SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH AND SELECTION PRACTICES

IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

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by

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ABSTRACT

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.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Public schools are the backbone of the American way of life and foster the ideals

of freedom and shared values and meet the changing needs of our evolving society

(National School Boards Association, 2006). The notion that every child can learn and

succeed at some level is widely agreed upon. According to the Texas Association of

School Boards (2006), the concepts of liberty, democracy, domestic tranquility, economic

prosperity, and all the other benefits traditionally associated with American society

require educated people. It is therefore the function of public education to ensure the

development of an educated populace (TASB, 2006).

In this era of increased accountability, the immense responsibility for educating

youth is the responsibility of all individuals in society. However, within the governance

structure of public schools, local school boards have the ultimate responsibility to ensure

that students are given every opportunity to acquire an education. This school governance

model has been in place since the early 1900s (Danzberger & Usdan, 1994). Therefore, it

has been established that local school boards oversee policy and establish a general

direction for the school district. While school boards are burdened with these essential

tasks, it is important to note that school board members are citizens from all walks of life

and possess various skills, experiences, and degrees of formal education (Danzberger &

Usdan). Few requirements exist for membership on a school board. Common

requirements include citizenship, current residency in the school district and a minimum

age prerequisite (Flinchbaugh, 1989). In Missouri, state statute 162.291 requires school

board members to be citizens of the United States, resident taxpayers of the district, reside in the state for one year next preceding their election or appointment, and be at least twenty-four years of age (Missouri Revised Statutes, 2005).

It is important to note that one of the most significant functions of a local school board is the appointment of a competent school district superintendent who possesses experience and skills particularly suited to the unique characteristics of the district and community (American Association of School Administrators, 1979). It is essential for school boards to know what options are available when searching for and selecting a superintendent of schools.

School superintendents possess substantial influence, despite legal limitations, public restrictions, and boards of education micro-management (Carter & Cunningham, 1997.) It is this possession of influence, along with vision and a plan of action for the district direction that constitutes a superintendent's educational leadership (Glass, 1993).

In 1922, Cubberley characterized the superintendency by stating, "No profession offers such large personal rewards for the opportunity of living one's life in molding other lives, and in helping to improve materially the intellectual tone and moral character of a community" (p. 131). Even in times of conflict and turmoil many highly qualified principals and central office administrators are attracted to the superintendency (Chapman, 1997). Modern superintendents strive to keep schools in compliance with state and federal mandates as well as with parent and community desires in an era of "school bashing" by the media and politicians. A superintendent of schools must exhibit numerous leadership qualities. There are myriad descriptions or definitions for leadership. However, most definitions of leadership involve a process whereby "a person

exerts intentional influence over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities

or relationships in a group or organization" (Yukl, 2002, p. 2). A continuing controversy

regarding leadership is that of a leader versus a manager (Yukl). People can be leaders

without being a manager, and people can manage without being leaders. However, the

distinction between leaders and managers often becomes unclear when defining the roles

of a leader and a manager. Managers are usually people who value stability, order, and

efficiency, while leaders value flexibility, innovation, and adaptation. According to Yukl,

managers are also concerned about how things are accomplished and try to get people to

perform better. Yukl also noted that leaders are described as people who are concerned

with what things mean to people, and they try to get people to agree about important

things to be done. Attempting to define leadership and management as two separate

entities or roles may cloud either definition. Most scholars agree that success as a

manager or administrator in organizations involves some aspect of leadership and vice

versa (Yukl, 2002).

There are numerous individuals within a school district who function in various

leadership capacities. These include teachers, principals, central office administrators,

school volunteers, parents, and community members. However, it is the superintendent's

role to provide "executive leadership." Most leaders act as managers "doing things right"

while superintendents perform as executive leaders "knowing what is the right thing to

do" (Lunnenberg & Ornstein, 2000).

Research has shown that the stability and success of school districts are dependent

upon the relationship between the board and the superintendent (Bjork, 2000; Carter &

Cunningham, 1997; Kowalski, 1999). If superintendent leadership is important for

meaningful change and reform, then the selection of a superintendent is a critical event for both the school district and the community. Effective executive leadership provided by superintendents is necessary to restructure, reorganize and revitalize the educational process of America's schools (Glass, 1993). Unfortunately, the tasks and functions of superintendency vary from district to district, making it difficult to generalize the skills and characteristics of the "best fit" executive leader.

It is reasonable to believe that school boards follow some type of process to ensure the best-qualified and most appropriate candidate is hired. However, the majority of superintendent selection literature is found in professional journals and textbooks that most school board members do not read (Lowery, Harris, & Marshall, 2002). The most prevalent source of information for school board members relating to superintendent selection is found in "school board member manuals" compiled and distributed by state school board associations.

Because each school district is unique, superintendents who are successful in one district may not be successful in another district. If school boards do not take sufficient time and effort to select the most appropriate person for the superintendency, the chances of success may be limited.

The success of the union between the superintendent and the school board is profoundly affected by the quality of the "match" (McAdams, 1996). The majority of superintendent terminations result from an inability to develop and maintain a positive working relationship with the board (Cunningham & Burdick, 1999). Often, the superintendent selection process is the first stage of superintendent and board relations. It would seem that a systematic and competent superintendent search and selection process

would be essential and enhance the chances of successful superintendent/board relations and future success of a school district.

In the state of Missouri, school boards have few resources to assist them in the process of superintendent search and selection. Most notably, the Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA) has provided formal superintendent search services for over 20 years. Recently, other organizations such as the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) and Midwest Superintendent Search Consultants (MSSC) have become popular alternatives for boards of education. However, many local school boards also choose to conduct superintendent searches and select superintendents without assistance from an outside agency.

<center>Rationale for the Study</center>

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 study also attempted to establish whether or not the use of a structured selection process could predict the success of superintendents.

A national investigative study conducted by Wallace (2003) cited a minimal amount of practitioner-based literature describing the actual superintendent search and selection process. In Wallace's study, there were virtually no empirical data describing and analyzing superintendent search processes across districts. After an extensive search of scholarly publications such as Dissertations Abstracts International (DAI) and other databases, this researcher was unable to locate a study of superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri. The majority of research data conducted in the state of Missouri has focused upon those factors deemed essential for school superintendents to be successful.

Given the importance, complexity, and visibility of school superintendents in today's society, it is important that school boards have multiple, effective options with which to select a superintendent of schools. It is also important for school boards to recognize those vital characteristics essential for success as a superintendent.

Purpose of the Study

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 differ according to school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender,

superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctorate degree as related to superintendent search criteria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were utilized to guide the study:

1. What percentage of Missouri public school board members in the sample population utilize superintendent search firms to assist in the search selection of a superintendent?

2. What impact did school district enrollment have on the superintendent selection process?

3. What impact did school district location have on the superintendent selection process?

4. What impact did school district wealth have on the superintendent selection process?

5. What impact did superintendent gender have on the superintendent selection process?

6. What impact did superintendent turnover rate have on the superintendent selection process?

7. What impact did a superintendent who possessed a doctoral degree have on the superintendent selection process?

8. How do school board members perceptions differ according to school district enrollment as related to superintendent search and selection criteria?

9. How do school board members perceptions differ according to school district location as related to superintendent search and selection criteria?

10. How do school board members perceptions differ according to school district wealth as related to superintendent search and selection criteria?

11. How do school board members perceptions differ according to superintendent gender as related to superintendent search and selection criteria?

12. How do school board members perceptions differ according to superintendent turnover rate as related to superintendent search and selection criteria?

13. How do school board members perceptions differ according to the superintendent possessing a doctoral degree as related to superintendent search and selection criteria?

Limitations of the Study

Interpretation of the study was subject to the following limitations:

1. This study may be limited if a superintendent has been hired during the year in which the data are being collected or if the superintendent has been in the position for more than five years.

2. This study may be limited if the board of education members responsible for the search and selection of a superintendent are no longer active school board members.

3. This study may be limited if a superintendent was released during the year in which the data are being collected.

4. Only public school districts will be included in the population of this study.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions are submitted to give direction to the study:

1. It will be assumed that the individual(s) responding to the survey understands each question and responds in a truthful manner.

2. It will be assumed that the individual(s) responding to the survey and interview questions understands the search and selection process.

3. It will be assumed that the population sample reflects the state population.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms are important to this study and are defined as follows:

District enrollment: Based on the number of students enrolled in the school district. A small district consists of fewer than 500 students, a medium district contains 500-1,999 students, and a large district has 2,000 or more students enrolled.

District location: Based on the location of the school district within the state. Various types were small town (fewer than 1000 residents), rural (between 1,000-25,000 residents) and urban (more than 25,000 residents).

District wealth: The assessed valuation (value assigned to property by a municipality for the purpose of tax assessment) of the school district and the district's 2005 per pupil expenditure (PPE) (dollars spent on each student in the school district).

Search procedures: The processes used during the pursuit of a superintendent.

Selection: Choosing a candidate for the position.

Selection criteria: The measures used to determine whether a candidate meets the job requirements.

Superintendent: The chief administrator of a Pre-Kindergarten-12th grade public school district.

Superintendent turnover rate: The number of superintendents employed within one district over the past ten years.

Superintendent success: Those factors that contribute to a superintendent being perceived or considered effective which could include expertise in school board and community relations, high quality communication skills, expertise in facilities, finance, transportation, technology, instructional leadership, management, personnel, legal issues, strategic planning, and media relations.

Summary

The process of searching for and selecting a superintendent is one of the most important tasks for a school board. This study was designed to investigate how school districts in Missouri go about searching for and selecting a superintendent and the degree to which the selection process predicts the success of a superintendent. The study also 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 differ according to school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctorate degree as related to superintendent search and selection criteria.

This study will be divided into five chapters. Chapter One included an introduction to the study and also includes a statement of the problem, the purpose of the

study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, design controls of the study, definition of terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter Two is a review of literature relating to school governance and leadership as well as literature dealing with the search and selection of school superintendents. Chapter Three addresses research design and the methodology utilized in the study. Sections in this chapter include research design, the study sample, data collection, and statistical analysis of the data. Chapter Four reports the results of data collection. The data for the study will be acquired from a survey disseminated to applicable school board members in the state of Missouri during the 2006-2007 school year. Chapter Five reports an overview of the study, as well as findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

For many years, the leadership of public schools has been shared between laypersons and professional educators. Boards of education comprised of elected or appointed citizens provide policy direction and educational administrators are employed to implement these policies (Kowalski, 1999). In this age of continuous educational reform and accountability, the roles of boards of education and school administrators are often challenged. For public school systems to survive, it is vital for boards of education and educational leaders to work together to bring about needed reform. The selection of an effective superintendent of schools is many times the first and most important step in bringing about educational reform in a school district.

This review of the literature focused on five distinct issues related to superintendent search and selection practices. The first area of focus is a historical perspective of school governance and the evolution of the superintendency. The second section discusses the evolution of the role of a school superintendent. Classical leadership theory and how the role of superintendent of schools relates to theoretical frameworks are reviewed in the third section. The fourth area reviewed focuses on the history of school boards and board/superintendent relations, as well as those factors considered attributes of superintendent effectiveness. The fifth and final section focuses upon various superintendent search and selection practices utilized and their effectiveness.

Historical Perspective and Evolution of School Governance

In the mid 1600s, local citizens in town meetings controlled American public schools. As towns grew in population, town selectman were chosen to perform school legislative and administrative functions because the details of education, similar to other concerns of government, had become too numerous and time consuming for people to administer them directly. In 1721, Boston selectmen nominated a permanent citizens committee on school visitation. This marked the first time local government authorized or delegated part of their control over schools to lay citizens. From these school committees have evolved the local school boards and city boards of education of today. Local school boards in New England are still called school committees (Idaho School Boards Association, 2004).

In 1837, Massachusetts established the first state board of education to give states a greater role in education, but local school boards retained most of the control over their schools, due at least in part to public distrust of the ability of distant political bodies to satisfy local needs and preferences (Danzberger & Usdan, 1992, 1994). Separate districts of schools, funded by local taxes, were formed as more schools were built to accommodate continuing population growth.

In the late 1830s, the first "city" superintendents were appointed in Buffalo, New York and Louisville, Kentucky. By 1870, there were 29 superintendents employed in large city districts. Only 13 of the then 37 states had a local school superintendent (Cubberley, 1922). The number of city superintendents grew proportionally to the rapid increases in urban population.

Massachusetts enacted legislation in 1891 that vested each district with financial and administrative authority over its schools. The Massachusetts system of separate educational governance spread throughout the colonies and was a prototype for today's governance of public schools by local school boards (Danzberger & Usdan, 1992).

In the late 1800s, school board members in urban areas typically were elected by local wards (or neighborhoods), which enmeshed the school board members in local ward politics (Danzberger & Usdan 1992; Urban & Wagoner, 1996). In response to perceptions that this linkage subjected schools to corruption, as well as the belief that schools were not adequately educating an increasingly diverse student population, elite professional, business, and education reformers strove to reform local educational governance (Danzberger & Usdan, 1992, 1994; Kirst, 1994; Rothman, 1992; Urban & Wagoner, 1996; Usdan, 1994). During the first two decades of the 20th century, local educational governance became centralized within a smaller city school board comprised of lay citizens selected through city-wide elections instead of in multiple, larger, ward school boards (Danzberger & Usdan, 1992; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1994; Kirst, 1994; Rothman, 1992; Urban & Wagoner, 1996). The centralized city school board was modeled on corporate boards and designed to be more focused on policy and less involved in daily administration (Danzberger & Usdan, 1994; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The role of superintendent, which in the mid to late 1800s had been largely instructional and tightly circumscribed by the school board, expanded to encompass many more management responsibilities and became professionalized, requiring formal training (Danzberger & Usdan; Urban & Wagoner).

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Although a primitive form of the "superintendency" existed in the colonial era, it did not develop into an identifiable profession until the late 19th century (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). According to Tyack & Hansot (1982), early superintendents were not only the "overseers" of many "schoolhouses," but also acted as a "head teacher," supervising teachers and students. At this time, business duties of the schools remained in the hands of the board.

The role of many early school superintendents was that of an educational reformer. Their primary objective was to promote the idea of the common school movement, which encouraged communities to support the concept of a free public education and establish local school systems (Spring, 1998).

With the advent of World War I came the development and implementation of Taylor's principles of "scientific management" in the industrial and corporate world. Many of Taylor's principles eventually became prominent teachings of professors of educational administration and found their way into the management of schools. The professors who taught about the efficiency of scientific management principles were not only the forefathers of the modern superintendency but also of the educational administration professorate (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). As a result of this process, the degree of control over decision-making within school districts was moved from boards of education into the hands of the superintendent. This transformation altered the superintendent's role from one of guardians of knowledge to intellectual business managers (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987). This management model continued to influence large districts as many successful large business leaders served as board members, who in turn hired and fired the superintendent (Callahan, 1962).

Callahan contended that the superintendents of the first half of the 20th century made decisions on the content, organization, and financing of education in response to the business power structure of their communities.

Taylor's principles continue not only to be the foundation of many educational administration preparation programs, but they are an integral part of the hierarchical bureaucracy and organizational chain of command found in today's public school systems (Chapman, 1997). The roles of the school superintendent and school board developed simultaneously. This is understandable, as boards seemingly would not employ superintendents not agreeing to carry out their wishes (Wallace, 2003).

In the 1930s and 1940s, the concept of school administration based upon cooperation, participation, and democracy emerged (Glass, 1986). This democratic administration philosophy was founded on the beliefs about democratic rights, individual welfare, and a need for cooperation in human enterprise (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Another administrative model also became popular in the 1940s as superintendents began to utilize the concepts of human relations in public school administration. These two divergent management principles differed in that the human relations model encouraged educators to focus on solving "person" based administrative problems rather than "democratizing schools." The focus of the human relations model was based on the individual while the democratic model addressed the needs of groups (Campbell et al., 1987).

