

Public Abstract

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Local school boards have the responsibility to select school superintendents to lead their districts. The process by which school boards go about searching for and selecting a superintendent varies. In Missouri, school boards have the option to hire a search firm (MSBA, MASA, MSSC, etc.) or other outside assistance, or they can choose to search for and select a superintendent on their own. This study was conducted to establish how superintendent search and selection procedures were being utilized in the state of Missouri. The study also attempted to distinguish between Missouri school boards that utilize superintendent search firms or conducted a search on their own and whether the boards were satisfied with their selection.

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze current superintendent search and selection practices utilized by public school boards and their perceived effectiveness in the state of Missouri. The study examined superintendent search criteria and attempted to determine what impact school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctorate had on the superintendent selection process. The study also attempted to show how school board members perceptions differed according to school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree as related to superintendent search criteria.

This study found that the majority of school board respondents in Missouri selected their superintendent as opposed to hiring a search firm to complete the search and selection process. An overwhelming majority of school board member respondents who conducted their own searches believed their search and selection procedures were effective. Those boards that utilized search firms were also satisfied with the results of the search/selection process.

Findings also suggest the variables of school district enrollment, location, school district wealth, superintendent turnover rate, superintendent gender, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree when coupled with de-selection criteria and knowledge and skills used in the selection process had varying degrees of impact on the superintendent search and selection process.

This study may have implications for practitioners in the state of Missouri and elsewhere regarding future superintendent search and selection practices and their effectiveness.