactions among the six ISLLC Standards. Descriptive statistics were also used to report the results of the rating scale. H<sub>01</sub>, There is no significant difference between school board members across enrollment levels on professional skills. H<sub>02</sub>, There is no significant difference between school board members across location levels on professional skills. H<sub>03</sub>, There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills. H<sub>04</sub>, There is no significant difference between school board members across experience levels on professional skills. H<sub>05</sub>, There is no significant difference between school board members across enrollment levels on personal characteristics. H<sub>06</sub>, There is no significant difference between school board members across location levels on personal characteristics. H<sub>07</sub>, There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics. H<sub>08</sub>, There is no significant difference between school board members across experience levels on personal characteristics.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Analysis of Data and Findings**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there are differences in what school board members look for in the areas of professional skills and personal characteristics when hiring a superintendent. The study used the Interstate Leadership and Licensing Consortium standards to establish two dependent variables (professional skills and personal characteristics). The three independent variables—location of the school corporation (rural, urban, and suburban), enrollment of the school corporation (under 2,000 students and over 2,000 students), and years of experience on the school board (0 to 4 years, 5 to 16 years, and over 16 years)—were used to attempt to gather answers to the eight research questions and null hypotheses:

#### **Research Questions**

This study identified the answers to the following eight research questions:

1. Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills?
2. Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills?
3. Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills?

4. Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board member's perceptions of importance with professional skills?
5. Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?
6. Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?
7. Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics?
8. Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?

### **Null Hypothesis**

As part of this study six of the following eight null hypotheses were tested.  $H_{03}$  and  $H_{07}$  were to be tested using an ANOVA test but the sample size would not allow that.

**$H_{01}$ .** There is no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**$H_{02}$ .** There is no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**$H_{03}$ .** There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills.

**$H_{04}$ .** There is no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills.

**$H_{05}$ .** There is no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>6.** There is no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>7.** There is no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics.

**H<sub>0</sub>8.** There is no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics.

A survey was created using the ISLLC standards. A letter was e-mailed to 42 school corporation superintendents who had an opening during the 2007-2008 school year. The request to the superintendents was to provide e-mail addresses for the members who served on the school board during the 2007-2008 school year. The superintendents returned 110 e-mail addresses or 44% of school board members who were on the school board during the 2007–2008 school year.

The survey consisted of two sections with the first section asking for demographic information. There were 45 total respondents which was a 44% rate of return. Of the 45 total responses, 32 (71%) were from corporations below 2,000 students and 13 (29%) were from corporations over 2,000 students. The location area was divided into three sections: rural with 35 (78%) responses, urban with 2 (4%) responses, and suburban with 8 (18%) responses. Age of the school board members was also surveyed and divided into three sections with 0 (0%) in the 35 or under category, 21 (47%) were 35 to 50 years of age, and over 50 had 24 (53%) responses returned. Gender of the board members reflected that 32 (71%) were men and 12 (27%) were women. The last item in the demographic section was years of experience of the school board members. There were 16 (36%) members with 4 years or less, 24 (41%) members in the 5 to 16 years and 5 (11%) in the 16 years or more. Age and gender were not analyzed for the purpose of

this study. One survey was incomplete and the results were not included. Table 3 reflects these data.

Table 3

*Returned Survey Demographics*

| Demographic                       | Surveys Returned |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>School Enrollment</b>          |                  |
| Under 2,000 students              | 32               |
| Over 2,000 students               | 13               |
| <b>Location</b>                   |                  |
| Rural                             | 35               |
| Urban                             | 2                |
| Suburban                          | 8                |
| <b>Age of school board member</b> |                  |
| 35 and under                      | 0                |
| 36 to 50                          | 21               |
| Over 50                           | 24               |
| <b>Gender</b>                     |                  |
| Male                              | 32               |
| Female                            | 12               |
| <b>Years of Service</b>           |                  |
| 4 years or less                   | 16               |
| 5 years to 16 years               | 24               |
| Over 16 years                     | 5                |

The second section consisted of 24 questions with 12 of the questions relating to personal characteristics and 12 questions relating to professional skills. Each question used a 5-point Likert scale for responses: 1) Not important, 2) Somewhat important, 3) Important, 4) Very important, and 5) Extremely important. Surveys were sent by e-mail to the 110 school board

members and 46 were returned or 42%. Participant responses were summed in two areas. The first 12 questions addressed personal characteristics and the second 12 questions addressed professional skills and the mean score was used to identify the highest area of concern identified by the school board members in each of the two areas.

### **Statistics**

The original intent of testing the data generated by the surveys completed was to run one- and two-way ANOVAs. However, since the sample size was so small for Ho3 and Ho7, it was determined that the results of an ANOVA would not be reliable. Also, due to the small sample size of each of the three categories (enrollment, location, and experience), it necessitated running *t*-tests to determine whether there was a significant difference with each of the six null hypotheses. In order to run *t*-tests, the location area had to be collapsed into two sections; the experience area also had to be collapsed into two sections. By doing this a *t*-test was an appropriate test. Running *t*-tests allowed the data to be analyzed to determine whether there were significant differences among the null hypotheses.

**Descriptive statistics.** Summing the means of each of the 12 questions within the personal characteristics category and the 12 questions within the professional skills category on the survey allowed me to rank the six areas questioned on the survey (enrollment, location, and experience for both personal characteristics and professional skills). The highest mean score was 4.44 and it occurred in both the personal characteristics (large schools) and in the professional skills (large schools). The range of mean scores was from 4.44 to 4.09 indicating that there was not a significant difference among any of the six areas questioned.