The 1960s and 1970s offered continuing challenges for school superintendents. Greater community involvement in conjunction with legislative mandates created instability in the traditional role of the superintendent (Chapman, 1997). Major problems

faced by superintendents during this era included civil rights, desegregation, busing, drugs, special education, discipline, and accountability (Eaton, 1990). Disenchantment with America's public schools during this time, coupled with an increasing number of unionized teachers, led to targeting and firing many superintendents due to their highly visible and vulnerable position (Cuban, 1988).

Another major evolution during this time period was the transformation of board members from formalized business leaders to board members that were more representative of the total community (Glass, et al., 2000). Homemakers, blue-collar workers, and others were elected to the boards with the intent of shifting the school system to meet their needs. This evolution reversed previous trends to de-politicize school districts (Getzels, Lipham, & Campbell, 1968). In turn, school boards once again became politicized and were made up of board members with their own agendas. This "micro-management" style of behavior led to rapid superintendent turnover and district instability (Glass, 2002).

The 1980s and 1990s are noted for the initiation of the national reform movements to improve America's schools. Concern over equity and the inability of industry to compete globally led a diverse group of civil rights and corporate interests to publish *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. However, this report outlined no clear path to reform and provided no funding or leadership for improving the nation's schools (Wallace, 2003).

Another reform movement was also initiated during this time period that placed additional burdens on superintendents, boards, and districts (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). This "new reform" movement forced many superintendents to focus more on instructional

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reform rather than maintaining and improving district management functions. Paradoxically, during this period of repeated reform mandates to improve instructional programs, boards continued to select superintendents based upon their traditional criteria to be excellent managers of district resources (Glass, 2003).

The standards movement and its emphasis on developing assessments to track student learning has yet to show a significant impact on either student achievement or district efficiency. Data on how this movement has affected the superintendency and boards of education are lacking.

Some boards of education have in turn begun to hire non-traditional (non-educator) chief executive officers or reform minded (curriculum leader) superintendents. Other school districts have been subjected to mayoral or state takeover with accompanying appointed boards. These appointed boards have typically been mandated to focus on school performance (Hills, 2003). Whether or not these "reform" boards and their superintendents are having a significant effect on student achievement is questionable at best (Wong, 2001).

The role of a superintendent of schools in today's society tends to vary greatly based upon the environment and culture established within a school district. The size, wealth, and location of a school district impact the board of education's expectations of the superintendent (Glass et al., 2000). The superintendency now requires three dimensions of leadership. The superintendent still needs to provide managerial leadership. Additionally he or she must also impart educational leadership, understanding the core of work that happens in schools. Finally, political leadership, which requires building coalitions both inside and outside the school system, is needed (Johnson, 1996).

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Urban and large school district superintendents are often thrust into the media spotlight and subjected to the role of a public relations expert, along with being held accountable for all aspects of the school system. Superintendents in small school districts retain the public relations role, but are generally able to become instructional and cultural leaders and have more direct impact on personnel.

Today's school superintendents also find themselves in an era of massive turnover and increasing job fluidity. An increasing number of school leaders are at retirement age and it is estimated that nationwide over 10,000 superintendents will retire or move to other districts during the next few years (Glass, 2001). Therefore it is imperative that attention be focused on improved superintendent preparation programs, as well as attracting candidates to the superintendency. Along with these two factors, superintendents and school boards must unite as a team to lead school districts. More often than not, poor superintendent-board relationships account for the majority of superintendent dismissals (Glass, 2001). Given this fact, it is vital that the superintendent selection process be sound and attentive to the aforementioned obstacles.

<center>Historical Development of the Superintendent's Role</center>

The role of superintendent of schools has evolved from a clerical position, to a supervisor of teachers, to a scientific manager, and transformational leader. However, the literature reveals three dominant conceptions of what defines the role of the superintendency. Cuban (1976) identifies these roles as instructional supervisor, administrative chief, and politician.

As the complexity of pedagogical matters began to increase in the early 20th century, superintendents emerged as instructional specialists or experts (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Superintendents were viewed as master teachers and functioned as overseers of instruction rather than the financial and business matters of the school system (Giffiths, 1966).

During the middle of the 20th century, with the advent of efficiency and scientific management principles, superintendents began to develop into expert managers and administrative chiefs. Much of their focus was on the business of school systems. Superintendents became more assertive leaders and became experts at school policy formation (Chapman, 1997).

It was not until the 1960s and 70s that Civil Rights activists began to challenge the established role of the superintendent and began to question the validity of scientific management principles as they applied to school management. Political pressure over failing urban schools resulted in desegregation and the break-up of established large educational bureaucracies (Cronin, 1973).

Reformers in the 1980s and 1990s targeted the organizational structure and culture of individual schools within highly centralized districts (Chapman, 1997). These reform attacks focused as much on superintendents and boards as on the school bureaucracy. In response, many boards began searches for superintendents who could quickly mount initiatives to counter reform critics and local political pressure (Hess, 1999).

Toward the latter part of the 20th century, the superintendent's role as a politician focused on the ability and expertise to acquire resources needed to revitalize educational

systems. Leadership, political savvy, reform strategies, community responsiveness, and public relations characterized the role of the superintendent (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). The superintendency began to move toward a chief executive role. Boards selected superintendents in tune with the new political realities, especially public relations. While the attributes of professional knowledge, leadership, and experience were still important, political astuteness became the measuring stick for success as a superintendent (Blumberg, 1985).

According to Chapman (1997), now more than ever, superintendents are the most visible educational professionals and are also the targets of criticism from both inside and outside the school system. Whether it is the community at large or the internal school community, superintendents often find themselves in the middle of political firestorms. In many of these situations, school boards often use superintendents as scapegoats to deflect conflict and public criticism (Chapman, 1997).

Classical Models of Superintendent Leadership and Management

The term leadership has been described a multitude of ways throughout literature, and research abounds with varying assortments of leadership models. According to Stogdill (cited in Yukl, 2002), "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 2). However, MacGregor's Theory X or Theory Y models, Fiedler's Contingency Theory, Hershey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, and Bolman and Deal's Frames most closely emulate those leadership qualities found within the superintendency (Yukl, 2002).

McGregor's (1960) Theory X or Theory Y model recommended that managers view their subordinates from either the Theory X or the Theory Y perspective. Both

theories begin with the premise that management's role is to assemble the factors of production, including people, for the betterment of the organization. From here, the management theories diverge. Theory X is based on the following assumptions: (a) work is inherently distasteful to most people; (b) most people are not ambitious, have little desire for responsibility, and prefer to be directed; (c) most people have little capacity for creativity in solving organizational problems; (d) motivation occurs only at the physiological and security levels; and (e) most people must be closely controlled and often coerced to achieve organizational objectives (McGregor, 1960).

Conversely, Theory Y is based on of the following: (a) work is as natural as play if the conditions are favorable; (b) self-control is often indispensable in achieving organizational goals; (c) the capacity for creativity is spread throughout organizations; (d) motivation occurs at affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization levels, not just security, physiological levels; and (e) people can be self-directed and creative at work if properly motivated (McGregor, 1960).

It is important to note that the exclusive use of dichotomous leadership roles such as Theory X and Theory Y can lead to limited and ineffective leadership (Bensimon, 1989). This is why the concept of multidimensional theories such as Fiedler's Contingency Theory, Hershey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, and Bolman and Deal's Frames are more applicable to today's educational leader (Yukl, 2002).

Fiedler's (1967) Contingency Theory is based on the belief that leadership effectiveness depends on both the leader's personality and the situation. This theory explains that group performance is a result of interaction of two factors. These factors are

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known as leadership style and situational favorableness. Certain leaders are effective in one situation but not in others (Fiedler & Chemers, 1984). Fiedler's Contingency Theory was the forerunner of Hershey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1976).

The Situational Leadership model established that leadership behaviors are sorted into two categories: directive behavior and supportive behavior. According to Hershey and Blanchard (1976), directive behavior involves telling an employee exactly what you want done, as well as when, where, and how to do it. The focus is to get a job done, and it is best used when employees are learning a new aspect of their job. Supportive behavior is meant to show caring and support to employees by praising, encouraging, listening to their ideas, involving them in decision making, and helping them reach their own solutions. This method is best used when an employee lacks competence or commitment to do a job.

By combining directive and supportive behaviors, Hershey and Blanchard (1976) established four possible leadership styles for different conditions. These four styles are telling, selling, participating, and delegating. Situational leadership theory suggests that effective leaders are flexible and adaptable and fit leadership behavior to match the "maturity" of followers. Furthermore, effective leaders are characterized as those who adapt leader behavior to meet the needs of their own unique situation (Hershey & Blanchard, 1976).

As the role of the superintendent becomes more complex, modern leadership requires school leaders to function multidimensionally, performing many roles simultaneously. Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1997) provides a framework from which school leaders can model effective leadership behavior. They describe four

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frames of leadership and ask leaders to step back and re-examine the operation of their organization through the use of various frames. These different frames or "lenses" bring organizational life into a different or clearer focus. The authors label the four frames as structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. By analyzing situations within an organization through these different frames, a leader is able to look at situations or problems from multiple perspectives. Often it is this lack of perspective that hinders a leader's ability to be effective and visionary (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Within the structural frame, organizations are visualized at their social context of work and not simply at the individual level. Once an organization designates specific roles for employees, the next decision is to form or group them into working units. Coordination and control of these various groups are achieved either vertically or laterally. The best structure depends on the organization's environment, goals and strategies. Bolman and Deal (1997) list six assumptions behind the structural frame: (a) Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives; (b) Organizations work best when rationality prevails over personal preferences and external pressures; (c) Structures must be designed to fit organizational circumstances; (d) Organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization and division of labor; (e) Appropriate forms of coordination and control are essential to ensuring that individuals and units work together in the service of organizational goals; and (f) Problems and performance gaps arise from structural deficiencies and can be remedied through restructuring (Bolman & Deal).

Much of our traditional public school educational system has its basis in the structural frame. The hierarchical structure of authority or "chain of command" in school

districts, beginning with the board of education and sequentially following to the superintendent, the building principal, and the classroom teacher gives our school systems consistency and stability. Many other examples of the structural frame are evident in schools, such as placing students in grade levels, assigning grades and administering standardized tests to measure performance, and having structured curriculum to guide instruction. While many of these structural components are traditional and common, they can at times be limiting and hinder creativity (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

According to Bolman and Deal (1997), the human resource frame provides another "lens" to bring an organization into a unique focus. Through this frame one views an organization like a large extended family. From this perspective, individuals inhabit an organization. These individuals have needs, prejudices, feelings, limitations, and skills. The goal of the leader in this frame is to mold the organization to meet the needs of its people. The leader seeks to merge the peoples' need to feel good about what they are doing with the ability to effectively get the job done. Bolman and Deal state that the key to this frame is a "sensitive understanding of people and their symbiotic relationship with organizations" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 112).

It is not difficult to establish a direct relationship with the human resource frame when considering the position of superintendent of schools. Each day, a superintendent must be attentive and aware of the needs of all constituents within a school system. This difficult task is one that requires the assistance of all members of the school system if it is to be done effectively. A school leader who does not have a good understanding of

people and how they relate within the organization will not be successful (Bolman &

Deal, 1997).

The political frame looks at the workplace as a jungle. The competitive

environment, or contest in which different people compete for power and limited

resources, is evident within most organizations. The work environment is one of rampant

conflict immersed in negotiation, bargaining, compromise, and coercion. Bolman and

Deal (1997) offer five propositions as a summary of this frame: (a) organizations are

coalitions of various individuals and interest groups; (b) there are enduring differences

among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of

reality; (c) most important decisions involve the allocation of scarce resources and what

gets done; (d) scarce resources and enduring differences give conflict a central role in

organizational dynamics and typically make power the most important resource; and (e)

goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position

among different stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned perspectives are a part of the business of

education as well as the world. According to Johnson (1996), a superintendent's ability to

manage the political landscape of a school district can be a determining factor between

success and failure. Success as an educational leader without political astuteness is highly

unlikely (Johnson, 1996). Boards of education must be attentive to this facet of the

position of superintendent and do all they can to minimize its effect on the operation of

the school system.

Finally, Bolman and Deal (1997) describe the symbolic frame as a powerful lens

that builds on cultural and social anthropology. It views organizations as carnivals, theaters or tribes. An organization is a unique culture driven by stories, ceremonies, rituals, and heroes. This is in contrast to an organization being driven by rules, authority or policies. The organization is analogous to a theater. Within this theater, various actors play their respective roles in the drama, and the audience forms its own impressions of what is seen on the stage. The symbolic frame also looks at team building in a different light. It views the development of high-performing teams as a spiritual network also enhanced by rituals, ceremonies and myths (Bolman & Deal).

One does not need to look far to discover these symbols within the context of a school system. They exist from the school district mission, to the school mascot, to the camaraderie of athletic teams, to the traditions associated with graduation. Without these traditions and symbols, school districts would struggle to have a basis on which to exist (Bolman & Deal, 1997). As the "director" of the school system, the superintendent must strive to lead others and develop teams of people that function at high levels. Clearly, the fate of public education depends on the superintendent's ability to embrace the symbolic role and lead school districts through positive reform and successful improvement (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

The utilization of Bolman and Deal's (1997) frames theory can allow school leaders to visualize their organizations through different lenses. Sometimes, the use of the multiple frames can assist a school leader to see and understand more broadly the problems and potential solutions available within a school system. It encourages leaders to think flexibly about their organization and opens various opportunities for the leader to view events from multiple angles (Bolman & Deal).

History of School Boards and Superintendent Relations

According to Wallace (2003), in most school districts throughout the nation, the local school board has been given the responsibility of providing a quality education. Board members are vested by states with the authority to provide public schools to the community through systems of local and state taxation. School board members are either elected by the community or appointed sitting boards. School boards are responsible for the appropriation of school funds, the quality of the school personnel, and the selection of the superintendent. School boards also set policies and formulate rules and regulations that apply to the school system (Wallace, 2003).

Despite the magnitude of their responsibilities, popular understanding of school boards and their work generally rests on anecdotes and news stories. Lack of knowledge and understanding equates to a lack of appreciation regarding the challenges school boards face. Given the increasing attention to education governance and leadership, it is surprising that we do not know more about the bodies that govern the nation's 14,890 school systems (Hess, 2002).

According to Hess (2002), because school boards are charged with providing effective community oversight of school systems, questions arise about their structure, their current and future roles and responsibilities, and what changes might enhance the contribution they can make. While such questions have no simple answers, a fuller understanding of school boards is a first step to addressing these questions (Hess, 2002).

Hess (2002) stated that the greatest challenge confronting school boards in today's society is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn. Boards must provide that opportunity while meeting the needs of the communities they serve and

taking care not to micromanage or to invade the appropriate realm of professional

educators. Part of this balancing act is the implicit desire that boards be representative

and democratic without being overtly political. To understand how well school boards are

able to manage these compromises, and to understand whether they are equipped to

manage the demands placed on them, additional knowledge regarding school boards must

be gathered (Hess, 2002).

In a report prepared for the National School Boards Association, Hess (2002)

found that most school board research focused on conditions and policies in the states and

in the largest urban systems. The result was a limited understanding of how educational

challenges or standing policies vary across local districts in a number of critical areas,

thus making it difficult to understand or address the real challenges that confront local

districts. However, despite the size or location of a school district, Hess did find that

today's school board members put a high priority on student achievement. Board

members nationwide also contribute considerable time to school leadership, and two-

thirds of them receive no pay for their work. Other findings included: (a) funding and

student achievement are leading topics of local concern; (b) school violence ranks

surprisingly low among board member concerns; (c) a vast majority of respondents have

received training in most areas of board operations, especially board member roles; (d)

respondents say the three most critical factors in evaluating superintendent performance

are the board-superintendent relationship, the morale of school system employees, and

the safety of district students; (e) two-thirds of superintendents are hired from outside the

district, a finding that may have implications for leadership development within school

systems; (f) board members have higher incomes and are better-educated than the typical

American; and (g) the mean length of board service among respondents is 6.7 years (Hess, 2002).

