THE SUPERINTENDENT'S MAINTENANCE AND INFLUENCE ON CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL CAPACITY: A MIXED METHOD STUDY

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Missouri- Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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AUGUST 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. George Petersen for putting me on this research path that has allowed to greatly expand my knowledge of school leadership and educational research. You have been a great advisor, teacher, and friend. Your willingness to work with me from afar has not only helped me get through this process, but demonstrated your deep commitment to your graduate students. Thank you again for all your patience and guidance. You have inspired me to always approach life with…no quarter.

To Dr. Jay Scribner for your willingness to help out as a co-advisor so I can continue the study. You have been a great teacher, supervisor, and advisor. Your continued guidance and support throughout the years has model for me how to be an excellent researcher and teacher. Your personal commitment to grace and accountability for excellence is something that I will take with me in both life and the classroom.

To Dr. Peggy Placier for your insightful and challenging questions that always kept me on my toes. Working with you has shown me how to navigate the world of education research while touching the everyday lives of schoolchildren.

To Dr. Jerry Valentine for helping me grow personally and professionally. Your help has improved my research and your research has truly impacted my knowledge of school leadership.

To Dr. Jessica Summers for everything that you have done for me. From your excellent classes, guidance, and edits, your willingness to always help out a graduate student in need has impacted me for a lifetime.

To my fellow graduate assistants on the third floor: Jeff, Ethan, Mark, Doug, Julie, and Tim for all the great and bad times we shared. You have taught me so much

about friendship, scholarship, and persistence. Hopefully all of us can take an extended lunch break, play quad-ball, and drink coffee together again someday.

To my brother Jason for who I could not have made it this far without him. You made this difficult time in my time bearable and I could never thank you enough. I hope someday to return the favor when you are getting a doctorate.

To the rest of my family: Mom, Rick, Danielle, and Grandma for the unconditional support, love, and inspiration. You have always supported my dreams no matter how impossible. Your sacrifices that let me to this point in me life will never go unnoticed.

To my favorite Heather for the many years of patience, support, and tremendous love you had with me. You have been there for me everyday both good and bad. The lifetime we spend together will make up for the tender moments we have missed. You will always be my favorite.

The greatest acknowledgement is for my Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Without you, none of the blessing you have given me would be possible. This work is my burnt offerings to you. I will forever be thankful and grateful to have you as the focus of my life.

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this investigation is an increased knowledge of the dynamics of these interactive relationships and the influence of the district superintendent on school improvement centered on instruction and student learning. Using the conceptual lenses of superintendent instructional leadership and instructional capacity, this investigation explored the attitudes, opinions and teachers' views of their superintendent's ability to influence classroom instruction. Specifically, we wanted to know the ability of the superintendent to teachers' ability to produce worthwhile and substantial student learning.

In this mixed method analysis, data were drawn from seven medium sized school districts in Missouri. In-depth and triangulation interviews with forty-seven classroom teachers were conducted by the authors. Teachers completed a questionnaire designed to examine factors related to teacher's perceptions of the district superintendent's instructional leadership, the superintendent's role in fostering an organizational environment that supported instructional capacity as well as involvement of teachers in their own professional learning and development.

Results of the correlational and regression analysis indicate a significant predictable relationship (R^2 = .878; F (2, 877) = .618, p =. 000) between the two independent variables (superintendent's instructional leadership and teacher's professional

development and instructional practices) the dependent variable (instructional capacity). Four themes emerged from the interviews with teachers. In these districts teachers perceived the superintendent as a (1. resource managers, (2. models of professional practice, (3. creating change in ideas of teaching and learning, and (4. creating a culture of trust. The paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications from these findings.

Chapter One

Background to the Study

Introduction

> *"…previous reforms never reached as deep as we must now reach to bring about lasting change for the better in public education. Changes in teacher beliefs and improved classroom practice are at the very core of the work we are undertaking. The name of the game is capacity-building and we must discover what this entails, or we shall find that the standards movement, too will be yet another in a long list of failed reforms (2001)."*
>
> Vicki L. Phillips
> Secretary of Education, Pennsylvania

Present trends of school reform and district accountability require school leadership and district reform efforts to move beyond traditional district management practices to focus on a renewed push for increasing district achievement (Petersen, 2003). No other position captures the focus of this groundswell of change unlike the top official in the school district-- the superintendent. Currently there are numerous social, professional, and political forces impacting the role of the superintendent to positively influence classroom instruction and student achievement. However, revolutions in the policies, preparation, and practices of district leadership have continually challenged the superintendent throughout the positions inception (Cuban, 1998).