Table 4

*Statistics for Experience on Professional Skills*


---

| Frame of Reference | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| 4 years or less    | 16       | 4.14 | .481      |
| 5–16/over 16 years | 28       | 4.30 | .454      |

---

There were 44 respondents who completed the survey. In the professional skills area dealing with years of service on a school board (experience) the category (1) of 4 years or less had 16 school board members. The category two, a combined category of 5 through 16 years and over 16 years of service, had 28 responders. The mean of group 1 was 4.14 with a standard deviation of .481 and the mean for group 2 was 4.22 with a standard deviation of .463.

The responses completed by the school board members within the experience category indicated that there is not much difference regarding the professional skills necessary to be hired as a superintendent. The scores among the standard deviation indicated that within both groups they agree that Professional Skills are important for a superintendent.

Table 5

*Statistics for Location on Professional Skills*


---

| Frame of Reference | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| Rural              | 35       | 4.20 | .458      |
| Urban/Suburban     | 9        | 4.39 | .489      |

---

There were 44 respondents who completed the survey on location on professional skills. In group 1 which was the 4 years of service and less there were 35 that completed the survey with a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of .458. In group two there were nine who completed the survey with a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of .489.

Even though there were more school board members in the rural category than the urban/suburban category the summed mean for each group regarding the importance of professional skills for a superintendent indicate there is not much difference. Both groups scored this category somewhat high indicating that a superintendent needs to be strong with their professional skills. Again the standard deviation scores group themselves closely indicating that within both groups professional skills are important.

Table 6

*Statistics for Enrollment on Professional Skills*

| Frame of Reference   | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| Under 2,000 students | 31       | 4.28 | .423      |
| Over 2,000 students  | 13       | 4.14 | .560      |

There were 44 respondents who completed the survey on enrollment on professional skills. In group one which was the under 2,000 student enrollment there were 31 that completed the survey with a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of .423. In group two which was the over 2,000 student enrollment there were 13 who completed the survey with a mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of .560.

The data from this table demonstrate that enrollment does not necessitate that a superintendent have more professional skills at a small school corporation than at a large school corporation. Although there is a small difference in standard deviation scores it is not large enough to indicate that one group's overall thinking is much different than the other group's.

Table 7

*Statistics for Experience on Personal Characteristics*

| Frame of Reference | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| 4 years or less    | 16       | 4.09 | .722      |
| 5–16/over 16 years | 28       | 4.16 | .563      |

There were 44 respondents who completed the survey. In the Personal Characteristics area dealing with years of service on a school board (experience) the category of 4 years or less had 16 school board members. The second category was a combined category of 5 through 16 years and over 16 years of service had 28 responders. The mean of group one was 4.09 with a standard deviation of .722 and the mean for group two was 4.16 with a standard deviation of .563.

The summed means of these two groups is slightly lower than some of the other groups but it still rated personal characteristics above 4 out of a possible 5. The standard deviation among the school board members with 4 or less years of service indicates that among that group the range of scores is wider than some of the other scores.

Table 8

*Statistics for Location on Personal Characteristics*

| Frame of Reference | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| Rural              | 35       | 4.09 | .582      |
| Urban/Suburban     | 9        | 4.31 | .756      |

There were 44 respondents who completed the survey on location on Personal Characteristics. In group one which was the 4 years of service and less there were 35 who completed the survey with a mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of .582. In group two there were nine who completed the survey with a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of .765.

Again this group has more rural school board members (35) compared with the urban/suburban (9). The range of summed means is close and above a 4 indicating that members of both groups believe personal characteristics are an important aspect of the superintendency. Among the nine members of the urban/suburban group the standard deviation is a somewhat wider spread indicating that they had varying degrees of importance with this category.

Table 9

*Statistics for Enrollment on Personal Characteristics*

| Frame of Reference   | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| Under 2,000 students | 31       | 4.13 | .566      |
| Over 2,000 students  | 13       | 4.16 | .755      |

There were 44 respondents who completed the survey on enrollment on personal characteristics. In group one which was the under 2,000 student enrollment there were 31 who completed the survey with a mean of 4.13 and a standard deviation of .566. In group two which was the over 2,000 student enrollment there were 13 who completed the survey with a mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of .755.

Again the summed mean scores are slightly lower than in some of the other categories but it is still above the score of 4, indicating that although this is not scored quite as high it is still considered important by both groups. The standard deviation among the over 2000 students is higher than most of the others indicating that among the 13 members who completed the survey they had a wider range of scores but overall as a group they believed personal characteristics are an important feature to be a superintendent.

In analyzing each individual question among the professional skills and summing all of the respondents' mean scores it must be noted that in all three areas (enrollment, location, and years of service) the question that had the highest score among the 12 questions identified in the professional skills area was question number 12, *The superintendent facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively*. It received a range of scores among the six categories from 4.70 to 5.0.

Questions 1 and 3 were also identified with all groups (with one exception) as being important in selecting a superintendent. Question 1 identified effectively communicating the vision and mission to all stakeholders and question 3 dealt with monitoring the vision and mission.

There was one exception. In the location group and the urban/suburban group, they did not identify either of these questions. That group indicated that question 8 which dealt with a culture of high expectations and question 11 which dealt with confronting and resolving problems in a timely manner were important areas for them.

Within the personal characteristics area question 22 was scored the highest in five of the six areas of responders. Question 22 was, *The superintendent treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect*. The range of scores within the other five groups was from 4.67 to 4.78. All but the urban/suburban group had question 22 rated the most important, but this group rated it third highest in importance. The urban/suburban group rated question 22 with a 4.62. They had question 21 rated with a 5.00.

All six groups had questions 20, 21, and 22 rated as the three highest with the range of scores from 4.35 to 5.00. Question 20 dealt with demonstrating values, beliefs and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance. Question 21 dealt with using the influence of the office to enhance educational programs rather than for personal gains. Question 22 inquired if people were treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.