Another source of information regarding school board and superintendent roles and responsibilities was research that was conducted by the Alabama Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB). This publication listed various functions of boards of education, such as (a) to make clear that the board's primary role is the establishment of policies; (b) to delegate to the superintendent responsibility for all administrative functions; (c) to support the superintendent fully in all decisions that conform to professional standards and board policy; (d) to hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school system through regular, constructive written and oral evaluations of the superintendent's work; (e) to provide the superintendent with a comprehensive employment contract; (f) to consult with the superintendent on all matters, as they arise, that concern the school system and on which the board may take action; (g) to develop a plan for board-superintendent communications, to channel communications that require action through the superintendent and to refer all concerns, complaints, and other communication to the superintendent; (h) to take action upon the recommendation of the superintendent; (i) to provide the superintendent with sufficient administrative personnel, including the area of monitoring teaching and learning; (j) to work with the superintendent to develop a vision for the school system; (k) to provide leadership to seek necessary funds for the system and to oversee system financial operations to maintain financial accountability; and (l) to ensure board members understand that, under law, the school board acts as a board and that individual board members have no independent authority (AASA, 2004).

Conversely, the study listed the following as roles and responsibilities of school superintendents: (a) to serve as the board's adviser and the school system's chief executive officer; (b) to serve as the school system's educational leader; (c) to keep the board informed about school operations and programs; (d) to interpret the needs of the school system to the board; (e) to present and recommend policy options along with specific recommendations to the board when circumstances require the board to adopt new policies or revise existing policies; (f) to develop and inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy; (g) to manage the school system's day to day operations; (h) to evaluate personnel and keep the board informed about evaluations; (i) to develop an adequate program of school community relations which keeps the community informed about board policies, programs, and procedures; (j) to propose and institute a process for long-range and strategic planning; (k) to develop and carry out a plan to keep the total staff informed about the mission, goals, and strategies of the school system; (l) to ensure that professional development opportunities are available to all school system employees; (m) to develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media; (n) to provide board members with information on any recommendations for school board action in advance of each board meeting; and (o) to oversee the school system's finances and provide the board with regular reports on the school system's financial operations (AASA, 2004).

<center>Superintendent/Board Relations</center>

The topic of superintendent and school board relations is found abundantly within the literature (Alsbury, 2003; Brackett, 1995; Castallo, 2003; Kitchens, 1994; MASB, 2005; McAdams, 1996). Many studies have focused upon the importance of positive

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superintendent/board relations and how this relationship often is the determining factor of superintendent success or failure. Together, boards and superintendents form the school district's leadership team (Smoley, 1999). The stability of this team is an important factor, not only in determining the success or failure of the superintendent (NSBA, 1996), but the overall effectiveness of the entire school district (McCurdy, 1992).

Workman (2003) found that major efforts are needed for school boards and superintendents to develop a positive working relationship. Communication and information sharing must occur for this relationship to be effective. Clearly defining roles and responsibilities allows both the board and the superintendent to perform their duties to serve the school district effectively. The ability of the board and superintendent to engage in self-evaluation of current governance practices, to have deliberate dialogue regarding governance, to identify the strengths and needs, to develop and implement an action plan and then self-evaluate the plan are critical to the success of the district (Workman, 2003).

In a related study in northern California, Meier (2001) also found that superintendents and school boards must constantly work to maintain positive relations. This study found that the appraisal of personnel was the area most likely to create conflicts between boards and superintendents. To combat this area of conflict, timely, clear, and open communication and feedback were the most predominately used strategies by superintendents in managing these conflicts. Other positive strategies utilized by superintendents included defining norms, roles, and responsibilities with the board, building a "team" relationship with the board, and building trust by mutually agreeing to not have "surprises" occur from either entity (Meier, 2001). Respondents in a

superintendent/board study conducted in Pennsylvania stated that board members would choose to spend less time with superintendent/board relations and management and to spend more time with vision setting and instructional leadership (Mextorf, 2003).

The literature supports the notion that superintendent/board relationships are an integral part of effective school leadership. These relationships begin with the initial selection of the superintendent. Therefore, boards of education must perform a well-planned and thorough superintendent search process to ensure that a healthy and positive relationship ensues (NSBA, 1996).

<center>Superintendent Effectiveness</center>

Defining effectiveness in educational settings can be a difficult task as compared to that of the business world. In business, defining success is as easy as looking at profit and loss statements. However, with the increased demands on educational accountability, society has begun to evaluate educational success as they do business and they demand positive results. Statistical data such as standardized test scores, graduation rates, drop-out rates, and attendance data are commonly utilized as standards for school effectiveness. A timely example of this type of strengthened accountability is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which requires schools to meet stringent standardized test score standards and criteria by 2014. When these data are found to be favorable as compared to similar school districts or state averages, school districts, and in turn school superintendents, are usually considered to be effective. Conversely, if these data are found to be lacking, schools and school superintendents are often considered ineffective. While this type of evaluation of schools and superintendents are commonplace, there are many more complex factors that are attributed to superintendent effectiveness.

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School districts and boards of education measure and evaluate superintendent success or effectiveness in a myriad of ways. Commonly found attributes of effective superintendents include demonstrating strong curricular innovation and implementation, a leader who understands and addresses the needs of students, parents, staff and community from diverse backgrounds, and a strategic planner who will engage all members of the community in establishing a vision that incorporates the school district's priorities, goals and desired outcomes (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Recently, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PBSA, 2004) posted attributes that are earmarks of successful or effective school management teams (superintendents and boards). These attributes included each member working toward commonly accepted goals; qualities such as integrity, perseverance, faith, ability to plan, vision, initiative and courage among members; working for harmony and a team spirit; taking a stand for adequate financial support based on an equitable distribution of the burden, and stand for efficient use of financial resources; encouraging cooperative relationships between the school system and the community; being alert to conditions and influences in the school district that contain controversy, and initiating plans to deal with them; and perhaps most importantly, work unceasingly to advance the quality and effectiveness of the educational program (PSBA, 2004).

In a study conducted in Ohio by Hoadley (2003), the main dependent variable was superintendent effectiveness and it was measured through eight subscales: leadership and district culture, policy and governance, communications and community relations, organizational management, curriculum planning and development, instructional management, human resources management, and values and ethics of leadership. In this

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study, the majority of respondents (school board members) rated superintendents most effective on the policy and governance subscale, while they rated their superintendents least effective on the human resources management subscale. The statistical results of this study revealed that respondents who came onto the board after the superintendent was already in place perceived the superintendent being less effective in performing his or her job duties than respondents who were on the board when the superintendent was originally hired. The statistical results also indicated that respondents who had been on the board four years or less or had worked with the superintendent four years or less perceived the superintendent as being less effective in the performance of his or her job duties (Hoadley, 2003).

In another study conducted by Seybert (1993), the purpose was to identify and compare perceptual differences of superintendents and school board presidents regarding superintendent competencies related to superintendent turnover. In this study, surveys were mailed to 187 superintendents and their board presidents in Montana, asking them to rank order competencies related to superintendent success and dismissal. These competencies included educational leadership, personnel management, superintendent/board relations, curriculum development, accomplishing goals set by boards, public relations, school finance, school law, policy formation, and legislative lobbying. The results of this study indicated there were significant differences in the way superintendents and board presidents ranked the success-related competencies of curriculum development, educational leadership, public relations, school finance, and superintendent/board relations. These two groups also differed significantly in rankings of the dismissal-related competencies of accomplishing goals set by boards, curriculum

development, educational leadership, personnel management, public relations, school finance, and superintendent/board relations (Seybert, 1993).

As previously stated, often the success and/or effectiveness of a superintendent is based almost exclusively on the superintendent's relationship with the board of education (Alsbury, 2003; Castallo, 2003; MASB, 2005; McAdams, 1996). This crucial interaction must be constantly evaluated and must begin with the selection of the superintendent. It is imperative that boards perform a systematic and thorough superintendent search process to increase the chances of success.

<center>Superintendent Search and Selection Practices</center>

When researching school board policy manuals, one will usually find a policy that relates to the search and selection of the superintendent of schools. These policies typically contain language that clarifies the board's responsibility for the recruitment, hiring, evaluating, and if necessary, terminating the superintendent. Often the skills, competencies, qualifications, education, experience, and past performance levels are also established for superintendent selection. The board typically develops a job description for the superintendent based on the district's strategic plan and vision, its academic learning standards, and other criteria established by the board on behalf of the community. The job description includes all other legal duties of the superintendent, including those imposed by district policies (Yakima School District, 2005).

While it has been substantiated that one of the most important functions of a board of education is that of selecting a superintendent, most state laws fail to mention the employment process for superintendents. This is remarkable as superintendents in most districts operate fairly independently of school board supervision. Boards only act

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when in actual session, and most superintendent actions never come under board scrutiny (Wallace, 2003).

Despite the importance of selecting the best candidate for superintendent, school districts spend little time defining and carrying out the process (Wallace, 2003). Boards of education tend to spend most of their time in the search process as opposed to assessing the district's needs and board's expectations (McCurdy, 1992). A poor match may lead to contract buyouts, resignations, and firings that can send a district into turmoil and instability (NSBA, 1996).

Superintendents are selected in various ways. The most prevalent scheme is the school board forming its own search committee (Glass et al., 2000). Some districts choose to hire a private search firm or agency, such as the state school board's association. The fees for these firms are dictated by the size of the district, the degree of involvement desired, and the degree to which the search is restricted to local candidates (Glass, 2001).

The first and most critical step in the selection process is the development of a plan (AASA, 1979). According to Burnett (1988), the higher the board's satisfaction with the selection process, the higher the satisfaction with the performance of the selected person.

Wallace (2003) suggested the following considerations for devising a systematic plan for the selection of a superintendent: (a) examine goals and priorities; (b) develop a time line; (c) develop selection criteria; (d) hiring procedures (inside or outside, in state or out of state, consultant firm or do it yourself); (e) community involvement; (f)

staff/student involvement; (g) consideration of screening committee; (h) evaluation of candidates; (i) setting a budget; and (j) working with the media.

Once a plan has been established, an assessment of the district's needs and a determination of candidate qualifications required for the position are essential. Setting objective criteria is critical to ensure an appropriately matched superintendent is selected. These criteria could include experience, leadership skills, management skills, communication skills, superintendent/board relations, management of budget and financial resources, and developing relationships with the community (Powell, 1984; Robertson, 1984).

Boards will often employ search consultants if an extensive search is conducted. While these consultants can be costly, they can be justified by judiciously matching candidates to district needs. Consultants can be used through every step of the process or for certain aspects such as screening (Flinchbaugh, 1993).

The screening of qualified applicants can be a time-consuming task for those districts not utilizing search consultants. However, when boards utilize objective criteria that have been established, this task is less cumbersome. Once applicants have been screened, boards will typically identify three to seven candidates to be interviewed. Once the interview process is complete, selection and prioritizing of the leading candidate(s) occurs. If there are multiple finalists, a second round of interviews can be completed (NSBA, 1996). The selection of a superintendent by the board should be unanimous, thus giving the hope of harmonious and appropriately matched relationships between the board and the superintendent (Hafer, 2000). Once a choice has been made, a contract is offered and negotiated.

The empirical research completed in the area of superintendent selection is minimal. Wallace's (2003) national investigative study described and analyzed the search processes occurring in a selected sample of school districts employing a new superintendent in the 2000-2001 school year. The study utilized survey research methodology to collect data from respondent school board presidents regarding applicant pools, quality of interviewed candidates, search procedures, costs, length of search, advertising, and satisfaction with the work of the new superintendent after one year in the position (Wallace, 2003).

According to Wallace (2003), a secondary purpose of the study was to analyze superintendent search characteristics in districts of varying size, wealth, and previous superintendent turnover with the anticipation that an ideal search model might be found. Significant differences were discovered in cross tabulating the 13 dependent variables of search procedures including length of search, advertising, quality of candidates, applicant pools, costs, and satisfaction with the six independent variables of previous superintendent turnover, district enrollment, wealth, location, superintendent gender, and whether or not the superintendent hired held a doctorate (Wallace, 2003).

Data analysis of this study identified districts that conducted their own internal searches rated their superintendents higher than those districts who conducted external searches. Very successful superintendents were found more often in districts where boards conducted longer searches, committed higher funding levels, possessed members with higher levels of information about superintendent searches, engaged in advertising attracting larger applicant pools, had more females in the applicant pool, and interviewed a higher number of quality candidates (Wallace, 2003).

Districts with higher levels of satisfaction with the new superintendent, in general, spent more time, effort, and money on this vital board responsibility. A new finding of this study indicated that a large group of districts exist that suffer chronic superintendent turnover. The characteristics identified as being part of an effective search were not always considered by this group of districts (Wallace, 2003).

Glass (2001) also stated that only a limited amount of research focused on the superintendent selection process. According to Glass, the only current source of practical information about superintendent searches is contained in various "School Board Member Manuals" authored by state school boards associations (NSBA, 1996). In brief, there was no national database describing what actually occurs in superintendent searches conducted by boards and by contracted search consultants. Glass then conducted a study in which the primary purpose was to obtain feedback from practicing search consultants regarding the superintendent search process and the current state of the superintendent applicant pool. Glass obtained the names of 70 search consultants/firms from superintendency vacancy advertisements in past issues of *Education Week*. Thirty consultants responded to a brief 23-item survey. With one exception, all 30 consultants were practicing or retired superintendents. The 30 search consultants responding to the survey had conducted 62 superintendent searches during the 2000-2001 school year. Only six of the 62 reported searches occurred in "small town" or rural districts. These districts tend to have much smaller budgets available for such searches. The remainder of the searches were conducted in suburban or urban districts. Results of the survey regarding the status of superintendent application pools found that the average pool consisted of approximately 30 to 40 applicants and that the majority of applicants were either very

well prepared or well prepared for the superintendency, as rated by the search consulting firms. Virtually all of the consultants gave applicants high marks with regard to the quality of academic preparation. The consultants also cited several attributes that would improve the quality and quantity of applicant pools, including (in order of priority) (a) less board micro-management, (b) transportable retirement system, (c) better qualified boards, (d) higher salaries and improved fringe benefits, and (e) a more positive media presence.

The consultants also evaluated the skills of applicants who were finalists for vacant superintendent positions and found that strong marks were given to the finalists' skills in communication, community relations and leadership; however, lower marks were given to the finalists' skills in providing instructional leadership and financial management. The search consultants also reported on the skills they believed most important to superintendent success, which included communication and interpersonal skills, as well as school board relationship-building skills. Those skills considered less important to superintendent success included skill in financial management and instructional leadership (Glass, 2001).

The search consultants reported the following information regarding the superintendent search process. A majority of the superintendent searches lasted three to five months. Retirement was given as the chief reason given by consultants for superintendent vacancies, followed by superintendents not having a good relationship with the board and moving to larger districts. A majority of the search consultants reported meeting with school boards four to six times during the search process. Search consultants typically met not only with board members, but district staff and community

members as they helped develop a list of qualifications listed on the vacancy announcement (Glass, 2001).

According to Glass (2001), 21 of the 30 search consultants indicated board members visit districts of finalists for superintendent vacancies. Such visits often were looked upon by employed superintendents as potentially damaging to the working relationship with their present board. Many superintendents believed this practice is not needed until an actual contract is offered. According to this study, four to six finalists are typically invited to attend in-district interviews. These finalists generally visit a district twice for separate interview sessions with the board, community members, parents, business community members, teachers, media, and even students (Glass, 2001).

Glass's (2001) study provided several interesting findings on how superintendent searches are conducted and the state of the typical applicant pool. The search consultants saw board micro-management and member quality as one of the key problems in restricting applicant quality. Glass noted that training should be mandatory for school board members in the area of superintendent/board relations, selection, evaluation, and team management. To slow superintendent turnover and attract new applicants, boards should explore offering multi-year contracts to experienced superintendents. Many superintendents do not apply for new positions due to a lack of confidence in board continuity and fairness (Glass).