Moving through six distinct eras beginning in the early 1900's, the role of the superintendent has historically been in a continual state of change (Petersen & Barnett,

2003). The superintendent, at the turn of the century to the mid 1930's, was influenced by scientific management which focused on infusing school districts with progressive business management and organizational efficiency (Callahan, 1964a). Additionally, the tremendous growth in the number of school age children forced superintendents to become increasingly focused on financial and facilities management (Callahan, 1964a). During this time, graduate programs for school leaders began highlighting the importance of business management to assist the increasing demands on educational organizations (Brunner, Grogan, & Björk, 2002; Callahan, 1964a; and Kowalski, 1999).

During the era from the 1930's to the mid 1950's, the superintendent's role became focused on becoming educational statesmen (Callahan, 1964a). Images of school leaders as bookkeepers and resource managers began to fade as the great depression affected school districts throughout the country (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Superintendents were beginning to become articulate philosophic leaders that began pushing school districts to focus on social responsibility and economic poverty. The role for the superintendent was changing from business management to a more academic and instructionally focused leadership style (Callahan, 1964a).

The mid 1950's to the 1970's was a dramatic change in the role of the superintendent. Following the conclusion of World War II, new images of the superintendent were developing which were less idealistic and increasingly grounded in the realities of the position (Callahan, 1964a). Professional organizations began to spring up and advocate for training, research, and additional support for district leaders. Professional standards and practices for superintendents were beginning to filter into preparation programs pushed by the Kellogg Foundation, the American Association of School Administrators,

and the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (Griffths, 1966). This era also began the passage of legislation focused on educational improvement and the development of teacher unions, both of which had a significant impact on the role of the superintendent yet again. This era, more that any previous, experienced significant social and political forces that changed the role of the superintendent for become much more visible and vocal in communicating with education stakeholders (Brunner et al, 2002).

The role of the superintendent changed from the 1970's to the 1980's to become an era of the accountable public servant (Petersen & Barnett, 2003). Parental, legislative, and pressure from newly formed teacher unions highlighted the public distrust and disappointment in school districts. Superintendents were thrust to the forefront of an increasingly political environment outside and within school districts. The capstone of this decade for educational change was the appointment of the first Secretary of Education in 1979 (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

From the 1980's to the 1990's, superintendents continued to experience friction. Much of the educational administration literature highlighted the failure of superintendents for substantial change, even thwarting efforts for improvement. Additionally, the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 further eroded popular opinion of the superintendent (Brunner et al, 2002; Carter and Cunningham, 1997, and Petersen & Barnett, 2003). During this decade, states began to develop standards and goals for districts further eroding the influence of the superintendent, thus forcing them to build political coalitions, seek external stakeholder support, and develop strategies for district improvement (Petersen & Barnett, 2003).

Petersen and Barnett (2003) cite the last significant era for the superintendent began in the 1990's and continue to the present. This era is highlighted by issues of leadership and school governance focused on achievement through curriculum and instruction. Superintendents continued with school reforms focused on instructional quality and academic performance using resources and expertise within and outside the school district. In the end, the school superintendent, focused on *external* demands, was becoming increasingly involved in promoting, facilitating, and maintaining organizational relationships and policies that advance the *internal* technical-core of curriculum and instruction (Elmore, 1999; Morgan & Petersen, 2002).

In the current climate of increasing importance on academic achievement, diversity, equity, technology, and student success, superintendents find themselves in situations in which they have limited understanding and expertise over such a broad spectrum of skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to meet increasing internal and external demands. Extant literature points to the fact that superintendents cannot continue to only focus on organizational management, but must distribute a significant amount of time and energy on curriculum and instructional capacity development; such as professional development, evaluation, and resource allocation. (Fusarelli, Cooper, & Carella, 2002).

Blending the multiple roles of the teacher-scholar, administrator, and statesman, superintendents need to focus on instructional issues and build relationships with the local community, while maintaining core functions of district operations. Having the ability to quickly shift between these roles has become extremely critical as superintendents manage increasing external and internal demands for accountability in student learning (Petersen & Barnett, 2003).