Table 10

*Statistics for Highest Rated Responses Within the Professional Skills Category*

| Question | Enrollment<br>1 (under<br>2,000<br>students) | Enrollment<br>2 (over<br>2,000<br>Students) | Location<br>1 (Rural) | Location<br>2 (Urban/<br>Suburban) | Yrs of Svc<br>1 (4 yrs<br>Or less) | Yrs of Svc<br>2 (5 to 16/<br>Over 16 yrs) |
|----------|--|---|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1        | 4.63   | 4.50  | 4.59                  |                                    | 4.40                               | 4.70                                      |
| 3        | 4.60   | 4.50  | 4.56                  |                                    | 4.40                               | 4.67                                      |
| 4        | 4.50   |   |                       |                                    |                                    |   |
| 8        |  |   |                       | 4.88                               |                                    |   |
| 11       |  | 4.67  |                       | 4.75                               | 4.60                               |   |
| 12       | 4.50   | 4.75  | 4.71                  | 5.00                               | 4.87                               | 4.70                                      |

The data demonstrated that there is a very small range between the highest rated response and the next five rated responses. The school board members' responses indicated that there is no one skill that is more important than the others.

Table 11

*Statistics for Highest Rated Responses Within the Personal Characteristics Category*

| Question | Enrollment<br>1 (under<br>2,000<br>students) | Enrollment<br>2 (over<br>2,000<br>Students) | Location<br>1 (Rural) | Location<br>2 (Urban/<br>Suburban) | Yrs of Svc<br>1 (4 yrs<br>Or less) | Yrs of Svc<br>2 (5 to 16/<br>Over 16 yrs) |
|----------|--|---|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 20       | 4.47   | 4.42  | 4.41                  | 4.62                               | 4.48                               | 4.48                                      |
| 21       | 4.43   | 4.58  | 4.35                  | 5.00                               | 4.53                               | 4.44                                      |
| 22       | 4.73   | 4.75  | 4.76                  | 4.62                               | 4.67                               | 4.78                                      |

The data in Table 11 indicated that the school board members surveyed did not believe in any one personal characteristic significantly more than another. Although question 22 was in all of the areas rated high the other areas also received high ratings. Additionally within the Professional Skills category there was little difference between any of the categories surveyed. In all categories it appeared that the beliefs of the school board members was one that the superintendent needs to very well versed in all areas of the superintendency. There were not one or two specific items identified in the survey that were considered more important than the other areas.

**Inferential statistical analysis.** In running the inferential statistics for the eight null hypotheses, it was determined that with such a small sample size for each, a *t*-test was the appropriate test. Hypotheses three and seven did not have a large enough sample size to run an appropriate test therefore none were run for those two hypotheses. The results of the *t*-tests can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12

*Inferential Statistics for Null Hypotheses*

|                  | Frame of Reference                            | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | Sig. |
|------------------|---|-----------|----------|------|
| H <sub>0</sub> 1 | Enrollment levels on professional skills      | 42        | .917     | .364 |
| H <sub>0</sub> 2 | Location levels on professional skills        | 42        | -1.074   | .289 |
| H <sub>0</sub> 4 | Experience levels on professional skills      | 42        | -1.137   | .262 |
| H <sub>0</sub> 5 | Enrollment levels on personal characteristics | 42        | -.164    | .870 |
| H <sub>0</sub> 6 | Location levels on personal characteristics   | 42        | -.970    | .338 |
| H <sub>0</sub> 8 | Experience levels on personal characteristics | 42        | -3.840   | .703 |

H<sub>0</sub>1 stated that there was no significant difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills. Based on the results of the school board members surveyed, the data indicated there was no significant difference across enrollment levels on Professional Skills as evidenced by the Sig value of .364,  $t(42) = .917$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore one should fail to reject the null.

H<sub>0</sub>2 stated that there was no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills. Based on the results of the school board members surveyed, the data indicates there was no significant difference across location levels on professional skills,  $t(42) = -1.074$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore one should fail to reject the null.

H<sub>0</sub>3 stated that there was no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills. Due to the small sample size it was determined

that an ANOVA test would not be appropriate. Therefore there were no statistical data to determine whether this null had been violated or not.

H<sub>04</sub> stated that there was no significant difference across experience levels on professional skills. Based on the results of the school board members surveyed, the data indicated there was no significant difference across experience levels on professional skills,  $t(42) = -1.137, p > .05$ . Therefore one should fail to reject the null.

H<sub>05</sub> stated that there was no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills. Based on the results of the school board members surveyed, the data indicated there was no significant difference across enrollment levels on personal characteristics,  $t(42) = -.164, p > .05$ . Therefore one should fail to reject the null.

H<sub>06</sub> stated that there was no significant difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics. Based on the results of the school board members surveyed, the data indicated there was no significant difference across location levels on personal characteristics,  $t(42) = -.970, p > .05$ . Therefore one should fail to reject the null.

H<sub>07</sub> stated that there was no significant interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics. Due to the small sample size it was determined that an ANOVA test would not be appropriate. Therefore there were no statistical data to determine whether this null had been violated or not.

H<sub>08</sub> stated that there was no significant difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics. Based on the results of the school board members surveyed, the data indicated there was no significant difference across

experience levels on personal characteristics,  $t(42) = -3.84, p > .05$ . Therefore one should fail to reject the null.