Glass (2001) also reported that to increase the potential pool of applicants available to all districts, state departments of education should consider creating a job clearinghouse that would assist districts when searching for superintendents, principals and central office administrators. Finally, as previously stated, only six of the 62 searches

reported in this study occurred in rural districts. These districts tend to have much smaller budgets available for such searches. Glass recommended that states should consider providing grants for less wealthy school districts to conduct superintendent searches (Glass).

A related study (Charlton, 1998) examined the relationship between the procedures used to select the superintendent of schools in selected Idaho public school districts and the satisfaction of the board with the performance of the superintendent selected. In effect, this was a study of the validity of selection procedures used by Idaho school boards. Board satisfaction with the selection procedures that were used in the most recent superintendent selection was used as a moderating variable. Board chairpersons, vice chairpersons, or board members of selected Idaho public school districts who were involved in selecting a new superintendent in the school years 1992–93 through 1996–97 described the procedures utilized in the selection process, their level of satisfaction with that process, and their satisfaction with the performance of the person selected, in seven domains (Charlton, 1998).

According to Charlton (1998), school boards were encouraged to engage in those selection procedures that have been shown to provide high levels of satisfaction for Idaho school board members. Among those procedures were: a) utilizing a thorough, involved recruitment and selection process; b) utilizing a consultant to help with the process, including community and staff in the screening and interview process; c) allowing the board to make the final decision; d) visiting the community of the top choice; e) employing a person from within the district; f) making a unanimous choice as a board; and g) formally introducing the new superintendent to the staff and community. Statistics

showed that the turnover rate for superintendents in Idaho, as well as the rest of the nation, is substantial when compared with other top education administration posts or chief executive officers in the private sector. The average length of tenure of Idaho superintendents was reported as 3.5 years during the period 1986 to 1994, while the national tenure was an average of 6.5 years. Charlton's study found that since 1993, over 64 percent of Idaho school districts have changed superintendents. The researcher concluded that since superintendents' succession is of such critical importance to a school district, a study of the procedures utilized to select superintendents, and the boards' subsequent satisfaction with the performance of the persons selected, is timely and should be of considerable value to boards and school district superintendents (Charlton).

In the state of Missouri, a school district's resources are limited when obtaining outside assistance in the selection of a superintendent. Since 1984, the Missouri School Board Association (MSBA) has provided assistance in searches to facilitate this extremely important decision. The use of the MSBA Superintendent Search Program by Missouri local boards of education has increased steadily. In recent years, MSBA has successfully assisted in the hiring of approximately 15-30 superintendents annually (MSBA, 2005). Through their relationship with the National School Board Association (NSBA), successful superintendent searches can be conducted regardless of the size of the school district. MSBA's Superintendent Search Program has been utilized by school districts ranging in size from less than 300 students to districts with over 6,000 students enrolled in their schools (MSBA, 2005).

According to MSBA (2005), the average tenure of employment of superintendents hired with the assistance of the MSBA search program is seven or more

years. This number exceeds the national average tenure of superintendent employment. This information is based on studies reported to MSBA by the Educational Research Service. MSBA attributes the success of their search program to several factors which include consultants spending time with all stakeholders to identify desirable superintendent characteristics, developing a personalized and comprehensive overview of the school district, and the use of state and nation-wide communication systems via the MSBA web site. MSBA consultants provide assistance with interview techniques, reference and security checks, as well as free legal assistance. Following the employment of a new superintendent, MSBA will provide, upon request, a teambuilding workshop. This workshop is available for a fee to any district desiring a local workshop on teambuilding. The workshop speaks directly to the importance of teamwork, specifically the board/administrative team (MSBA, 2005).

Another service provided by MSBA allows school districts the opportunity to list administrative job opportunities on the MSBA website. This service is provided by MSBA, along with the Missouri Association of School Administrators, the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals and the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (MSBA, 2005).

Another resource for Missouri school boards when searching for superintendent candidates is Midwest Superintendent Search Consultants (MSSC). Since 2002, this organization has assisted school districts in selecting six to ten superintendents a year. The majority of these school districts were large school systems with enrollments of 5,000 students or more. When MSSC assists a school district with a superintendent search, there are typically between 12-20 applicants for the superintendent positions.

MSSC was founded by two retired Missouri school superintendents and is currently staffed with three former superintendents. According to Paul James, one of the founders of the consultant company, MSSC was formed out of a need for school districts to have another alternative when selecting a superintendent. The retired superintendents who work for MSSC provide boards of education with insights based upon their years of experience in the superintendency (P. James, personal communication, February 3, 2005).

Two national search firms are also sometimes utilized by Missouri school districts when searching for and selecting superintendents. The staffs of both firms include former school superintendents, professors, and school board members (HYAA, 2005; Ray, 2005).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The literature regarding superintendent selection encompasses a wide variety of topics. The school governance model in which the first superintendents were appointed began in the 1830s (Cubberley, 1922). However, it was not until the late 19th century that the superintendency became an identifiable profession (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The role of many early superintendents was that of an educational reformer; however, over the years superintendents have also functioned as managers of their school systems (Spring, 1998; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The role of a superintendent of schools in today's society tends to vary greatly, based upon the environment and culture established within a school district. The size, wealth, and location of school district impact the board of education's expectations of the superintendent (Glass et al., 2000).

While leadership and management models describe various styles, MacGregor's Theory X or Theory Y models, Fiedler's Contingency Theory, Hershey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, and Bolman and Deal's Frames most closely emulate those leadership qualities found within the superintendency (Yukl, 2002). As the role of the superintendent becomes more complex, modern leadership requires school leaders to function multidimensionally, performing many roles simultaneously.

Another integral aspect of superintendent selection is found in the relationship between the superintendent and the board of education. Together, boards and superintendents form the school district's leadership team (Smoley, 1999). The stability of this team is an important factor, not only in determining the success or failure of the superintendent (NSBA, 1996), but the overall effectiveness of the entire school district (McCurdy, 1992). Therefore, boards of education must perform a well-planned and thorough superintendent search process to ensure that a healthy and positive relationship ensues (NSBA, 1996).

While the literature supports the notion that the search and selection of a superintendent is important to the success of a school district, little research has been completed regarding the actual search and selection process. The prior research (Alsbury, 2003; Brackett, 1995; Castallo, 2003; Kitchens, 1994; MASB, 2005; McAdams, 1996; Powell, 1984; Robertson, 1984) that appears to have the most relevance regarding superintendent search and selection is embedded in the literature describing the role of the superintendent, the professional and personal characteristics that superintendents should possess to be successful, and the superintendent's relationship with the school board.

In Missouri, school district's resources are limited when obtaining outside assistance in the selection of a superintendent. Since 1984, the Missouri School Board Association (MSBA) has provided assistance in searches to facilitate this extremely important decision. Other alternatives include Midwest Superintendent Search Consultants (MSSC) and national search firms.

In this age of increased educational accountability, it is imperative that boards of education and school districts begin to focus on the superintendent search and selection process to help assure that the best possible person is selected for the position. By utilizing a structured and thorough procedure for search and selection, boards of education can minimize the chance of an incorrect and potentially harmful selection.

Chapter 3 of this study will focus on the design and research methodology utilized to gather data on superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri. It will also focus upon the perceived effectiveness of the search and impact various demographic variables had on the superintendent selection process. Chapter 3 will also focus upon show how school board members perceptions differ according to school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctorate degree as related to superintendent search criteria.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design and methodology are presented in Chapter Three. This chapter

included the purpose of the study, a definition of the sample population, data collection,

statistical analysis techniques used on study data, and a summary of the research design.

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 determine if school board member's perceptions differ according

to school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth,

superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a

doctorate degree as related to superintendent search criteria.

This study utilized data collected from surveys designed to identify the

superintendent search and selection processes in the state of Missouri. The data were

collected from surveys sent to current school board members who have been involved in

the search and selection of a superintendent(s) during the 2001-2002 through 2005-2006

school years. This study could be classified as "policy research," in that descriptive

analyses and relationships between selected variables may provide empirical evidence to

assist school boards in their selection procedures for superintendents. Frequencies were

utilized to identify and describe the relationships between the variables related to selection criteria and procedures, as well as selected demographic variables in sampled school districts.

Research Design

This descriptive comparative study utilized survey research methodology to describe superintendent search and selection practices utilized by public school boards in Missouri. The results of the survey provided data to establish potential relationships between selected variables to provided thoughtful recommendations for school boards involved in superintendent selection. Survey methodology is frequently employed to produce a quantitative description of a respondent group's opinions and perceptions (Fink, 1995). The perceptions of a state sample of school board members was used to provide the data for this analysis, and survey research methodology was utilized to explore the study of the problem through the stated research questions.

Population and Sample

This study's sample population consisted of those individuals from applicable school districts who responded to a web-based survey sent to all public school district board of education members in the state of Missouri that have selected a new superintendent of schools during the 2001-2002 through 2005-2006 school years. Districts that conducted a superintendent search during the previous two to five years were utilized in this study to help assure board members could remember the details of the search(s). These school districts were identified by contacting the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Schools district demographic information including enrollment, location, and wealth were also gathered by accessing

information found on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

web site. By utilizing a 23 question web-based survey, the researcher hoped to improve

upon the typical low return rates (20%-25%) of school board members on mail-out

surveys.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

A 23 item Likert-type scale survey was utilized to collect data for this study.

Although this survey was developed by the researcher, it contained revised items utilized

in Wallace's (2003) national investigative study of superintendent selection processes.

Once applicable school districts were determined, ten pilot surveys were e-mailed to

applicable school superintendents and board members to test the quality of the survey

instrument.

Reliability

The reliability of a questionnaire or survey is the degree to which results are

stable and consistent. Reliability assumes uniform administration of the survey

instrument. A pilot study of the survey consisted of surveys sent to ten different school

board members. The data from the pilot respondents were analyzed to ensure there were

no confusing questions and to make sure the survey instrument was functioning well and

could be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

Validity

Content validity is the extent to which an item actually measures what it purports

to measure (Babbie, 1995). Conducting a formal review by the subject's acknowledged

authorities is a technique used to determine an instrument's content validity (Litwin,

1995). This study instrument's content validity was determined through a review by a

panel of experts in the field of educational administration. Six reviewers were asked to judge the appropriateness of the fit between the item content and the research questions. Once it was determined that the survey instrument worked, the remainder of the surveys were e-mailed to applicable school board members in the school districts to gather data on each school district's superintendent selection practices.

Survey items were devised or revised from Wallace (2003) to provide information regarding the school district's superintendent search and selection practices and to address the thirteen research questions. The researcher attempted to gather individual responses to the aforementioned topics. A copy of the survey, along with the appropriate letters (e-mail messages) containing informed consent information, can be found in Appendices A, B, C, and D.

Data Collection

The purpose for collecting data is to acquire information allowing inferences and conclusions to be drawn based upon specific characteristics of a certain group of subjects (Lunsford & Lunsford, 1996). This study gathered mainly quantitative data to describe the relationships previously mentioned.

School district selected for this study were schools in Missouri that had completed a superintendent search during 2001-2002 through 2005-2006 school years. The superintendent of each of the selected school districts was contacted via email to explain the study and determine applicable board members to participate in the study. The time span was limited to avoid having skewed results from districts that have had the same superintendent for more than five years. The superintendent was then asked to forward

the survey link (e-mail message) to applicable board members asking them to complete the survey.

The cover letters (e-mail messages) described the purpose of the study and assured confidentiality of the respondents. The respondents were asked to complete the web-based survey. If the respondent chose to respond, a message reflecting an understanding of the conditions outlined in the informed consent and their willingness to voluntarily participate in the study electronically was sent to the researcher.

An electronic mail message was sent as a follow-up one week after the distribution of the survey requesting the respondents take the survey or thanking them for returning the survey. A second follow-up message was sent two weeks following the distribution of the survey (See Appendix C).

Districts and school board members were identified to the researcher only by the district identification number assigned to each school district by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This information was incorporated into the web-based survey and utilized to gather information such as school district size, location, wealth, and assessed valuation. This information was also useful to the researcher if there were multiple responses from board members in the same school district.

Statistical Analysis

The survey data were summarized with descriptive statistics through sample means and standard deviations, when possible, for each survey item. These data revealed any distribution response patterns, as well as indicated the degree of differences that existed in the participants' responses to each applicable item. Frequencies were utilized

to identify any relationships that existed between the variables related to selection criteria and procedures, as well as demographic variables reflected in the sampled populations.

Summary

This descriptive and comparative study used a web-based survey that was sent to all applicable public school board members in the state of Missouri that have completed a superintendent search from 2001-2005 to determine their superintendent search and selection practices. The researcher gathered data that were used to analyze factors utilized to select Missouri school superintendents and to determine whether a relationship existed between these factors and the success of superintendents. Additionally, the study also 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 member's perceptions differ according to school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctorate degree as related to superintendent search criteria.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In Chapter Four, the research findings of this study are presented. This chapter is

organized as follows: review of methodology and research design, analysis of data, and

summary of findings.

Review of Methodology and Research Design

This descriptive study utilized survey research methodology to describe

superintendent search and selection practices used by public school boards in Missouri.

The survey responses provided empirical evidence to determine if relationships existed

between selected variables in the superintendent search and selection process.

The perceptions of a state sample of school board members were used to provide

the data for this analysis. The sample consisted of those individuals who responded to a

web-based, 23 item Likert-type scale survey sent to all applicable school district in the

state of Missouri.

Analysis of Data

There are a total of 525 public school districts in the State of Missouri (DESE,

2006). Of these school districts, 223 have selected new superintendents during the years

2001-2005 (T. Ogle, personal communication, February 28, 2006). For the purposes of

this study, surveys were sent to the superintendents of all 223 school districts. For various

technical reasons such as email address changes and networks that would not allow the

email to be delivered, 190 surveys actually reached superintendents. This limitation was

consistent with empirical research found regarding the reliability of email or web-based

survey techniques (Shannon, 2002). It was then the responsibility of the superintendents

to forward the survey link to their board of education members who had been involved in

the search and selection of a superintendent(s). The researcher had no way of knowing

how many superintendents forwarded the survey to the applicable board members or how

many board members had actually been involved in the search and selection of a

superintendent.

A total of 71 usable surveys were received from board of education members. Of

these, 51 respondents were able to be identified in terms of their demographic

information by supplying their DESE district code. Of the 51 identifiable respondents, 29

were from different school districts. Tables 1, 2, and 3 present demographic information

gathered in the study. These data provide a description of non-duplicated demographic

characteristics of 29 of the 71 respondents. The demographic characteristics included: (a)

school district enrollment, (b) school district location, and (c) school district wealth.

The samples district enrollment data were based on the number of students

enrolled in each school district. A small district was defined as having fewer than 500

students, a medium district contained 500-1,999 students, and a large district had 2,000 or

more students enrolled. Table 1 presents enrollment data for the 29 non-duplicated

respondents that identified their districts by district number. The small districts accounted

for approximately 17% of the sample population; the medium sized districts accounted

for approximately 48% of the sample population; and the large sized districts accounted

for approximately 34% of the sample population.

Table 1
Size of Respondent School Districts (Non-duplicated)

Enrollment	No.	%
Small (Fewer than 500)	5	17.24
Medium (500 to 1,999)	14	48.28
Large (2,000 or more)	10	34.48

N=29

Research question two stated: What impact did school district enrollment have on the superintendent selection process? According to data received, local Boards of Education in 7 out of 10 districts classified as large (2000 or more students enrolled) conducted their own search and selection process. Of the 14 school districts classified as medium in size (500 to 1,999 students), 7 districts conducted their own search and selection process while the other 7 employed search firms to conduct the superintendent search. All five of the small districts (fewer than 500 students) that responded conducted their own superintendent search (See Table 2). Based upon data collected in this study, school districts that have larger enrollments utilize search firms on a more frequent basis than those school districts that have smaller enrollments.