Internal demands

Internal demands for the superintendent to become attentive and knowledgeable in all areas of education within the district, specifically instructionally focused, have increased provided recent reform initiatives (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). Increased demands creates the need for the superintendent to become an instructional leader; yet many of the daily realities such as budgeting, school board relations, and policy implementation of the position keep the district leader far from impacting instruction in the classroom (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003).

District superintendents perceive a strong focus on curriculum and instruction unattainable because of numerous internal issues such as collective bargaining, working with the teacher's association, school and community politics, and board relations (Trump, 1986). Hess (1999) and Sarason (1996) concluded that superintendents lack the necessary tools to effect change and the physical structures of school bureaucracies have numerous levels between the superintendent and the classroom.

State pressures significantly increased the internal financial burden of districts by ambitious evaluation and scientifically proven programs pulling the superintendent further from being instructionally focused. However, it has become essential for local districts to cover the shortages (Education Commission of the States, 2002). Given the recent economic shortfalls, superintendents must become more entrepreneurial in practice, seeking external funding to increase the capacity for classroom data collection and program development (American Association of School Administrators, 2005).

Yet, superintendent internal involvement in instructional develop is necessary for success. Studies have highlighted the importance of the superintendent as central on

effective school reform, especially related to curriculum and instruction. Successful innovations and school improvements often have central office support and superintendents have the greatest advantage to support instructional improvement in the district (Fullan, 1992; Hord, 1993; Petersen 1999; Peterson & Finn, 1985).

While is it evident that administrative support through financial, human, and political resources are needed for instructional change to occur, there are many internal and external factors that superintendents must balance.

External influences

External influence on school leadership also impact the superintendent's ability to focus on the technical core of curriculum and instruction. Legislative mandates at the federal, state, and local level continually challenge the superintendency. Petersen & Barnett (2003) wrote:

> Much of the work and controversy a modern superintendent faces does not originate from their local boards of education; it comes from outside the school. Information and demands- requests from parents, principals, teachers, members of the board, federal and state departments, external advocates and programs, community groups etc, constantly bombard superintendents (p 9).

Carter & Cunningham (1997) highlight how external influence began in the 1980's and continued into the 1990's with the legislation created to stimulate educational renewal. During this time period individuals, organizations, and lawmakers intent on improving public education vigorously focused on school leadership and governance (Petersen & Barnett, 2003). *A Nation at Risk* (1983) was one of the first in a series of policy recommendations to hold school leaders accountable for improvement reforms.

The report recommended that educators should be held responsible for providing the leadership necessary to achieve the report's reforms. The report highlighted how principals and superintendents play a crucial role in gathering support and resources to carry out the outlined reforms. Managerial and leadership skills became the focus for future legislation for school improvement. For example new standards in for evaluation were developed focused on effective leadership practices, university based preparation programs adopted standards that moved training from managerial to organizational leadership, and sanctions were created to hold district leaders accountable for student achievement.

Signed into law by President Clinton on March 31, 1994, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* furthered this idea of accountability for district and school leaders by requiring states to dramatically rethink the role of school leaders and make them more accountable for school performance. It stated:

> Each state improvement plan shall establish strategies for improved governance, accountability and management of the State's education system, such as -- (1) aligning responsibility, authority, and accountability throughout the education system, so that decisions regarding the means for achieving state content standards and state student performance standards are made closest to the learners... (Title III, Sec. 306(e).)

Goals 2000 also introduced the need for "school leaders to develop systems and processes for familiarizing public school stakeholders with the state standards and developing the capacity and capability of teachers to provide high quality instruction within the content areas" (Sec. 306(c)(1)(D)). Superintendents were charged with serving on the front line of school reform and were also going to be held accountable to ensure

the district improvement specifically focused on the quality of instruction in public school classrooms.

Eight years later, another piece of legislation pushed the envelope and accountability of school leaders even further. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act called the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8th, 2002. A cornerstone of the new law focused on increasing school accountability by demonstrating adequate student achievement regardless of race or ethnicity, limited English proficiency, or economic status. This new accountability in local schools has several implications that directly apply to school superintendents as instructional leaders (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2002). Four critical aspects of No Child Left Behind impact the instructional leadership of the superintendent- student assessments, teacher quality, parental choice, and resource flexibility.

Accountability standards in NCLB require superintendents to develop yearly, standards based, district assessments (in conjunction with statewide tests) aligned to the state standards. Data are gathered from district, school, and classroom assessments (Armstrong & Anthes, 2001). NCLB allows districts to develop their own curriculum, but programs and practices must be scientifically proven and evidence of success in increasing student achievement will be targeted for federal monies.