This researcher gave his best effort to collect the data necessary to answer the research questions. The limited number of surveys returned by the school board members indicated there were no significant differences between personal characteristics and professional skills regarding any of the six hypotheses tested using  $t$ -tests. Given that there was a small sample size, it was possible that there could be some significance but none were found.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications for Future Research**

This chapter is divided into four sections: introduction, conclusions, summary, and recommendations for further research. This study was done to determine whether there were any significant differences between enrollment of schools (over 2000 students and under 2000 students), location of schools (rural, urban, and suburban), and years of service (4 years or less, 5 to 16 years of service, and over 16 years of service) of school board members regarding personal characteristics and professional skills in hiring a superintendent. The following eight research questions were developed as a basis for the study:

1. Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills?
2. Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with professional skills?
3. Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on professional skills?
4. Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board member's perceptions of importance with professional skills?
5. Is there a difference across levels of enrollment on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?

6. Is there a difference across levels of location on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?
7. Is there an interaction between enrollment and location with school board members on personal characteristics?
8. Is there a difference across levels of experience on school board members' perceptions of importance with personal characteristics?

I had developed assumptions for each of these research questions prior to surveying the school board members. These assumptions were based on my experiences as an educational leader both as a middle school principal and as a superintendent over the past 22 years. The first assumption combined research questions 1 and 5 since both questions dealt with the size of the school corporation. My initial belief was that there was a difference between the large school corporation's board members and the smaller school corporation's board members. It was the belief that in a larger corporation there was much more emphasis placed on the management aspect of the job; that most of the time was spent working with either the school board members or the community promoting the vision of the school corporation. The professional skills that would be necessary would deal with developing and maintaining staff, creating or continuing a strong instructional program, and creating and promoting a school vision.

Regarding the personal characteristics standards created by the ISLLC consortium, the areas in question dealt with having a safe and orderly environment, being involved in the community, being fair and ethical, and understanding the social, political, ethical and legal context. This meant the superintendent would spend most of the time working on the environment of the corporation and being active in the community working on the political

aspect of the job. However, based on the survey data collected there was no significant difference among large and small school corporations.

The second assumption addressed both research questions 2 and 6 as both of these deal with location of the school corporations. The results of the survey were that there was not a difference between the different locations of school corporations. However it should be noted that the sample size was rather small and that there were very few large corporations. Based on my experience and having casual conversations with superintendents from a few very large corporations, it was their belief that some of the most important work they did dealt with promoting the corporation within the local community and throughout the state, as well as working very closely with the local political scene to ensure the corporation was viewed in a positive light. They understand that there are other people employed that have the expertise in specific areas such as finance, curriculum, or transportation that they do not need to be closely involved in those specific areas.

The third assumption combined research questions 3 and 7 as these questions addressed whether there was any interaction between enrollment and location. This question could not be researched using any statistical data assessment instrument due to the small sample size. The intent of the question was to determine whether large or small rural school board members had the same or similar beliefs than those from large or small urban/suburban school corporations. In addition, was there a reaction between one variable to another? My initial belief was that there was some reaction between the two groups of school corporations based on location and enrollment. My experiences indicated that what was important in a small rural school corporation was much different from a small urban/suburban school district. Relative to the ISLLC standards it is my belief that the emphasis in the political arena is much more prevalent in

the urban/suburban school corporation than the rural ones. Based on my experiences as a superintendent and middle school principal, what the research stated in this study and what the superintendents I spoke with experience are far different. Although the school board members surveyed indicated there was no significant difference between what the boards of large school corporations and small school corporations believed, the superintendents I visited with stated in personal conversation that there is a significant difference in the board's expectations in both personal characteristics and professional skills of the superintendent.

The fourth assumption addressed both research questions 4 and 8, years of experience as a school board member. It was my initial belief that there would be significant differences across the levels of experience of school board members in the areas of professional skills and personal characteristics. My experiences with school boards had normally been that with a first term member of the school board there is a large learning curve with how a school corporation operates. Each year the learning curve gets smaller as the school board members better understand that they must work as a unit and not as an individual. Once a member of the board begins their second term they have a much better appreciation of how the corporation operates and how they can operate within that board concept. With the learning that takes place, there seemed to be higher expectations about how the corporation functions better as a learning community. This did not evolve from the data, however the sample size might have been the issue.

The data collected to answer these eight research questions came from an e-mail survey sent to school board members who had an opening during the 2007-2008 school year. Sending 110 surveys and having 46 returned yielded a 42% return rate. There were two surveys that were incomplete and were not included in the final results.

## **Discussion**

The importance of the superintendent's position cannot be understated. In my 15 years as a building level administrator, I witnessed firsthand how valuable the leadership of a superintendent can be to a school corporation. Now as a superintendent, I have worked closely with the building level administrators and have seen growth in our test scores and have been told by my administrators and school board members that because of my passion and leadership our scores have improved. With that taken in consideration, it might explain the belief expressed by the school board members surveyed that their high expectations for the superintendent is warranted. The publicity that school test scores have generated is another indicator that the superintendent needs to be all things for all people.

The initial intent of this study was to help future superintendent candidates better understand what are the most important aspects of being a superintendent. It was my belief that there were several differences between the thoughts of a large school corporation school board member and a small school corporation school board member. Had that been the case, this study would have given potential superintendent candidates some powerful insights into the position. They would have been able, once they had read what the differences were, to better prepare themselves for the interview process. Based on the data of this study, it is necessary for candidates to be well skilled in all aspects of a superintendency.

A recommendation that this study is for a potential superintendent candidate to study the six standards from the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium. These standards were created through a consortium made up from the states of Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and North Carolina and the District of Columbia. This consortium attempted to identify the various aspects of the superintendent position and develop standards to address the

standards. The survey that the school board members were asked to complete came from the ISLLC standards.