Table 2

Impact School District Enrollment had on Superintendent Selection Process (Non-duplicated)

Enrollment	Small <500		Medium 500-1,999		Large 2000>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	5	100.0	7	53.9	7	70.0
Search firm	0	-	6	46.1	3	30.0

N=28

Research question eight stated: How do school board member's perceptions differ according to school district enrollment as related to superintendent search criteria? Table 3 presents data by school district enrollment size and those criteria school board members identified as de-selection criteria, or those items that caused school board members to not consider a superintendent applicant. Table 4 presents data by school district enrollment size and the knowledge and skills commonly used in the superintendent selection process. School board members identified these knowledge and skills as a very high priority, high priority, priority, low priority, and not a priority for superintendents' to possess.

Based upon data collected in this study, enrollment size did not seem to make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria. Board members from all three enrollment sizes reported not having an educational background as the main reason to not consider a candidate for superintendent. Board members also noted that having no prior administrative experience, having no prior superintendent experience, having no central office experience, and not having experience in a district with similar characteristics were additional factors to not consider a superintendent applicant (See Table 3).

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Data collected in this study regarding enrollment size and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process revealed that enrollment size did seem to make a difference on board member's prioritization of some superintendent knowledge and skills. Board members in medium and large size school districts rated superintendent/school board relations, community relations, and media relations as very high priorities for superintendents when compared to small school districts. However, knowledge and skills in communication/interpersonal skills, facilities, finance/budget, management, personnel, legal issues, and strategic planning were very similar when comparing school district enrollment size. Also of note was the overwhelming high prioritization of instructional leadership from all three sizes of school districts. The areas of transportation and technology received the lowest prioritization throughout all three sizes of school districts (See Table 4).

Table 3

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Enrollment as Related to
Superintendent Search Criteria (De-selection Criteria)

Enrollment	Small <500	Medium 500-1,999	Large 2000>
De-selection criteria	No.	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	4	22	17
Having no prior administrative experience	4	16	15
Having no prior superintendent experience	1	9	12
Having no central office experience	0	6	12
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	1	7	5
Not having a doctoral degree	0	3	4
From outside the district	0	2	2
From inside the district	0	0	1
Other	1	1	0

Note. N=51 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 4
How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Enrollment as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection Process)

Enrollment	Small <500				Medium 500-1,999				Large 2000>			
Knowledge/Skill	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	1	5	-	-	3	22	-	-	2	18	-	-
Community Relations	-	6	-	-	10	15	-	-	10	10	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	1	4	1	-	3	22	-	-	4	16	-	-
Facilities	-	5	1	-	1	13	11	-	-	7	13	
Finance/Budget	3	3	-	-	6	16	3	-	3	9	8	-
Transportation	-	4	2	-	-	11	12	2	-	3	14	3
Technology	-	5	1	-	-	8	15	2	-	6	12	2
Instructional Leadership	5	1	-	-	19	6	-	-	17	3	-	-
Management	1	5	-	-	-	25	-	-	2	18	-	-
Personnel	-	6	-	-	-	20	5	-	-	10	10	-
Legal Issues	-	5	1	-	-	24	1	-	2	18	-	-
Strategic Planning	-	3	3	-	-	22	3	-	6	12	-	-
Media Relations	-	3	3	-	1	20	4	-	8	12	-	-

Note. N=51 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

Table 5 presents survey data that represents the 29 non-duplicated school districts location within the state of Missouri. The possible locations were identified as small town (fewer than 1000 residents), rural (between 1,000-25,000 residents) and urban (more than 25,000 residents). Small towns accounted for approximately 34% of the respondents, rural towns made up approximately 51% of the respondents, and urban cities accounted for approximately 13% of the respondents.

Table 5
Location of School Districts

Location	No.	%
Small Town (fewer than 1000)	10	34.48
Rural (between 1,000-25,000)	15	51.72
Urban (over 25,000)	4	13.79

N=29

Research question three stated: What impact did school district location have on the superintendent selection process? Data received regarding location and its impact on the superintendent selection process yielded the following results: Rural districts conducted their own superintendent search in 11 out of 14 districts, 7 out of 10 small town districts conducted their own search, while three of the four urban districts utilized search firms. These data indicate that school district location does seem to have an impact on the superintendent selection process (See Table 6).

Table 6

Impact School District Location had on Superintendent Selection Process

Location	Small town		Rural		Urban	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	7	70.0	11	78.6	1	25.0
Search firm	3	30.0	3	21.4	3	75.0

N=28

Research question nine stated: How do school board member's perceptions differ according to school district location as related to superintendent search criteria? Table 7 depicts data by school district location and those criteria school board members identified as de-selection criteria, or those items that caused school board members to not consider a superintendent applicant. These data revealed school district location did not seem to make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria. Board members from all three location categories reported not having an educational background, having no prior administrative experience, having no prior superintendent experience, having no central office experience, and not having experience in a district with similar characteristics at higher rates than the remaining categories (See Table 7).

Data collected in this study regarding school district location and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process revealed that district location did not seem to make a difference on board member's prioritization of superintendent knowledge and skills. Board members in all three location categories rated community relations, communication/interpersonal skills, instructional leadership, and media

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relations as very high priorities for superintendents. Knowledge and skills in

superintendent/school board relations, facilities, finance/budget, management, personnel,

legal issues, and strategic planning were also very similar when comparing school district

location. Interestingly, the area of technology received a higher prioritization in the small

town category as compared to the rural and urban categories. The area of transportation

received the lowest prioritization throughout all three locations of school districts (See

Table 8).

Table 7

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Location as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (De-selection Criteria)

Location	Small town	Rural	Urban
De-selection criteria	No.	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	11	28	4
Having no prior administrative experience	9	24	2
Having no prior superintendent experience	5	15	2
Having no central office experience	2	14	2
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	3	9	1
Not having a doctoral degree	1	4	2
From outside the district	1	2	1
From inside the district	0	1	0
Other	2	0	0

Note. N=50 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 8

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Location as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection Process)

Enrollment	Small Town				Rural				Urban			
Knowledge/Skill	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	1	15	-	-	5	25	-	-	-	5	-	-
Community Relations	3	13	-	-	13	12	-	-	4	1	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	2	13	1	-	4	26	-	-	2	3	-	-
Facilities	1	10	5	-	-	15	15	-	-	-	5	-
Finance/Budget	6	9	1	-	6	17	7	-	-	2	3	-
Transportation	-	10	6	-	-	8	18	4	-	-	4	1
Technology	4	11	1	-	-	9	17	4	-	1	4	-
Instructional Leadership	12	4	-	-	25	5	-	-	4	1	-	-
Management	1	15	-	-	1	24	-	-	1	4	-	-
Personnel	-	15	1	-	-	19	11	-	-	2	3	-
Legal Issues	-	15	1	-	1	28	1	-	1	4	-	-
Strategic Planning	-	11	5	-	4	25	1	-	2	3	-	-
Media Relations	1	9	6	-	6	23	1	-	2	3	-	-

Note. N=51 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

Table 9 represents data received from 29 non-duplicated respondent school districts regarding the assessed valuation of the county in which each school district resides and the per pupil expenditure in each school district. Assessed valuation is defined as value assigned to property by a municipality for the purpose of tax assessment (DESE, 2006). The assessed valuation of each county is an integral aspect of the state of Missouri's school foundation funding formula. The higher the assessed valuation of a county equates to increased funding for each school district located within the county. Thus, assessed valuation is typically utilized as one means to determine the wealth of a school district (K. Monsees, personal communication, September 8, 2006). Of the 29 non-duplicated identifiable respondents to the survey, the assessed valuation ranged from a low of $7,452,226 to a high of $1,676,904,875. The mean assessed valuation was $205,622,765.

For the purposes of this study, per pupil expenditure (PPE) was defined as the amount of dollars spent per student during the 2005 school year. PPE for the 29 non-duplicated respondent school districts reflected a wide range with a low level of $5359 to a high level of $11,234. The mean PPE for the 29 respondents was $7,023.

Table 9
Assessed Valuation & Per Pupil Expenditure for Selected School Districts

School District Data	Min	Max	M	SD
Assessed Valuation	7,452,226	1,676,904,875	205,622,765	367,411,659
Per Pupil Expenditure	5359	11,234	7,023	1,220

N=29

Research question four stated: What impact did school district wealth have on the superintendent selection process? According to data received, nine out of 15 school districts with an assessed valuation of less than 100 million dollars conducted their own superintendent search, while ten out of 13 school districts with an assessed valuation of over 100 million dollars conducted their own search (See Table 10). In terms of per pupil expenditure, 12 out of 15 school districts that spent under $7000 per student conducted their own superintendent search, while seven out of 13 school districts that spent over $7,000 per student conducted their own search (See Table 11). These data indicated that school district wealth did not seem to have an impact upon the search and selection procedures of the respondent school districts.

Table 10
Impact School District Wealth (A.V.) had on Superintendent Selection Process

Wealth (A.V.)	< $100 million		> $100 million	
	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	9	60.0	10	76.9
Search firm	6	40.0	3	23.1

N=28

Table 11

Impact School District Wealth (PPE) had on Superintendent Selection Process

Wealth (PPE)	< $7,000		> $7,000	
	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	12	80.0	7	53.8
Search firm	3	20.0	6	46.2

N=28

Research question ten stated: How do school board member's perceptions differ according to school district wealth as related to superintendent search criteria? Tables 12 and 13 present data based on school district wealth and those criteria school board members identified as de-selection criteria, or those items that caused school board members to not consider a superintendent applicant.

Data collected regarding school district wealth and de-selection criteria revealed that neither school district assessed valuation nor per pupil expenditure seemed to make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria. Board members from all four wealth categories (A.V. <$100 million and >$100 million, PPE <$7,000 and >$7,000) reported not having an educational background, having no prior administrative experience, having no prior superintendent experience, and having no central office experience at higher rates than the remaining categories. Other categories that received lower ratings included not having experience in a district with similar characteristics, not having a doctoral degree, from outside the district, from inside the district, and other (See Tables 12 & 13).

Additional data regarding school district wealth and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process revealed that district wealth did not seem to

make a difference on board members prioritization of superintendent knowledge and skills. Board members in all four wealth categories (A.V. <$100 million and >$100 million, PPE <$7,000 and >$7,000) rated superintendent/school board relations, community relations, communication/interpersonal skills, finance/budget, instructional leadership, management, strategic planning and media relations as very high priorities for superintendents. Knowledge and skills in personnel and legal issues were also rated as high priorities when comparing school district wealth. The areas of transportation and technology received the lowest prioritization throughout all four categories of school district wealth (See Tables 14 & 15).

Table 12

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Wealth (A.V.) as Related to
Superintendent Search Criteria (De-selection Criteria)

Wealth (A.V.)	< $100 million	> $100 million
	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	25	19
Having no prior administrative experience	22	14
Having no prior superintendent experience	12	10
Having no central office experience	13	6
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	9	4
Not having a doctoral degree	4	4
From outside the district	2	2
From inside the district	1	0
Other	0	2

Note. N=50 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 13

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Wealth (PPE) as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (De-selection Criteria)

Wealth (PPE)	< $7,000	> $7,000
	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	27	17
Having no prior administrative experience	24	12
Having no prior superintendent experience	14	8
Having no central office experience	14	5
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	9	4
Not having a doctoral degree	4	4
From outside the district	2	2
From inside the district	1	0
Other	0	2

Note. N=50 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 14

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Wealth (A.V.) as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection Process)

Wealth (A.V.)	< $100 million				> $100 million			
Knowledge/Skill	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	4	24	-	-	2	21	-	-
Community Relations	9	19	-	-	11	12	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	4	23	1	-	4	19	-	-
Facilities	1	17	10	-	-	8	15	-
Finance/Budget	9	16	3	-	3	12	8	-
Transportation	-	15	11	2	-	3	17	3
Technology	-	7	18	3	-	7	14	2
Instructional Leadership	21	7	-	-	20	3	-	-
Management	1	27	-	-	2	21	-	-
Personnel	-	24	4	-	-	12	11	-
Legal Issues	-	26	2	-	2	21	-	-
Strategic Planning	-	23	5	-	6	15	1	-
Media Relations	1	21	6	-	8	14	1	-

Note. N=51 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

Table 15

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Wealth (PPE) as Related to
Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection
Process)

Wealth (PPE)	<$7,000				>$7,000			
Knowledge/Skill	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	3	27	-	-	3	18	-	-
Community Relations	12	18	-	-	8	13	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	4	25	1	-	4	19	-	-
Facilities	-	16	14	-	1	9	11	-
Finance/Budget	8	15	7	-	4	13	4	-
Transportation	-	11	17	2	-	7	11	3
Technology	-	8	19	3	-	6	13	2
Instructional Leadership	25	5	-	-	16	5	-	-
Management	2	28	-	-	1	20	-	-
Personnel	-	20	10	-	-	16	5	-
Legal Issues	1	28	1	-	1	19	1	-
Strategic Planning	4	20	5	-	2	18	1	-
Media Relations	6	19	5	-	3	16	2	-

Note. N=51 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

Tables 16 through 49 present data based on the 71 usable survey responses of

school board members when asked specific questions regarding superintendent search

and selection procedures in their school district. Table 12 portrays the length of time

districts spent in the superintendent search and selection process. Overall, 52.1% of the

districts took 1 to 3 months to complete the search and selection process; 43.6% of the

districts took 4 to 6 months to complete the process; 1.4% of the districts took 7 to 9

months to complete the process; 1.4% of the districts took 9 months to a year to complete

the process; and 1.4% of the districts were unsure of the length of time it took to search

for and select a superintendent.

Table 16
Length of Time to Complete Superintendent Search Process

Length of Time	No.	%
1 to 3 months	37	52.1
4 to 6 months	31	43.6
7 to 9 months	1	1.4
9 months to a year	1	1.4
Not sure	1	1.4

N=71

Table 17 presents data about who conducted the search for the school district's

current superintendent. Out of 71 respondents, 56.3% stated that the entire board was

responsible for conducting the search; 21.1% stated that the Missouri School Boards'

Association (MSBA) conducted the search; 5.6% of the searches were conducted by

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another search firm; 5.6% were conducted by committees of the local school Board; 5.6%

of the searches were conducted by other entities; 4.2% of the searches were conducted by

a private consultant; and 1.4% of the respondents were not sure who conducted the

search.

Table 17
Who Conducted the Superintendent Search

Who conducted search	No.	%
Entire Board	40	56.3
MSBA	15	21.1
Another Search Firm	4	5.6
Committee of the Board	4	5.6
Other	4	5.6
Private consultant	3	4.2
Not sure	1	1.4

N=71

Table 18 presents the results of data received regarding active participants in the

superintendent search process. Out of 71 respondents, 94.3% indicated that local school

Board members were active participants in the search. Local school Board members also

indicated that the following groups were also active participants in their searches:

administrators (36.6%), community members (22.5%), non-certificated staff members

(22.5%), parents (16.9%), business/community members (15.4%), local governmental

leaders (5.6%), other (5.6%), and a board member indicated that they were not sure

(1.4%).

Table 18
Groups Involved in Superintendent Search Process

Who was involved in search	No.	%
Board members	67	94.3
Administrators	26	36.6
Community members	16	22.5
Non-certificated staff members	16	22.5
Parents	12	16.9
Business/community members	11	15.4
Local Governmental leader	4	5.6
Other	4	5.6
Not sure	1	1.4

Note. N=71 (includes multiple responses from board member respondents)

Table 19 consists of data received regarding the various superintendent search

committee activities. Of the 71 board members that responded, 87.3% stated that they

were involved in the interview process, while 66.1% indicated they were involved in the

superintendent finalist decision-making process. Board members also indicated that they

were involved in the following: final choice to hire (64.7%), reference checks (60.5%),

paper screening (57.7%), development of job description or criteria (53.5%), semi-finalist

decision (52.1%), recruitment (36.6%), site visits (19.7%), and 2.8% of the board

member respondents indicated that they were not sure about this question.