Superintendents must recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in all classrooms. All teachers, to be considered highly qualified, must have full state certification, pass a state licensing exam, or meet the requirements of the state's public charter school laws (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2002). District administrators must also

ensure that current teachers strengthen and improve pedagogy using researched-based instructional strategies in their teacher development and continuing education programs. This is a highly challenging provision for superintendents focused on recruitment of quality personnel in a limited pool of qualified candidates.

District leaders must provide more choices for parents of students in low performance schools. Schools that are identified as failing to meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) must provide parents the right to transfer their children to a better performing school in the district. This radical effort at empowering the parent to make educational choices for their child has a significant impact on the superintendent's ability to be an instructional leader.

Sanctions from No Child Left Behind (2002) penalized districts with consecutive years of schools failing to meet state standards could potentially have a reduction of federal funding (NCLB, 2002). Students moving from failing schools to successful districts could impact the instructional quality of schools. The unintended outcomes of NCLB could impact other nearby district administrators of high performing schools through an influx of students from failing schools, overcrowding, strains on district facilities, transportation, and classroom resources. In the end, the reality of NCLB would ultimately erode the educational experience and performance of all students (Education Commission of the States, 2002).

No Child Left Behind significantly changed how the district administrators receive, allocate, and maintain funding for programs focused on instruction and learning (Education Commission of the States, 2002). Districts must now use district and building level data to inform decisions regarding funding. Resource flexibility is designed to give

superintendents greater ability to allocate resources to proven programs that will best meet their students' needs by pooling local and federal funds. Research has demonstrated that the most cost-effective area that impact student achievement is focusing on the classroom teaching environment (Cicchinelli, Gaddy, Lefkowits, & Miller, 2003).

Current internal demands and external influences that superintendents face such as district macro and micro-management, the blending multiple roles within the organization, and current movements for increased accountability in student achievement combine to make focusing on instructional leadership very difficult. Although there is a small body of empirical work that has examined the role of the superintendent as instructional leader (Bredeson, 1996; Bredeson and Johanson, 1997; Coleman and LaRocque, 1990; Hallinger and Murphy, 1986; Herman, 1990; Hord, 1993; Morgan and Petersen, 2000; Petersen, 1999 and 2002; Petersen and Barnett, 2003; Peterson, Murphy, and Hallinger, 1987; Pitner, 1979; Wimpelberg, 1987; Wirt, 1990), a new understanding of successful district leadership focused on instruction is needed. Given the current emphasis on academic accountability, greater knowledge of district leaders who have been recognized as leading and facilitating academically successful school districts will benefit both researchers and practitioners (Petersen, 2002). This study will provide a greater understanding of successful superintendents who are instructionally focused and how they develop the capacity to create high performing schools.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of the superintendent as an instructional leader by teachers and principals and the superintendent's role in the

development and maintenance of instructional capacity in the classroom. Using mixed methods, this study seeks to understand the superintendent's role in developing and maintaining instructional capacity within districts. Instructional leadership questionnaires will be used to measure the relationship between the teachers' and principals' views of the superintendent as an instructional leader and the superintendents' role in the development of instructional capacity. At the same time, the superintendent's role in developing and maintaining instructional capacity will be explored using focus group and individual interviews with classroom teachers, building principals, and superintendents in school districts located throughout Missouri.

Statement of the problem

Since the inception of the superintendent, demands and expectations of the position have continually changed because of social, political, and economic trends in our society (Petersen & Barnett, 2003). *A Nation at Risk* (1983), exposed public education to a new level of public dissatisfaction. Overtime, public confidence and support in public education significantly decreased and much of the blame was placed on the district superintendent (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Policy-makers responded with the passage of new legislation to improve public schooling. As outlined, with the passage of *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994), and the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001), new accountability measures have been used to assess school efficacy and leadership. Unfortunately, superintendents, school boards, policymakers, and local communities have struggled to comply with the new laws (Cicchinelli, Gaddy, Lefkowits, & Miller, 2003). Changes in the role of the

superintendent, failure to prepare, and new accountability focused on student achievement have caused district leaders to fail at significant school reform.

The superintendent's role has moved from that of a comprehensive manager to an instructional leader focused on the individual classroom (McEwan, 1998). They must become experts in finance budgeting, staff development, labor relations, curriculum design, public policy, and engineering in order to satisfy the necessary demands of the position (Fusarelli, Cooper, and Carella, 2002). Superintendents must become an instructional resource by becoming aware of new instructional and assessment techniques, while providing high quality professional development, and setting a vision and mission for district improvement.