Within each of these standards there were sections that dealt with knowledge that the superintendent must have, dispositions that could be used as a guide, and performances describing what it should look like (ISLLC, n.d.). The standards address a wide variety of issues that would make it difficult for a superintendent to be well-versed. The areas addressed included the following: promoting the school vision to the school community; providing a school culture and instructional programs that make the school conducive to student learning; managing the organization and operational resources for a safe, efficient, effective learning environment; collaborating with families and community members responding to diverse community interests and needs; acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (ISLLC, n.d.).

After a candidate is selected for the superintendent position the job has just begun. The relationship between the superintendent and the school board is one that helps make or break the success of the superintendent. With my experiences as a superintendent, I believe it is imperative that the superintendent work closely with all members of the school board, especially the school board president. While a superintendent has the responsibility of leading the school corporation, it is the school board that ultimately has the final decision making ability. Without the support of the school board a superintendent will have little, if any, success. Therefore, working closely with the school board through proper communication techniques is one key that a successful superintendent uses.

## **Implications**

There are many implications that can be made about this study. Implications for the university search team could be that they need to use this information to share with the school board they work with when hiring a superintendent. The university search team is comprised of one member from Indiana State University, one member from Indiana University, one member from Purdue University, and one member from Ball State University. They work with the school board to determine what it is the school board believes is important for the candidate to be able to do as their superintendent. It would be during the initial discussion with the board that the university search team would try to determine exactly what it is the school board is most interested in seeking and not simply accepting that the superintendent must be all things to all of the board members.

Another implication for the university search team to take back to their respective universities would be to incorporate the kinds of coursework that would provide the education necessary for a candidate to be successful. The current coursework provides a minimal amount of education relative to the ISLLC standards and does not focus on what the data tell us it should. Ensuring that the proper courses are offered and eliminating the kinds of course work that is not relevant is suggested based on the data gathered for this study. Some examples of course offerings based on the ISLLC standards would include how to create and promote a vision of learning, a commitment to recruiting and maintaining staff, developing strong instructional programs, how to maintain a safe and productive learning environment, how to be involved in the community, understanding the political landscape of the community, knowing how the school system fits within that landscape, being fair and ethical, and knowing how to work with the social aspect of the position as well as the legal aspects. For a superintendent to be

successful according to the data presented he/she needs to be well-versed in all aspects of the position, specifically those listed with the Interstate School Leadership and Licensure Consortium. This would help potential candidates be better prepared when they attend an interview and/or accept a superintendent position.

One more implication of the study could help the Indiana School Boards Association when they work with school boards around the state of Indiana. During the professional development sessions that the Indiana School Boards Association provides school corporations, they can work with the board to determine exactly what it is they expect from the superintendent. Although a school corporation advertises on its application all of the expectations they would ideally like to see, the reality is that each school corporation has specific goals. My experience with interviewing for a superintendent position has shown that even though the school corporation advertises many expectations on the application, during the interview itself what they actually believe is important is limited to two or three issues.

It would appear that any of the professional development activities or any university coursework should be directly related with the ISLLC standards. For it is all these standards the school board members surveyed suggest are important concepts.

## **Conclusions**

The data that were generated through the use of the surveys indicated that no matter the size of the school corporation, the location of the school corporation, or the years of service of a school member, there is no difference in board members' beliefs regarding a superintendent and their personal characteristics or their professional skills.

This was somewhat of a surprise, as I believed that there was a significant difference specifically among the school board members from large school corporations versus small school

corporations. Most superintendents that I spoke with indicated that their job was primarily a public relations job and they did not need to know the day-to-day operations of a school corporation. In most instances a superintendent at a large school corporation spoke of having someone else who was knowledgeable about a specific skill such as finances, curriculum, etc. They indicated that it was not possible to be well versed in all aspects of their school corporation. Yet the data stated precisely that the school board members did expect their superintendent to be that person who was well versed in all aspects of the job.

What became apparent looking at the data was that the school board members believe that a superintendent must be proficient in both the personal characteristics and the professional skills. The indication is that they want a person who is a strong generalist in all aspects of superintendency. The scores that were generated were high enough to support the thought that a superintendent needs to be everything to everybody. The school board members are not looking for a superintendent to be a specialist with certain strong skills and weak in others. The expectation is that no matter what the responsibility, the superintendent needs to be able to handle it and handle it well!

It should be noted that although the data indicated quite emphatically that there were no significant differences between the two dependent variables and among the three independent variables this came from a small sample size. It was possible that with a larger sample size other data could be generated and a significant difference might be found. In addition, it is quite possible that with a larger sample the median age could be impacted positively or negatively and that could generate different data as well. The literature researched during this study indicated that over time the expectations of school board members did indeed change. While initially the responsibility of the school leader was to simply manage the school corporation, as time went on

additional duties were added. Such additions included becoming more of an educational leader focusing on curriculum development and drawing in the public stakeholders to be active participants in the educational process.

As one looks at each of the individual questions and the summed means of that specific question one can surmise that all of the items are important. A range of summed mean scores between 3.03 and 5.0 is a reflection that each of the 24 questions and the areas they encompass have been identified by school board members as important. The belief that a superintendent needs to have all of the professional skills and personal characteristics to be all things to all people stills exists today. According to Konnert and Augenstein (1995), “The superintendency is more than *how to do*; it is *how to think* and *how to feel*” (p. xv). The *how to think* deals with the professional skills necessary to be a superintendent and the *how to feel* deals with personal characteristics and how they impact the position of superintendent. The results of the school board members who completed the survey is that as a group they believe the superintendent must be well versed in both the professional skills and personal characteristics category.

The data were generated through the use of a written survey and e-mailed to those board members who had an opening during the 2007–2008 school year for the position of superintendent. One might question whether this was the best technique to gather data for this study. It is possible that through a qualitative study different results might have been found. For those members of the school board who took the time to complete the survey, speaking with them in a one-on-one setting might have been better received.