Table 19
Superintendent Search Committee Activities

Search committee activities	No.	%
Interview process	62	87.3
Finalist decision	47	66.1
Final choice to hire	46	64.7
Reference checks	43	60.5
Paper screening	41	57.7
Develop job description/criteria	38	53.3
Semi-finalist decision	37	52.1
Recruitment	26	36.6
Site visits	14	19.7
Not sure	2	2.8

Note. N=71 (includes multiple responses from board member respondents)

Table 20 presents data regarding the prior experience of the present

superintendent. Of the 71 responding board members, 54.9% indicated that their

superintendent had prior experience as an assistant superintendent, while 52.1% had

experience as a high school principal. Thirty-three point eight percent of the respondents

indicated that their superintendent had experience as a superintendent elsewhere. Board

members also stated that their superintendents had prior experience in the following

positions: middle school principal (18.3%), elementary principal (18.3%), and assistant

principal (18.3%). Other responses included: 2.8% of the board member respondents

indicated they were not sure about their superintendent's prior experience, 1.4% stated

their superintendent had other experience, and 1.4% stated that their superintendent had

no prior experience.

Table 20
Superintendent's Prior Experience

Prior experience	No.	%
Assistant Superintendent	39	54.9
High School Principal	37	52.1
Superintendent	24	33.8
Middle School Principal	13	18.3
Elementary Principal	13	18.3
Assistant Principal	13	18.3
Not sure	2	2.8
Other	1	1.4
None	1	1.4

Note. N=71 (includes multiple responses from board member respondents)

Table 21 represents data received regarding the size of the most recent

superintendent search applicant pool. Respondents indicated that 45% of their

superintendent applicant pool was between 11-20 applicants, while 28.1% stated their

applicant pool was between 1-10 applicants. The remainder of the respondents had

applicant pools of 21-30 (14%), 31-40 (7%), and more than 40 (4.2%). A small

percentage of board members, 1.4%, indicated they were not sure about the size of their

applicant pool.

Table 21
Total Size of Superintendent Applicant Pool

Applicant pool	No.	%
11-20	32	45.1
1-10	20	28.2
21-30	10	14.0
31-40	5	7.0
More than 40	3	4.3
Not sure	1	1.4

N=71

Table 22 consists of data received about the criteria utilized by board members

and/or search consultants during paper screening to screen-out superintendent applicants.

Of the 71 respondents, 84.5% stated that not having an educational background was

utilized as a screen-out mechanism. Other screen-out criteria consisted of having no prior

administrative experience (73.2%), having no central office experience or superintendent

experience (36.6%), not having experience in a district with similar characteristics

(25.3%), not having a doctoral degree (11.2%), from outside the district (5.6%), other

(4.2%), and from inside the district (2.8%).

Table 22

Criteria Used to Screen-Out Prospective Superintendent Candidates

Screen-out criteria	No.	%
No educational background	60	84.5
Having no prior administrative experience	52	73.2
Having no central office experience	26	36.6
No superintendent experience	26	36.6
No experience in similar district	18	25.3
Not having a doctoral degree	8	11.2
From outside district	4	5.6
Other	3	4.2
From inside district	2	2.8

Note. N=71 (includes multiple responses from board member respondents)

Table 23 consists of data that represents the board members opinions regarding the percentage of the applicants they believe were well qualified to be superintendent of schools. Of the 71 respondents, 45% believed that 80%-89% of their applicant pools were well qualified, while 19.7% believed that 90%-100% of their applicant pools were well qualified. The remainder of the results were as follows: 12.6% believed that 50%-59% were well qualified, 11.2% believed that 70%-79% were well qualified, 7% believed that less than 50% of their applicants were well qualified, and 4.2% believed that 60%-69% of their applicant pool was well qualified.

Table 23
Percentage of Superintendent Applicants Well Qualified

Applicant pool well qualified	No.	%
90%-100%	14	19.7
80%-89%	32	45.0
70%-79%	8	11.3
60%-69%	3	4.2
50%-59%	9	12.7
Below 50%	5	7.1

N=71

Table 24 depicts data that account for the total number of applicants that each board of education interviewed during their last superintendent search. 33.8% of the 71 respondents stated that their board interviewed three candidates during their last superintendent search, while 25.3% of the respondents interviewed four candidates. 14% of the boards interviewed two candidates, 9.8% interviewed five candidates, 8.4% interviewed six candidates, 5.6% interviewed one candidate, and 2.8% interviewed eight or more candidates.

Table 24
Total Number of Superintendent Applicants Interviewed

Applicants interviewed	No.	%
1	4	5.6
2	10	14.1
3	24	33.8
4	18	25.4
5	7	9.9
6	6	8.4
7	0	-
8+	2	2.8

N=71

Table 25 consists of data that describes the board member opinions of the total applicant pool being well qualified, qualified, average, poorly qualified, or not qualified to be superintendent. Of the 71 respondents, 69% stated they believed their total applicant pools were qualified, 19.7% believed their applicant pool were well qualified, and 11.2% of the respondents believed their applicant pools were average. None of the respondents believed their applicant pools were poorly qualified or not qualified.

Table 25
Total of Superintendent Applicant Pool Qualified

Total applicant pool	No.	%
Well qualified	14	19.7
Qualified	49	69.0
Average	8	11.3
Poorly qualified	0	-
Not qualified	0	-

N=71

Table 26 represents data that were received from board members regarding the approximate amount of money that was spent on their last superintendent search and selection process. 53.5% of the respondents stated that their district spent less than $2,000 on their last superintendent search. The remainder of the respondents stated that their districts spent the following amounts: 29.5% spent between $2,000-$5,000, 4.2% were not sure how much was spent, 8.4% spent between $5,000-$10,000, 2.8% spent between $10,000-$15,000, and 1.4% spent between $15,000-$20,000.

Table 26
Approximate Cost of Superintendent Search

Approximate cost of search	No.	%
Less than $2,000	38	53.5
$2,000-$5,000	21	29.6
$5,000-$10,000	6	8.5
$10,000-$15,000	2	2.8
$15,000-$20,000	1	1.4
Not sure	3	4.2

N=71

Table 27 depicts data received from board members asking them to rate the level of success of their current superintendent's first year. Of the 71 respondents, 62% perceived their superintendent's first year as very successful. Other board members responses were as follows: 29.6% believed their superintendent's first year was successful, 7% believed their superintendent's first year was somewhat successful, and 1.4% believed their superintendent's first year was minimally successful.

Table 27
Level of Success of Superintendent's First Year

Superintendent's first year	No.	%
Very successful	44	62.0
Successful	21	29.6
Somewhat successful	5	7.0
Minimally successful	1	1.4
Not successful at all	0	-

N=71

Table 28 presents data regarding the board members response to how successful they believe their superintendent's successive years (after their first year) have been (if applicable). Of the 69 respondents, 59.4% stated that their superintendent's successive year(s) have been very successful, while 31.9% stated that their superintendent's successive year(s) were successful. 5.9% of the board members believed their superintendent's successive year(s) were somewhat successful, 1.4% stated their superintendent's successive year(s) were minimally successful, and 1.4% believed their superintendent's successive year(s) were not successful at all.

Table 28
Level of Success of Superintendent for Successive Year(s)

Superintendent's successive year(s)	No.	%
Very successful	41	59.4
Successful	22	31.9
Somewhat successful	4	5.9
Minimally successful	1	1.4
Not successful at all	1	1.4

N=69

Table 29 represents data received regarding the total number of superintendents employed in each of the respondents school districts during the last ten years. Approximately 60.6% of the 71 respondents stated their school district had employed two superintendents in the last ten years. Of the 71 respondents, 26.8% of the board members stated their school district had employed three superintendents during the last ten years, and 12.6% of the board members stated their school district had employed four or more superintendents in the last ten years.

Table 29
Total Number of Superintendents in Last 10 Years

Superintendents employed in last 10 years	No.	%
1	0	-
2	43	60.6
3	19	26.8
4 or more	9	12.6

N=71

Research question six stated: What impact did superintendent turnover rate have on the superintendent selection process? Results received from respondents indicated that of the school districts that had two superintendents in the past ten years, 28 of the 43 had been selected by the board. Of those school districts that had employed three superintendents in the past ten years, 10 out of 19 had been selected by the board. Finally, there were nine school districts that had employed four or more superintendents in the past ten years. All of these districts selected their superintendent without the use of a search firm (See Table 30). These data seem to indicate superintendent turnover rate is impacted by the superintendent search process. School districts with lower turnover rates are those that have utilized a search firm to search and select their superintendent.

Table 30

Impact Superintendent Turnover had on Superintendent Search Process

Turnover rate (Superintendents in last 10 years)	2		3		4 or more	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	28	65.1	10	52.6	9	100
Search firm	15	34.9	9	47.4	0	0.0

N=71

Research question 12 stated: How do school board member's perceptions differ according to superintendent turnover rate as related to superintendent search criteria? Table 31 depicts data received from respondents based upon superintendent turnover rate and those criteria school board members identified as de-selection criteria, or those items that caused school board members to not consider a superintendent applicant. Table 32 presents data based upon superintendent turnover rate and the knowledge and skills commonly used in the superintendent selection process. School board members identified these knowledge and skills as a very high priority, high priority, priority, low priority, and not a priority for superintendents to possess.

Data received regarding superintendent turnover rate and de-selection criteria revealed superintendent turnover rate did not seem to make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria. Board members from all three categories (2, 3, and 4 superintendents in the last 10 years) reported not having an educational background, having no prior administrative experience, having no prior superintendent experience,

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and having no central office experience at similar and higher rates than the remaining categories (See Table 31).

Data collected in this study regarding superintendent turnover rate and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process revealed that superintendent turnover rate did not seem to make a difference on board member's prioritization of some superintendent knowledge and skills. Board members in all three categories (2, 3, and 4 superintendents in the last 10 years) rated superintendent/school board relations, community relations, communication/interpersonal skills, finance/budget, instructional leadership, strategic planning, and media relations as very high priorities for superintendents. Knowledge and skills in facilities, management, personnel, and legal issues were rated as high priorities. The areas of transportation and technology received the lowest prioritization throughout all three categories (See Table 32).

Table 31

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Superintendent Turnover Rate as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (De-selection Criteria)

Turnover rate (Superintendents in last 10 years)	2	3	4 or more
	No.	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	35	17	9
Having no prior administrative experience	28	14	9
Having no prior superintendent experience	13	7	6
Having no central office experience	15	5	6
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	9	9	-
Not having a doctoral degree	3	5	-
From outside the district	2	2	-
From inside the district	1	1	-
Other	2	1	-

Note. N=71 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 32
How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Superintendent Turnover Rate as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection Process)

Turnover rate (Superintendents in last 10 years) Knowledge/Skill	2				3				4 or more			
	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	3	40	-	-	2	17	-	-	2	7	-	-
Community Relations	15	28	-	-	7	12	-	-	6	3	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	8	35	-	-	2	17	-	-	2	7	-	-
Facilities	-	19	24	-	-	8	11	-	1	2	6	-
Finance/Budget	15	22	6	-	5	11	3	-	1	3	5	-
Transportation	-	17	22	4	-	6	13	-	-	2	4	3
Technology	-	17	22	4	-	5	14	-	-	1	5	3
Instructional Leadership	32	11	-	-	14	5	-	-	9	-	-	-
Management	3	40	-	-	1	18	-	-	-	9	-	-
Personnel	-	34	9	-	-	15	4	-	-	3	6	-
Legal Issues	1	40	2	-	-	19	-	-	1	7	1	-
Strategic Planning	4	33	6	-	-	17	2	-	3	5	-	-
Media Relations	5	32	6	-	2	15	2	-	5	3	1	-

Note. N=71 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

Table 33 consists of data received from school board members' responses to the question, "Did the board members receive information/training on how to develop and conduct superintendent search/selection?" Of the 71 respondents, 60.5% replied that they had received information/training on how to develop and conduct superintendent search/selection, while 39.5% stated that they had not received information/training on how to develop and conduct superintendent search/selection.

Table 33
Board Training Regarding Superintendent Search/Selection

Board received training	No.	%
Yes	43	60.5
No	28	39.5

N=71

Table 34 addresses research question one which asked: What percentage of Missouri public school districts in the sample population utilizes superintendent search firms to assist in the selection of a superintendent? Results indicated that 34.3% of the respondent school board members school districts utilized a superintendent search firm to assist in the section of their last superintendent.

Table 34 specifically depicts results of data received regarding the following question posed to board members: If a search firm and/or consultant was used (during their last superintendent search/selection process), how satisfied were you with the results? 65.7% of the 70 respondents replied "not applicable", because a search firm and/or consultant was not utilized during their last superintendent search. Approximately

17.1% of the board members responding stated they were very satisfied with the results

of the search/selection process, while 11.4% stated they were satisfied with the results of

the search/selection process. Approximately 2.9% of the respondents were somewhat

satisfied with the results of the search/selection process, and 2.9% of the respondents

were not satisfied with the results of the search/selection process. While the majority of

respondents did not utilize a search firm, those districts that did utilize a search firm had a

high level of satisfaction.

Table 34
Board Member Satisfaction Utilizing Search Firm/Consultant

Satisfied with results (using search firm/consultant)	No.	%
Very satisfied	12	17.1
Satisfied	8	11.4
Somewhat satisfied	2	2.9
Not satisfied	2	2.9
Not applicable	46	65.7

N=70

Table 35 describes data received from school board respondents relating to the

question: If the board conducted its own search, how satisfied were you? Approximately

45.7% of the respondents indicated they were very satisfied with the results of their

search. Approximately 34.3% of the respondents replied not applicable, indicating that

they utilized a search firm or consultant instead of conducting the search on their own.

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Approximately 18.6% of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with the results of their own search, and 1.4% indicated that they were somewhat satisfied with the results of their search. Of those districts that conducted the search and selection of their superintendent on their own, the majority (64.3%) were satisfied and would classify the search as effective.

Table 35
Board Member Satisfaction Conducting Their Own Search

Satisfied with results (Board conducted search)	No.	%
Very satisfied	32	45.7
Satisfied	13	18.6
Somewhat satisfied	1	1.4
Not satisfied	0	-
Not applicable	24	34.3

N=70

Table 36 depicts data received from school board respondents regarding the current tenure of their superintendent. Out of 69 respondents, 46.4% reported their superintendent had been in their current position for three years. The remainder of the respondents reported the following results: 27.5% stated their superintendent was in their second year of employment, 14.5% stated their superintendent was in their fourth year, and 11.6% stated their superintendent had been employed for five years.

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Table 36
Current Superintendent Tenure

Current tenure of superintendent (# of years)	No.	%
2	19	27.5
3	32	46.4
4	10	14.5
5	8	11.6

N=69

Tables 37 through 49 describe data based upon board members opinions regarding the knowledge and/or skills commonly utilized in the superintendent selection process. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each knowledge and/or skill as it applied to their superintendent search process. Possible responses included very high priority, high priority, priority, low priority, and not a priority. A total of 71 responses were received from school board members for each of the 13 possible knowledge and/or skill areas which included: superintendent/school board relations, community relations, communication/interpersonal skills, facilities, finance/budget, transportation, technology, instructional leadership, management, personnel, legal issues, strategic planning, and media relations.

Of the 71 respondents, 88.7% rated the skill or knowledge area of superintendent/school board relations as a high priority, while 11.3% rated this area as a very high priority. Respondents rated the area of community relations as follows: 63.4% as a high priority and 36.6% rated this area as a very high priority. In the area of

communication/interpersonal skills, 81.7% of the respondents rated this area as a high

priority, 16.9% rated this area as a very high priority, and 1.4% rated this area as a

priority. Of the 71 respondents, 57.8% of the respondents reported that the skill or

knowledge of facilities was a priority, 40.8% stated this area was a high priority, and

1.4% reported this area as a very high priority.

When asked about the importance of skill and/or knowledge in the area of

finance/budget, 50.7% rated this area as a high priority, 29.6% rated this area as a very

high priority, and 19.7% rated this area as a priority. In the area of transportation

knowledge, respondents stated the following: 56.3% rated this area as a priority, 33.9%

rated this area as a high priority, and 9.8% rated this area as a low priority. Of the 71

respondents, 54.9% of the respondents rated the skill and/or knowledge area of

technology as a priority, 32.4% rated this area as a high priority, while 9.9% rated this

area a low priority, and 2.8% rated this area as a very high priority. When asked about the

importance of skill and/or knowledge in the area of instructional leadership, 74.6% rated

this area as a very high priority, while 25.4% rated this area as a high priority.