In the end, school superintendents are being held accountable to standards that they have little control over and are given limited training to properly meet the new standards of school achievement. The superintendent's role as the instructional leader is more important than ever (Gulek, 2003). District administrators must have an increased philosophical and technical expertise in curriculum scope, sequence, and alignment. Superintendents must now focus on the tasks associated with long-term, sustained success focused at the classroom level. The superintendent's ability to create the optimal climate and effectively utilize the necessary resources to impact instructional capacity highlights the future of the superintendency. Beginning with improving the quality of the teachers, becoming a resources provider, and creating learning communities, superintendents as instructional leaders need to be more effective (Cicchinelli, Gaddy, Lefkowits, & Miller, 2003). They must move from administrative to innovative. Changes in the superintendency focused on proven results, extensive evaluations, and data-driven

decision-making have moved the role of the superintendent from the district sideline to the front of the class.

Conceptual Framework

For the purposes of this study, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and instructional capacity will be used to construct a framework for analysis. Utilizing these three concepts, the study will present an in depth understanding and analysis of the superintendents influence on instructional capacity within the classroom.

Instructional Leadership

Research demonstrates that instructional leadership behaviors among school leaders positively impacts practices within the classroom (Quinn, 1999; Sheppard, 1996). Conversely, schools that do not have leadership that is instructionally focused will experience negative outcomes (Blase & Blase, 1998; Valentine & Whitaker, 1993). Therefore, instructional leadership is vital to school improvement and systemic reform. Understanding instructional leadership and its impact on classroom capacity is an important step to develop a greater understanding of the superintendent's role.

Instructional leadership is defined several ways. Leithwood (1994) believes that instructional leadership is a series of behaviors designed to directly affect classroom instruction through areas such as supervision, staff development, modeling, and coaching. Smith & Andrews (1989) write that instructional leadership can be characterized by providing resources, offering instructional resources, communicating effectively, and

maintaining a visible presence in the organization. Both definitions highlight a focus on the core functions in the classroom and the structures that support teaching and learning.

A key component of instructional leadership is providing resources that support instructional practices (McEwan, 1998; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Zepeda, 2003). Instructional leaders mobilize building and district resources to support and sustain academic achievement goals, promote staff development activities for teachers and principals, are knowledgeable about instructional resources, and are considered important instructional resource figureheads within the district. Leaders use internal and external resources to establish a climate conductive to student success and problem solving by devising plans and policies to address the issue (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

Instructional leaders are keenly engaged in the improvement of classroom practices that promote student learning and use building and district data to improve achievement (Smith & Andrews, 1989). Superintendents as instructional leaders use a variety of strategies to impact classroom instruction by being visible in the building, providing classroom and building resources, focusing on professional development, and improving the curriculum. Instructional leaders are effective at using various building and district level data to evaluate and improve the district's ability to impact student achievement (Hoy & Hoy, 2003; Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2001). Superintendents use data to evaluate instruction and curriculum, mission achievement, district core tasks, and teacher efficacy. Instructional district leaders are aware of the challenges and opportunities that teachers and students face in the classroom and work diligently to improve the experiences for all educational stakeholders throughout the organization.

Petersen (1999) concluded that instructionally focused superintendents created a vision for academic success through strong and tightly coupled leadership. They were visible throughout the district, especially in classrooms. Also, superintendents used professional development to demonstrate the importance of teaching and learning in addition to the shared decision making. Superintendents had a positive relationship and strong support from the school board. Lastly, they often used student assessment and program evaluation data to evaluate the academic success of the district. District data were also used to create feedback loops for decision making.

Instructional leaders as communicators develop and articulate the district's vision and mission (McEwan, 1998). Bolman and Deal (1997) suggest that "a good school will be headed by a strong visionary instructional leader" (p. 297). Smith and Andrews (1989) highlight the need of a school leader to provide the mission of the school in order to move its stakeholders in the same direction. It is vital for the instructional leader to use the vision and mission of the district to operationalize their will into the daily reality of the classroom; constant and open communication is instrumental.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders focus their power, resources, and political capitol through inspiring and creating organizational processes to increase student achievement (Hanson, 2003). The focus of transformational leadership is on arousing human potential, satisfying higher needs, and raising expectations of both leaders and followers to motivate them to higher levels of commitment and performance (Sergiovanni, 1989 & 1999). Lunenburg & Orstein (2004) write that "transformational leadership ultimately

becomes moral in that it raises the level of ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus has a transforming effect on both" (p.136). Transformational leadership works toward a higher order of change that establishes an integrative fit between process and products, internal and external environment. Ultimately, transformational leadership transcends across beliefs, understandings, and assumptions about the role of the individual in the organization.