Another possibility that could have impacted the results was that the small sample size did not allow the school board members from large school corporations to contribute a significant number of responses. My belief was that the large school corporations would have

indicated how important some of the personal characteristics are than some of the professional skills. I believed that the school board members from a larger school corporation were more interested in being informed with more one-on-one contact than school board members from smaller school corporations.

### **Future Research Recommendations**

The following three recommendations need to be considered for future reference:

1. A replication of this study should be done collecting more surveys. With 42 school corporations having an opening for superintendent during the 2007-2008 school year, the population for this study was approximately 250 potential school board members.
2. A replication of this study using the ISLLC Standards in surrounding states would allow a comparison between Indiana school board member beliefs and other states on what is important when hiring a superintendent.
3. Surveying all school corporation school board members rather than just the ones that had a superintendent opening would allow for further comparison of results. This could generate a much greater number of surveys returned and possibly indicate more accurate results.

### **Summary**

The data generated from this study did not indicate a significant difference among school board members when determining what is important when hiring a superintendent. Across the levels of enrollment, location, and years of service there were no data found to indicate a significant difference, so this study failed to reject any of the six null hypotheses that were tested.

The data determined that for the school corporations that had an opening for a superintendent during the 2007-2008 school year there were no significant differences in what school board members were looking for in hiring a superintendent.

The expectation of school board members seeking a superintendent is that they were looking for a generalist in education. With no significant difference between personal characteristics and professional skills identified by the school board members it appears that a potential superintendent candidate needs to be well prepared in all aspects of a superintendency. The idea that a superintendent can be strong in certain areas and not as strong in others is something that, according to the data, is not acceptable.

Initially I believed that there were many significant differences between what school board members from large school corporations thought when hiring a superintendent than a school board members from a small school corporation. Should the next study survey all of the school corporation's board members, I believe it would find a few significant differences between the large school corporations and the small school corporations.

### References

- Bjork, L. G., & Gurley, D. K. (2003, April). *Superintendent as educational statesman*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Bjork, L. G., & Kowalski, T. J. (2005). *The contemporary superintendent: Preparation, practice, and development*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Bjork, L. G., & Lindle, J. C. (2001). Superintendents and interest groups. *Educational Policy*, 15(1), 76-91.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1991). *Images of leadership* (NCEL Occasional Paper, No. 7). Washington, DC: Office of the Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 332345)
- Bredsen, P. V. (1996). Superintendent's roles in curriculum development and instructional leadership: Instructional visionaries, collaborators, supporters, and delegators. *Journal of School Leadership*, 6, 243-264.
- Brunner, C. C., Grogan, M., & Bjork, L. G. (2002). Shifts in discourse defining the superintendency: Historical and current foundations of the position. In J. Murphy (Ed.), *The educational leadership challenge: Redefining leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 211-238). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Callahan, R. E. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency: A study of the social forces that have shaped the administration of public schools*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Callahan, R. E. (1966). *The superintendent of schools: A historical analysis*. Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 0104410)
- Campbell, R. F., Cunningham, L. L., Nystrand, R. O., & Usdan, M. D. (1990). *The organization and control of American schools* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Carr, E. H. (1961). *What is history?* New York, NY: Vantage Books.
- Carter, G. R., & Cunningham, W. G. (1997). *The American school superintendent*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Coleman, P., & LaRocque, L. (1990). *Struggling to be good enough: Administrative practices and district ethos*. London, United Kingdom: Falmer Press.
- Crowson, R. L., & McPherson, R. B. (1987). The legacy of the theory movement: Learning from the new tradition. In J. Murphy & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Approaches to administrative training in education* (pp. 45-64). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Cuban, L. (1976). *The urban school superintendent: A century and a half of change*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Cuban, L. (1988). How schools change reforms: Redefining reform success and failure. *Teachers College Record*, 99, 453-477.
- Culbertson, J. A. (1981). Antecedents of the theory movement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 17(1), 25-47.
- Getzels, J. W. (1977). Educational administration twenty years later, 1954-1974. In L. Cunningham, W. Hack, & R. Nystrand (Eds.), *Educational administration: The developing decades* (pp. 3-24). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

- Glass, T. E. (1992). *The 1992 study of the American school superintendency: America's education leaders in a time of reform*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 370229)
- Glass, T. E. (2000). *The study of the American school superintendency: A look at the superintendent of education in the new millennium*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.
- Glass, T. E. (2003, April). *The superintendency: A managerial imperative?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Glass, T., & Franceschini, L. (2007). *The state of the American superintendency: A mid-decade study*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Griffiths, D. E. (1966). *The school superintendent*. New York, NY: The Discourse for Applied Research in Education.
- Hanson, E. M. (2003). *Educational administration and organizational behavior* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hayes, W. (2001). *So you want to be a superintendent?* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Herman, J. L. (1990, November). *Instructional leadership skills and competencies of public school superintendents: Implications of preparation programs in a climate of shared governance*. Paper presented at the Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration Conference, Atlanta, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 328 980)
- Howlett, P. (1993). The politics of school leaders, past and future. *Education Digest*, 58(9), 18-21.