In the area of skill and/or knowledge in management, 94.4% of the respondents

stated this as a high priority, while 5.6% rated this area as a very high priority. In the area

of personnel, 73.2% of the respondents stated this was a high priority, while 26.8% rated

this area as a priority. When asked about the importance of knowledge and/or skill in

legal issues, 93% of the respondents stated this area was a high priority, 4.2% of the

respondents rated this area as a priority, and 2.8% rated this area as a very high priority.

Of the 71 respondents, 78.9% of the respondents believed the area of strategic planning

was a high priority, while 11.2% believed this area was a priority, and 9.9% believed this

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area was a very high priority. In the area of media relations, 70.4% of the respondents

stated this area was a high priority, 16.9% stated this area was a very high priority, and

12.7% stated this area was a priority.

Table 37
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Superintendent/school board relations

Superintendent/school board relations	No.	%
Very high priority	8	11.3
High priority	63	88.7
Priority	0	-
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 38
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Community relations

Community relations	No.	%
Very high priority	26	36.6
High priority	45	63.4
Priority	0	-
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 39

Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Communication/interpersonal skills

Communication/interpersonal skills	No.	%
Very high priority	12	16.9
High priority	58	81.7
Priority	1	1.4
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 40

Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Facilities

Facilities	No.	%
Very high priority	1	1.4
High priority	29	40.8
Priority	41	57.8
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

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Table 41
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Finance/budget

Finance/budget	No.	%
Very high priority	21	29.6
High priority	36	50.7
Priority	14	19.7
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 42
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Transportation

Transportation	No.	%
Very high priority	0	-
High priority	24	33.9
Priority	40	56.3
Low priority	7	9.8
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 43
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Technology

Technology	No.	%
Very high priority	2	2.8
High priority	23	32.4
Priority	39	54.9
Low priority	7	9.9
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 44
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership	No.	%
Very high priority	53	74.6
High priority	18	25.4
Priority	0	-
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 45
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Management

Management	No.	%
Very high priority	4	5.6
High priority	67	94.4
Priority	0	-
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 46
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Personnel

Personnel	No.	%
Very high priority	0	-
High priority	52	73.2
Priority	19	26.8
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 47
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Legal issues

Legal issues	No.	%
Very high priority	2	2.8
High priority	66	93.0
Priority	3	4.2
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 48
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Strategic planning

Strategic planning	No.	%
Very high priority	7	9.9
High priority	56	78.9
Priority	8	11.2
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Table 49
Knowledge or Skill Commonly Utilized: Media relations

Media relations	No.	%
Very high priority	12	16.9
High priority	50	70.4
Priority	9	12.7
Low priority	0	-
Not a priority	0	-

N=71

Board members were asked to list any other knowledge or skills that were a

priority for their superintendent searches that were not listed previously. Eight responses

were submitted and are listed verbatim:

*Desire to work in our district and a passion for the job and making
successful students.*

customer skills, academic emphasis

proven experience raising academic standards

organizational skills

technology savvy

Philosophical relationship with Board, Patrons, and Students

Excellent management skills

*I can say that our main focus was on the knowledge and skills necessary to
improve student achievement and student success in a district with
changing demographics, specifically increasing minority and free/reduced
lunch populations.*

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Tables 50 through 59 present data received regarding demographic information

about each of the respondent school board members current superintendents. School

board members were asked to identify their superintendent's gender, whether or not their

superintendent was a minority or non-minority, their superintendent's age range, and

whether or not their superintendent had earned a doctoral degree (PhD or EdD).

Of the 71 responding board members, 73.2% indicated their superintendent was

male and 26.8% responded their superintendent was female (See Table 50). Research

question five stated: What impact did superintendent gender have on the superintendent

selection process? Of the 70 board members that responded regarding the gender of their

superintendent and the process their board utilized to hire a superintendent, 35 indicated

that their superintendent was male and a search firm was not utilized while 17 indicated

that their superintendent was male and a search firm was used. Eleven respondents

indicated that their superintendent was a female and the board did not use a search firm,

while seven indicated that their superintendent was female and a search firm was utilized

(See Table 51). These data seem to indicate that superintendent gender did not have an

adverse impact on the superintendent selection process.

Table 50
Superintendent gender

Gender	No.	%
Female	19	26.8
Male	52	73.2

N=71

Table 51
Impact Gender had on Superintendent Selection Process

Gender	Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	11	61.1	35	67.3
Search firm	7	38.9	17	32.7

N=70

Research question 11 stated: How do school board member's perceptions differ according to superintendent gender as related to superintendent search criteria? Table 52 presents data received from respondents based upon superintendent gender and those criteria school board members identified as de-selection criteria, or those items that caused school board members to not consider a superintendent applicant. Table 53 presents data based upon superintendent gender and the knowledge and skills commonly used in the superintendent selection process. School board members identified these knowledge and skills as a very high priority, high priority, priority, low priority, and not a priority for superintendents' to possess.

Data received regarding superintendent gender and de-selection criteria revealed superintendent gender did not seem to make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria. Board members from both categories (female and male) reported not having an educational background, having no prior administrative experience, having no prior superintendent experience, having no central office experience, and not having

experience in district with similar characteristics at similar and higher rates than the remaining categories (See Table 52).

Data collected in this study regarding superintendent gender and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process revealed that superintendent gender did not seem to make a difference on board members prioritization of some superintendent knowledge and skills. Board members in both categories (female and male) rated superintendent/school board relations, community relations, communication/interpersonal skills, finance/budget, instructional leadership, management, strategic planning, and media relations as very high priorities for superintendents. Knowledge and skills in facilities, personnel, and legal issues were also rated as high priorities consistently in both categories. The areas of transportation and technology received the lowest prioritization throughout both categories (See Table 53).

Table 52

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Superintendent Gender as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (De-Selection Criteria)

Gender	Female	Male
	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	18	42
Having no prior administrative experience	16	36
Having no prior superintendent experience	10	16
Having no central office experience	8	18
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	7	11
Not having a doctoral degree	5	3
From outside the district	2	2
From inside the district	1	1
Other	-	2

Note. N=71 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 53

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Superintendent Gender as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection Process)

Gender	Female				Male			
Knowledge/Skill	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	3	16	-	-	4	48	-	-
Community Relations	8	11	-	-	20	32	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	4	15	-	-	8	43	1	-
Facilities	-	9	10	-	1	20	31	-
Finance/Budget	8	8	3	-	13	28	11	-
Transportation	-	6	10	3	-	19	29	4
Technology	-	7	10	2	-	16	31	5
Instructional Leadership	15	4	-	-	40	12	-	-
Management	1	18	-	-	3	49	-	-
Personnel	-	13	6	-	-	39	13	-
Legal Issues	-	18	1	-	2	49	1	-
Strategic Planning	1	17	1	-	6	38	7	-
Media Relations	1	17	1	-	11	33	8	-

Note. N=71 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

When asked to provide the minority status of their superintendents, board members indicated that 95.8% were non-minority while 2.8% were minority (See Table 54). Board members were also asked to provide the age range of their current superintendent. Of the 71 respondents, 53.6% indicated their superintendent's age was in the range of 51-60 years of age. The remaining respondent's superintendent's age ranges were as follows: 33.8% in the 41-50 age range, 4.2% in the 36-40 age range, 2.8% in the 30-35 age range, 2.8% in the 61+ age range, and 2.8% of the respondents were not sure of their superintendent's age range (See Table 55).

Table 54
Superintendent minority/non-minority

Minority/non-minority	No.	%
Minority	2	2.8
Non-Minority	68	97.2

N=71

Table 55
Superintendent age range

Age range	No.	%
30-35	2	2.8
36-40	3	4.2
41-50	24	33.8
51-60	38	53.6
61+	2	2.8
Not sure	2	2.8

N=71

School board members were asked whether or not their current superintendent held a doctoral degree (either a PhD or EdD). Of the 71 respondents, 50.8% indicated their superintendent held a doctoral degree, 47.8% stated their superintendent did not hold a doctoral degree, and 1.4% of the respondents were not sure if their superintendent held a doctoral degree (See Table 56). Research question seven stated: What impact did a superintendent who possessed a doctoral degree have on the superintendent selection process? Of the 36 superintendents that held doctoral degrees, 20 were selected by their board, while of the 34 superintendents that did not hold doctoral degrees, 26 were selected by their board (See Table 57). These data seem to indicate that superintendents that are selected by search firms have a higher likelihood of having a doctoral degree as opposed to the superintendents selected by the board. Thus, the possession of a doctoral degree did seem to have an impact on the superintendent selection process.

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Table 56
Doctoral degree held (either a PhD or EdD)

Doctoral degree	No.	%
Yes	36	50.8
No	34	47.8
Not sure	1	1.4

N=71

Table 57
Impact of Superintendent Possessing a Doctoral Degree had on Superintendent Selection Process

Doctoral degree	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Board search	20	55.6	26	76.5
Search firm	16	44.4	8	23.5

N=70

Research question 13 stated: How do school board member's perceptions differ according to the superintendent possessing a doctoral degree as related to superintendent search criteria? Table 58 presents data received from respondents based upon the superintendent possessing a doctoral degree and those criteria school board members identified as de-selection criteria, or those items that caused school board members to not consider a superintendent applicant. Table 59 presents data based upon the superintendent possessing a doctoral degree and the knowledge and skills commonly used in the

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superintendent selection process. School board members identified these knowledge and skills as a very high priority, high priority, priority, low priority, and not a priority for superintendents' to possess.

Data received regarding the superintendent possessing a doctoral degree and de-selection criteria revealed that superintendents possessing a doctoral degree did not seem to make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria. Board members from both categories (doctoral degree or no doctoral degree) reported not having an educational background, having no prior administrative experience, having no prior superintendent experience, and having no central office experience at similar and higher rates than the remaining categories (See Table 58).

Data collected in this study regarding the superintendent possessing a doctoral degree and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process revealed that superintendents possessing a doctoral degree did not seem to make a difference on board member's prioritization of some superintendent knowledge and skills. Board members in both categories (doctoral degree or no doctoral degree) rated superintendent/school board relations, community relations, communication/interpersonal skills, finance/budget, instructional leadership, management, strategic planning, and media relations as very high priorities for superintendents. Knowledge and skills in facilities, personnel, and legal issues were rated as high priorities. The areas of transportation and technology received the lowest prioritization throughout both categories (See Table 59).

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Table 58

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Superintendent Possessing
a Doctoral Degree as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (De-Selection Criteria)

Doctoral degree	Yes	No
	No.	No.
Not having an educational background	31	28
Having no prior administrative experience	27	24
Having no prior superintendent experience	16	10
Having no central office experience	18	7
Not having experience in district with similar characteristics	11	6
Not having a doctoral degree	7	1
From outside the district	2	2
From inside the district	1	1
Other	1	2

Note. N=70 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)

Table 59

How School Board Members Perceptions Differ According to Superintendents Possessing a Doctoral Degree as Related to Superintendent Search Criteria (Knowledge and Skills Used in Superintendent Selection Process)

Doctoral degree	Yes				No			
Knowledge/Skill	VHP	HP	P	LP	VHP	HP	P	LP
Superintendent/ School Board Relations	4	32	-	-	3	31	-	-
Community Relations	16	20	-	-	12	22	-	-
Communication/ Interpersonal Skills	7	29	-	-	5	28	1	-
Facilities	1	11	24	-	-	17	17	-
Finance/Budget	7	19	10	-	14	16	4	-
Transportation	-	9	22	5	-	15	29	2
Technology	-	11	21	4	-	11	20	3
Instructional Leadership	28	8	-	-	28	6	-	-
Management	2	34	-	-	2	32	-	-
Personnel	-	23	13	-	-	29	5	-
Legal Issues	2	33	1	-	-	32	2	-
Strategic Planning	6	29	1	-	1	27	6	-
Media Relations	10	25	1	-	2	25	7	-

Note. N=70 (respondents had the option to select multiple items)
VHP = Very High Priority, HP = High Priority, P = Priority, LP = Low Priority

School board member respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments if they desired. The comments supplied (minus identifiable content) were as follows:

He came to us as a High School principal, and told us in the interview, his goal was to be our next superintendent, and retire from the district. He did not have his superintendent's certification for the first year, but got it and is great one. The board is glad to have him and hope to keep him as long as it is mutually beneficial for all of us.

Superintendent job description needed to be revised and that didn't happen. It was slightly studied but became too hard to make the changes. Also, classroom experience needed to be emphasized more.

One subject that was difficult to deal with was a petition by staff to support an internal candidate. I am not sure at that point that we considered utilizing any staff during the interview process, because to compound the matter a couple of petition signatures belonged to board members spouses who were employees of the district. This was an indication to me we needed an external search.

I was on the Board when the current Superintendent was hired, but I was deployed with the military at the time. I received email and phone calls occasionally about the progress of the search.

We promoted our Assistant Superintendent to Superintendent.

We were very fortunate in our last supt. opening because the Board knew that they wanted to promote one of our current asst. supts. We only interviewed and considered our two assistants that were already in the district. If the Board had not been satisfied with the interviews, we would have opened the process up to candidates outside the district. We have used MSBA for the previous 3 superintendents and were very DISSATISFIED with their process. It is nothing but a "good old boy" network. MSBA determines who they think is ready for a promotion from across the state, then they talk the selection committee into accepting their candidate. Because they get everybody and their brother involved as members of the selection committee, the Board is almost forced to go along with the committee's recommendation. They (MSBA) are not good at what they do! We currently have the best superintendent in the state of Missouri! I speak from 24 years of experience as a board member.

Summary

This chapter presented results on the 13 research questions. The descriptive analysis indicated that a majority of the school board members sampled did not utilize a search firm when search for and selecting a superintendent. Furthermore, the analysis also indicated that school district enrollment size, school district location, superintendent turnover rate, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree did have an impact on the superintendent search process. However, school district wealth and superintendent gender did not seem to have an impact on the type of superintendent search procedures utilized.

Further analysis found that school district enrollment size did not make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria during the superintendent selection process, but did make a difference when coupled with knowledge and skills used in superintendent selection process. Additional analysis revealed that school district location, school district wealth, superintendent turnover rate, superintendent gender, and superintendent possessing a doctoral degree did not make a difference in the superintendent selection process when coupled with de-selection criteria or knowledge and skills used in superintendent selection process.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the study, findings, conclusions based upon the interpretation of the findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

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 determine if the superintendent search criteria differed by school district enrollment, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent gender, superintendent turnover rate and superintendents possessing a doctorate degree.

While a minimal amount of research exists that specifically addresses superintendent search and selection practices, the results of this study were consistent with Wallace's (2003) national investigative study that found multiple variables, including district enrollment size, district location, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree did seem to have an effect on the type of superintendent selection procedure utilized by school districts and its effectiveness. In previous studies, (Glass, 2001, Glass et al., 2000, Chance, 1992) research indicated factors such as open communication with the board and the community, people skills, and effective decision-making contributed to superintendent effectiveness. Factors such as lack of

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communication and autocratic leadership styles were found to increase superintendent turnover.

Findings

This study found that the majority (65.7%) of school board respondents in Missouri selected their superintendent as opposed to hiring a search firm to complete the search and selection process and that only 34.3% of the respondent school board members school districts utilized a superintendent search firm to assist in the section of their last superintendent. Of school board member respondents who conducted their own searches, an overwhelming majority (97.8%) believed their search and selection procedures were effective. Only 2.2% of these respondents stated they were only somewhat satisfied with the results of their superintendent search. Of those boards that utilized search firms, 83.3% also stated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the results of the search/selection process, while approximately 16.7% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied or not satisfied with the results of the search/selection process.