- Hoyle, J. T., & The AASA Commission on Standards for the Superintendency. (1993). *Professional standards for the superintendency*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators. Retrieved from <http://www.cedu.niu.edu/aboutus/outlines/LEPF/LEEA610.pdf>
- Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.sai-iowa.org/issl/>
- Kaufhold, J. (1993). What they don't teach superintendents in graduate school. *The School Administrator*, 50(2), 41-44.
- Keedy, J. L., & Bjork, L. G. (2002). Superintendents and local school boards and the potential for community polarization: The call for political strategist skills. In B. Cooper & L. D. Fusarelli (Eds.), *The promise and perils facing today's school superintendent* (pp. 103-128). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.
- Kelleher, P. (2002). Core values of the superintendency. *Educational Leadership*, 59(2), 28-31.
- Kernan, J. E., & Shepard, R. T. (2007). *Streamlining local government: We've got to stop governing like this*. Indianapolis, IN: Center for Urban Policy and the Environment.
- Konnert, M. W., & Augenstein, J. J. (1990). *The superintendency in the nineties: What superintendents and board members need to know*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.
- Konnert, M. W., & Augenstein, J. J. (1995). *The school superintendency: Leading education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.
- Kowalski, T. J. (1999). *The school superintendent: Theory, practice, and cases*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, Prentice Hall.
- Kowalski, T. J. (2003). *Contemporary school administration* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

- Kowalski, T. J. (2004). School public relations: A new agenda. In T. J. Kowalski (Ed.), *Public relations in schools* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 3-29). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, Prentice Hall.
- Kowalski, T. J. (2006). *The school superintendent* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kowalski, T. J., Bjork, L. G., & Otto, D. (2004, February). *Role expectations of the district superintendent: Implications for deregulating preparation and licensing*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of School Administrators, San Francisco, CA.
- Maranell, G. M. (Ed.). (1974). *Scaling: A sourcebook for behavioral scientists*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Marx, G. (1996). Superintendency in crisis calls for systems thinking: State, national leaders meet at annual conference. *Leadership News*, 168(1), 3.
- McCurdy, J. (1992). *Building better board-administration relations*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.
- Melby, E. O. (1955). *Administering community education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Morgan, C., & Peterson, G. J. (2002). The superintendent's role in leading academically effective school districts. In B. S. Cooper & L. D. Fusarelli (Eds.), *The promise and perils of the modern superintendency* (pp. 175-196). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Morphet, E. L., Johns, R. L., & Reller, T. (1974). *Educational organization and administration: Concepts, practices, and issues*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Murphy, J. (1991). *Restructuring schools: Capturing and assessing the phenomena*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Murphy, J., & Hallinger, P. (1986). The superintendent as instructional leader: Findings from effective school districts. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 24, 213-236.

- Neufeldt, V. E. (Ed.). (1988). *Webster's new world dictionary*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Petersen, G. J. (2002). Singing the same tune: Principals' and school board members' perceptions of the superintendent's role in curricular and instructional leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*, 158-171.
- Petersen, G. J., & Barnett, B. G. (2003, April). *The superintendent as instructional leader: History, evolution and future of the role*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Peterson, K. D., Murphy, J., & Hallinger, P. (1987). Superintendents' perceptions of the control and coordination of the technical core in effective school districts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 23*(1), 79-95.
- Sharp, W., & Walter, J. (1997). *School superintendent*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.
- Sharp, W. L., & Walter, J. K. (2004). *The school superintendent: The profession and the person*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Spring, J. H. (1994). *The American school, 1642-1993* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Tyack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). *Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America, 1820-1980*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Van Meter, E., & Murphy, J. (1997). *Using ISLLC standards to strengthen preparation programs in school administration*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Van Til, W. (1971). Prologue: Is progressive education obsolete? In W. Van Til (Ed.), *Curriculum: Quest for relevance* (pp. 9-17). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Willower, D. J., & Fraser, H. W. (1980). School superintendents and their work. *Administrators Notebook*, 28(5), 1-4.

Willower, D. J., & Forsyth, P. B. (1999). A brief history of scholarship in educational administration. In J. Murphy & K. Seashore Louis (Eds.), *Handbook on research on educational administration* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 1-24). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Wirt, F. M., & Kirst, M. W. (2001). *The political dynamics of American education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Zigarelli, M. A. (1996). An empirical test of conclusions from effective schools research. *Journal of Educational Research*, 90, 103-110.

**APPENDIX A: LETTER TO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER**

(Date)

Dear School Board Member,

I am seeking your participation in a research study to complete my dissertation. The study I am conducting is to survey all school board members from Indiana school corporations that had an opening for a superintendent during the 2007-2008 school year. The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a difference between large school corporation's school board members and small school corporation's school board members regarding the personal characteristics and professional skills necessary to be a superintendent.

Here is the web site you will need to go to in order to take the survey. [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). You will find a survey that should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the survey please submit it and log out of the web site. Your participation in completing the survey is completely voluntary. You and your responses will be kept as confidential and anonymous as humanly possible. The reason for your anonymity is to allow you the freedom to be as honest as possible in responding to the survey.

I ask that you complete the survey within the next ten days if at all possible. Should you have any questions about the survey you may contact me or Dr. Robert Boyd at Indiana State University.

Your contribution to this project will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Leonard R. Orr  
Doctoral Candidate  
Indiana State University  
1-765-592-1245

Dr. Robert Boyd  
Dissertation Chair  
Indiana State University  
1-812-237-2900

**APPENDIX B: LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT**

(Date)

Dear Superintendent,

I am currently a doctoral student at Indiana State University working on my dissertation. I am writing to ask you for your help. My research study is to survey school board members at school corporations who had an opening for a superintendent during the 2007-2008 school year. I would ask their thoughts on the professional skills and personal characteristics they were seeking when hiring the superintendent. The Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents and/or the University Search Team have indicated that your school had an opening during that school year.

Included in this mailing is a form that I would ask that you complete and return to me. I am asking for the names and e-mail addresses of the school board members who served on the board during the 2007-2008 school year. I will be e-mailing a letter with the web site link survey directly to the board members. Those board members who choose to participate and their responses will be kept as confidential and anonymous as humanly possible. I have also included in this mailing a copy of the survey and the letter I will be sending to the board members for your perusal.