When analyzing additional data received, the variables of school district enrollment, location, superintendent turnover rate, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree seemed to have an impact when coupled with the superintendent search and selection process. School districts that had larger enrollments, an urban location, lower superintendent turnover, and superintendents with doctoral degrees seemed to be those districts that utilized a search firm more frequently. Conversely, the variables of school district wealth and superintendent gender did not seem to have an impact when coupled with the superintendent search process.

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Data received in this study regarding all three sizes of school districts were consistent with Wallace's (2003) study that found medium and large sized districts utilized search firms much more frequently than small sized school districts. Data received in this study were also consistent with Wallace's (2003) study that found a large number of rural and small town school districts conducted their own search, while urban districts often hired search firms.

When analyzing how school board member's perceptions differed according to school district enrollment, location, wealth, gender, superintendent turnover rate, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree when coupled with de-selection criteria and knowledge and skills used in the superintendent search process, the data revealed that enrollment size did not make a difference when coupled with de-selection criteria, but did make a difference with coupled with knowledge and skills used in the superintendent search process.

The variables of district location, school district wealth, superintendent turnover rate, superintendent gender, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree did not make a difference in the superintendent selection process when coupled with both de-selection criteria and the knowledge and skills used in the superintendent search process.

Board member respondents also indicated it was a very high priority for superintendents to possess knowledge and/or skills in the following areas (in order of importance): instructional leadership, community relations, finance/budget board, media relations, communication/interpersonal skills, superintendent/board relations, management, and legal issues. Other knowledge and/or skills found to be a high priority

included strategic planning, personnel, and facilities. The areas of transportation and technology were found to be the lowest levels of priority.

Conclusions

This section includes conclusions based upon findings previously discussed. Findings lead to the general conclusion that the majority of local school boards in Missouri do not utilize search firms but prefer searching for and selecting a superintendent on their own. The data also suggest that the majority of board members are highly satisfied with their search results, whether they perform the search on their own or hire a search firm. The findings of this study also lead to the general conclusion that school district size, location, superintendent turnover rate, and superintendents possessing a doctoral degree do have an impact on the superintendent search process. However, this study revealed that school district wealth and superintendent gender did not have an impact on the superintendent selection process.

Additional findings of this study lead to the conclusion that school district enrollment does make a difference when coupled with knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process. Conversely, this study found that the variable of school district enrollment, when coupled with de-selection criteria, did not make a difference during the superintendent selection process. Additionally, school district location, school district wealth, superintendent turnover rate, superintendent gender, and superintendent possessing a doctoral degree did not make a difference in the selection process when coupled with de-selection criteria or knowledge and skills used in the superintendent selection process.

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Recommendations

  This study attempted to make an addition to the small amount of current literature regarding superintendent search and selection practices by utilizing data received about superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri. This study may have implications for practitioners in the state of Missouri and elsewhere regarding superintendent search and selection practices and their effectiveness.

  While this study provided evidence that the majority of local school boards sampled in the state of Missouri prefer searching for and selecting superintendents on their own instead of hiring a search firm, it does not provide practitioners with conclusive evidence of what superintendent search and selection practice is most successful. This study also suggested that certain demographic variables do have an impact and can make a difference when related to superintendent search and selection practices. However, a more sophisticated analysis is necessary to address the effect of current superintendent search and selection practices when related to different variables and to further develop criteria for future superintendent searches. Future studies could follow-up with school districts to see if superintendents that were hired actually possess the skills deemed to be important when hiring took place.

Appendix A

(This is an e-mail that will be sent to each applicable Superintendent)

Superintendent of Schools:

I am requesting your assistance for your board members participation in a study of Superintendent Search and Selection Practices in the State of Missouri. This study is being conducted as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The work will be published and disseminated to a wider audience. I am using the important information provided by your school board members to examine the current Superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri.

•Request: I am requesting your assistance in forwarding the attached document to **all of your current school board members who have been involved in hiring a superintendent(s) within the past five years (2002-2006 school years).** *If your school district has not hired a superintendent during this time period or your school district has hired a new superintendent for the 2006-2007 school year, please disregard this request.* The message describes the purpose of the study and provides a link to the web-based survey regarding superintendent search/selection.

•Participation in this study is completely voluntary: If you or your school board members decide not to provide information, I will respect that decision. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions about your participation. You may reach me at 660-221-2419. You may also reach my project advisor, Dr. Robert Bowman at (660) 543-8628.

•Your Responsibility: Forwarding the attached document to each applicable school board members who will provide accurate information regarding search and selection practices in your school district via a web-based survey. **By forwarding the attached document to your school board members, you are consenting to participation in this study.**

•Your identity, the identity of your school board, and the identity of your school district will be protected and remain confidential in the reporting of my findings. The requested data do not contain private information about individuals or groups in your school district. Individual school district's responses and the names of individuals providing the information will not be reported in the findings. The data will only be reported in aggregate form.

Your employment status or relationship within the school district will not be affected as a result of your participation (or lack thereof participation).

The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and are similar to the risks of everyday life. By participating in this study, the body of knowledge regarding the

selection of Superintendents in the state of Missouri will assist school districts in creating the best possible educational environment for students.

•Protection from injury: It is not the policy of the University of Missouri to compensate human subjects in the event the research results in injury. The University of Missouri does have medical, professional and general liability self-insurance coverage for any injury caused by the negligence of its faculty and staff. Within the limitations of the laws of the State of Missouri, the University of Missouri will also provide facilities and medical attention to subjects who suffer injuries while participating in the research projects of the University of Missouri. In the event you have suffered injury as the result of participating in this research project, you are to immediately contact the Campus Institutional Review Board Compliance Officer at (573) 882-9585 and the Risk Management Officer at (573) 882-3735 to review the matter and provide you further information. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

Your school board member(s) completion and submission of the survey will indicate their consent to participate in the study of superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri. Thank you for your assistance with my study. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please feel free to contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Patrick
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
University of Missouri-Columbia

Appendix B

(This is a document that will be sent to each applicable Board of Education member)

Board of Education member:

I am requesting your assistance in a study of Superintendent Search and Selection Practices in the State of Missouri. This study is being conducted as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The work will be published and disseminated to a wider audience. I am using the important information provided by school board members to examine the current Superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri.

•Request: I am requesting your assistance in completing and submitting a web-based survey regarding your district's Superintendent search and selection practices.

•Participation in this study is completely voluntary: If you decide not to provide information, I will respect that decision. You can skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions about your participation. You may reach me at 660-221-2419. You may also reach my project advisor, Dr. Robert Bowman at (660) 543-8628.

•Your identity and the identity of your school district will be protected and remain confidential in the reporting of my findings. The requested data do not contain private information about individuals or groups in your school district. Individual school district's responses and the names of individuals providing the information will not be reported in the findings. The data will only be reported in aggregate form. The school district code requested will only be utilized to gather demographic information about the district.

Your employment status or relationship within the school district will not be affected as a result of your participation (or lack thereof participation).

The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and are similar to the risks of everyday life. By participating in this study, the body of knowledge regarding the selection of Superintendents in the state of Missouri will assist school districts in creating the best possible educational environment for students.

•Your Responsibility: Completing a web-based survey regarding search and selection practices in your school district. The survey is located at the following web address:

http://fs10.formsite.com/Sedalia_200/form246180059/index.html

•Protection from injury: It is not the policy of the University of Missouri to compensate human subjects in the event the research results in injury. The University of Missouri

does have medical, professional and general liability self-insurance coverage for any injury caused by the negligence of its faculty and staff. Within the limitations of the laws of the State of Missouri, the University of Missouri will also provide facilities and medical attention to subjects who suffer injuries while participating in the research projects of the University of Missouri. In the event you have suffered injury as the result of participating in this research project, you are to immediately contact the Campus Institutional Review Board Compliance Officer at (573) 882-9585 and the Risk Management Officer at (573) 882-3735 to review the matter and provide you further information. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate in the study of superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri.

Thank you for your assistance with my study. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please feel free to contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585.

Thank you once again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Patrick
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
University of Missouri-Columbia

Appendix C

(This is a follow-up e-mail that will be sent to each applicable Board of Education member)

Board of Education member:

Recently you received a request to assist me in gathering information regarding my study of Superintendent Search and Selection Practices in the State of Missouri. This study is being conducted as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

If you have completed the survey, I thank you for your participation. If you have not yet completed the survey, I ask that you complete it and return it as soon as possible. Completing the survey should not take more than ten minutes. Once again, this web-based survey can be found at the following web address:

http://fs10.formsite.com/Sedalia_200/form246180059/index.html

Once again, I thank you for your participation in this study.

Scott W. Patrick
Assistant Superintendent
Warrensburg R-VI School District
438 East Market St.
Warrensburg, MO 64093
(660) 747-7823

Appendix D

Superintendent Search and Selection

Board of Education member:

I am requesting your assistance in a study of Superintendent Search and Selection Practices in the State of Missouri. This study is being conducted as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The work will be published and disseminated to a wider audience. I am using the important information provided by school board members to examine the current Superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri.

Request: I am requesting your assistance in completing and submitting this web-based survey regarding your district's Superintendent search and selection practices.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary: If you decide not to provide information, I will respect that decision. You can skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions about your participation. You may reach me at 660-221-2419. You may also reach my project advisor, Dr. Robert Bowman at (660) 543-8628.

Your identity and the identity of your school district will be protected and remain confidential in the reporting of my findings. The requested data do not contain private information about individuals or groups in your school district. Individual school district's responses and the names of individuals providing the information will not be reported in the findings. The data will only be reported in aggregate form. The school district code requested will only be utilized to gather demographic information about the district.

Your employment status or relationship within the school district will not be affected as a result of your participation (or lack thereof participation).

The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and are similar to the risks of everyday life. By participating in this study, the body of knowledge regarding the selection of Superintendents in the state of Missouri will assist school districts in creating the best possible educational environment for students.

Your Responsibility: Completing this web-based survey regarding search and selection practices in your school district.

Protection from injury: It is not the policy of the University of Missouri to compensate human subjects in the event the research results in injury. The University of Missouri does have medical, professional and general liability self-insurance coverage for any injury caused by the negligence of its faculty and staff. Within the limitations of the laws of the State of Missouri, the University of Missouri will also provide facilities and medical

attention to subjects who suffer injuries while participating in the research projects of the University of Missouri. In the event you have suffered injury as the result of participating in this research project, you are to immediately contact the Campus Institutional Review Board Compliance Officer at (573) 882-9585 and the Risk Management Officer at (573) 882-3735 to review the matter and provide you further information. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

Your completion and submission of this survey will indicate your consent to participate in the study of superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri.

Thank you for your assistance with my study. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please feel free to contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585.

Thank you once again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Patrick
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
University of Missouri-Columbia

Superintendent Search & Selection

1. How long did the last superintendent search/selection process take from formal notice of vacancy to contract signing?

◻ 1 to 3 months

◻ 4 to 6 months

◻ 7 to 9 months

◻ 9 months to a year

◻ Not sure

◻ Other [＿＿＿＿＿]

2. Who conducted the search for your current superintendent?

☐ Missouri School Boards' Association (MSBA)

☐ Another Search Firm

☐ Private consultant

☐ Entire Board

☐ Committee of the Board

☐ Community Search Committee

☐ Not Sure

☐ Other [   ]

3. Who were active participants in the search? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Board members

☐ Community members

☐ Administrators

☐ Parents

☐ Non-certificated staff members

☐ Business/community members

☐ Local Governmental leader

☐ Not sure

☐ Other [   ]

4. Please check search committee activities. (Check all that apply.)

☐ Development of job description/criteria

☐ Recruitment

☐ Paper screening

☐ Reference checks

☐ Interview process

☐ Semi-finalist decision

☐ Finalist decision

☐ Site visits

☐ Final choice to hire

☐ Not sure

☐ Other [   ]

5. Does your present superintendent have prior experience as: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Superintendent

☐ Assistant Superintendent

☐ High School Principal

☐ Middle School Principal

☐ Elementary Principal

☐ Assistant Principal

☐ None

☐ Not sure

☐ Other [   ]

6. What was the size of your applicant pool?

○ 1-10

○ 11-20

○ 21-30

○ 31-40

○ More than 40

○ Not sure

7. What criteria during paper screening did the board and/or search consultant use to **screen-out** superintendent applicants? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Having no prior superintendent experience

☐ Not having a doctoral degree

☐ Not having an educational background

☐ Not having experience in a district with similar characteristics

☐ Having no central office experience

☐ Having no prior administrative experience

☐ From inside the distirct

☐ From outside the district

☐ Other [   ]

8. In your opinion, approximately what percentage of applicants were "well" qualified?

☐ 90-100%

☐ 80-89%

☐ 70-79%

☐ 60-69%

☐ 50-59%

☐ Below 50%

9. Please indicate the number of applicants the board interviewed.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8+

☐ Not sure

10. Please rate the "total" applicant pool as:

☐ Well-qualified

☐ Qualified

☐ Average

☐ Poorly qualified

☐ Not qualified

11. Approximately how much did your board spend on the search?

☐ Less than $2,000

☐ $2,000-$5,000

☐ $5,000-$10,000

☐ $10,000-$15,000

☐ $15,000-$20,000

☐ $20,000+

☐ Not sure

12. In your personal opinion, please rate your superintendent's first year:

☐ Very successful

☐ Successful

☐ Somewhat successful

☐ Minimally successful

☐ Not successful at all

13. Please rate your superintendent's successive years (if applicable):

☐ Very successful

☐ Successful

☐ Somewhat successful

☐ Minimally successful

☐ Not successful at all

14. In the last 10 years, how many superintendents has the district employed?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4 or more

☐ Not sure

15. Did the board members receive information/training on how to develop and conduct superintendent search/selection?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. If a search firm and/or consultant was used, how satisfied were <u>you</u> with the results?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Somewhat satisfied

☐ Not satisfied

☐ Not applicable

17. If the board conducted its own search, how satisfied were <u>you</u>?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Somewhat satisfied

☐ Not satisfied

☐ Not applicable

18. What is the current tenure of your superintendent? (Please enter the number of years)

[   ]

19. Below is a list of knowledge and skills commonly used in the superintendent selection process. Please indicate the importance of each knowledge or skill as it applied to your search process.

	Very High Priority	High Priority	Priority	Low Priority	Not a Priority
Superintendent-School Board Relations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community Relations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication/Interpersonal Skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Finance/Budget	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Transportation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instructional Leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Legal Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategic Planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Media Relations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please list any other knowledge or skills that were a priority for your superintendent search that were not listed in the previous question.

20. Please tell us about your present superintendent:

☐ Male

☐ Female

21. Please tell us about your present superintendent:

☐ Minority

☐ Non-minority

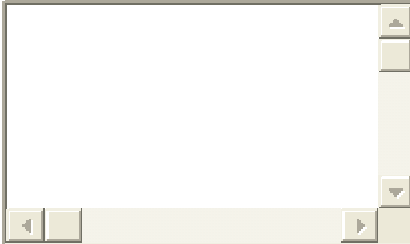**22. Please tell us the age of your present superintendent:**

☐ 30-35

☐ 36-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 51-60

☐ 61+

☐ Not sure

23. Doctorate held (Ph.D. or Ed.D.):

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Please enter your school district code:

Comments:

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Once again, your completion and submission of this survey will indicate your consent to participate in the study of superintendent search and selection practices in the state of Missouri.

Submit

This form created at http://www.formsite.com/

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VITA

Scott William Patrick was born in Kansas City, Missouri on October 14, 1966. Scott is the son of Norman and Minnie Patrick of Warrensburg, Missouri. After graduating from Warrensburg High School in 1985, Scott entered Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Education degree majoring in Physical Education and minoring in Biology in 1988. Scott earned his Master of Science in Secondary Education Administration in 1991, and his Education Specialist degree in Superintendency in 1999. Both degrees were received from Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri. Scott participated in the University of Missouri-Columbia cohort doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. Scott was a member of Cohort III, beginning in the summer of 2001. Scott has worked in the field of education for 18 years as a teacher, coach, and administrator.