Should you have any question about this study please feel free to contact myself or Dr. Robert Boyd my committee chairman from Indiana State University.

Thank you for your attention and prompt reply to my request.

Sincerely,

Leonard R. Orr  
Doctoral Candidate  
Indiana State University  
1-765-592-1245

Dr. Robert Boyd  
Dissertation Chair  
Indiana State University  
1-812-237-2900

## APPENDIX C: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SURVEY

### Demographic Information

Corporation Enrollment: 1) under 2,000 students 2) over 2,000 students

Corporation Location: 1) rural      2) urban      3) suburban

Your Age:    1) 35/under    2) 36 - 50    3) over 50

Gender:      1) Male      2) Female

Years of service on the school board:

1) 4 or less    2) 5 to 16)    3) over 16

For the purpose of answering the following statements please circle the appropriate number along the continuum that best describes your level of importance with each statement.

- 1 Not important
- 2 Somewhat Important
- 3 Important
- 4 Very important
- 5 Extremely important

For the first 19 statements the sentence should begin with the following:

The superintendent facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring

- 1)      that the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members.

1      2      3      4      5

- 2)      that the school community is involved in school improvement efforts.

1      2      3      4      5

3) the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised.

1 2 3 4 5

4) the needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals.

1 2 3 4 5

5) that professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals.

1 2 3 4 5

6) that technology is used in teaching and learning.

1 2 3 4 5

7) that curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented evaluated, and refined.

1 2 3 4 5

8) that there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance.

1 2 3 4 5

9) that emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5

10) that collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed.

1 2 3 4 5

11) that problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner.

1 2 3 4 5

12) that fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.

1 2 3 4 5

13) that high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority.

1      2      3      4      5

14) the school and community serve one another as resources.

1      2      3      4      5

15) that community stakeholders are treated equitably.

1      2      3      4      5

16) that diversity is recognized and valued.

1      2      3      4      5

17) that the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families.

1      2      3      4      5

18) that communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate.

1      2      3      4      5

19) that there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups.

1      2      3      4      5

For the following five (5) statements the sentence should begin with the following:

The Superintendent ...

20) demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance.

1      2      3      4      5

21) uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain.

1      2      3      4      5

22) treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.

1      2      3      4      5

23) considers the impact of one's administrative policies on others.

1      2      3      4      5

24) facilitates processes and engages in lines of communication developed with decision makers outside the community.

1      2      3      4      5

**APPENDIX D: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION**

Please provide the names and email addresses of the school board members who were on your school board for the 2007 – 2007 school years.

| Name | E-Mail Address |
|------|----------------|
|------|----------------|

Thank you.

Leonard R. Orr, Superintendent  
Southwest Parke Community School Corporation  
765-569-2073

**APPENDIX E: INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST**

|            |                             | t-test for Equality of Means            |      |          |           |                                      |            |                 |       |       |  |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|------|----------|-----------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-------|-------|--|
|            |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      |          |           | 95% Confidence Interval of the Diff. |            |                 |       |       |  |
| Personal   | Location                    | <i>F</i>                                | Sig. | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | Sig. (2-Tailed)                      | Mean Diff. | <i>SE</i> Diff. | Lower | Upper |  |
|            | Equal variances assumed     | 2.006                                   | .164 | -.970    | 42        | .338                                 | -.224      | .231            | -.691 | .242  |  |
|            | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -.830    | 10.570    | .425                                 | -.224      | .270            | -.822 | .374  |  |
| Experience |                             |   |      |          |           |                                      |            |                 |       |       |  |
|            | Equal variances assumed     | 3.651                                   | .063 | -.384    | 42        | .703                                 | -.075      | .196            | -.470 | .320  |  |
|            | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -.359    | 25.519    | .723                                 | -.075      | .210            | -.506 | .356  |  |

| Enrollment                   |                             |   |      |          |           |                                      |            |                 |       |       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|----------|-----------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
|                              | Equal variances assumed     | 3.005                                   | .090 | -.164    | 42        | .870                                 | -.034      | .207            | -.451 | .383  |
|                              | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -.164    | 17.915    | .886                                 | -.034      | .233            | -.523 | .455  |
| t-test for Equality of Means |                             |   |      |          |           |                                      |            |                 |       |       |
|                              |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      |          |           | 95% Confidence Interval of the Diff. |            |                 |       |       |
| Professional                 | Location                    | <i>F</i>                                | Sig. | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | Sig. (2-Tailed)                      | Mean Diff. | <i>SE</i> Diff. | Lower | Upper |
|                              | Equal variances assumed     | .305                                    | .584 | -1.074   | 42        | .289                                 | -.187      | .174            | -.537 | .164  |
|                              | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -1.033   | 11.872    | .322                                 | -.187      | .181            | -.581 | .207  |
| Experience                   |                             |   |      |          |           |                                      |            |                 |       |       |
|                              | Equal variances assumed     | .036                                    | .849 | -1.137   | 42        | .262                                 | -.165      | .145            | -.458 | .128  |
|                              | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -1.118   | 29.849    | .272                                 | -.165      | .148            | -.467 | .137  |
| Enrollment                   |                             |   |      |          |           |                                      |            |                 |       |       |
|                              | Equal variances assumed     | 1.963                                   | .168 | .917     | 42        | .364                                 | .141       | .154            | -.170 | .452  |

|                                      |      |        |      |      |      |       |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Equal<br>variances<br>not<br>assumed | .816 | 17.994 | .425 | .141 | .173 | -.222 | .505 |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------|------|------|------|-------|------|

---