Leithwood (1994) presented compelling research on linking principals' transformational leadership to improvements in teachers' classroom behaviors, attitudes, and effectiveness. His transformational leadership model is one of the most comprehensive conceptualizations of effective transformational leadership among eight dimensions (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi (2001) highlight:

- building a school vision;
- establishing school/district goals;
- providing intellectual stimulation;
- offering individualized support;
- modeling best practices and important educational values;
- demonstrating high performance expectations;
- creating a productive school culture;
- developing structures for participation in decision-making.

Transformational leadership creates interest among peers and subordinates to view their work from new perspectives, generates awareness of the mission and vision of the organization, and develops colleagues and followers to new levels of professional

performance that will positively benefit the district (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders who are transformational employ idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to achieve elevated levels of performance. Transformational leaders act as role models for followers, exhibit personal sacrifice for the benefit of others, share risk-taking with followers, and remains persistent to goals (Bass & Aoilo, 1994).

Inspirational motivation describes how transformational leaders create a new meaning and challenge to the followers' daily work. A consequence of the motivation is an increased level of inspiration and intrinsic desire to succeed. Intellectual stimulation highlights the transformational leader's ability to provide followers spaces for heightened cognition by encouraging creativity, questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old problems with new solutions (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Finally, transformational leadership is characterized by being cognizant of the individual (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders pay attention to each individual's needs for professional achievement and growth by acting as a coach and mentor. Encouraged by two-way communication, transformational leaders are effective listeners and seek to build trust by positively reinforcing an open dialogue.

Transformational leadership describes a leader who has the knowledge and ability to cultivate a capacity for improvement. Operating from a moral imperative, transformational leaders seek to empower education stakeholders regardless of position within the organization to best meet the mission and vision. They practice leadership by purpose (Sergiovanni, 1990). The collective action transformational leadership empowers

followers to continue to accomplish school improvement with purpose, optimism, and energy.

Most recently, Marks and Printy (2003) have reconceptualized instructional and transformational leadership into a created a new model of “shared instructional leadership” or an integrated leadership (p. 371). This new notion of school leadership is highlighted by district leadership involved in the active collaboration with principals and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Shared or integrated instructional leadership blend both transformational and instructional leadership where school leaders seek out the ideas, insights, and expertise of teachers. The school administration and teachers share responsibility for professional, curricular, supervision, and instructional development. Thus, the district superintendent becomes the “leader of instructional leaders” (Glickman, 1989).

Integrated leadership poses a new paradigm for transformational and instructional leadership. Because transformational leadership does not imply instructional leadership (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998), effective superintendents integrate both leadership models to elicit higher levels of commitment and quality from stakeholders. Superintendents who espouse to an integrated leadership model use members of the organization that directly impact student achievement- teachers and principals. In the end, Marks and Printy (2003) bring to light how effective school leadership “elicits high levels of commitment and professionalism from teachers and works interactively with teachers in a shared instructional leadership capacity, schools have the benefit of integrated leadership; they are organizations that learn and perform at high levels” (p. 393).

Superintendents that use an integrated leadership model, by utilizing the expertise of classroom teachers, can impact classroom instructional capacity for improvements.

Instructional Capacity

The primary goal of developing instructional capacity is to improve students' academic achievements in the classroom. It is the ability of the educational system to help all students meet a challenging curriculum standard (O'Day, Goertz, & Floden, 1995). Cohen & Ball (1999) highlight three classroom level capacity areas that are vital to improving teaching and learning, while Massell (1998) identifies four school, district, and state level issues that impact capacity in the classroom. When these perspectives are combined, leaders are provided with a comprehensive and complex view of the challenges and opportunities in fostering instructional capacity.

At the classroom level, instructional capacity focuses school improvement exclusively on the success of the individual through the interaction of the teacher, student, and instructional material in the classroom (Cohen & Ball, 1999). A teacher's intellectual and personal resources influence instructional interactions by shaping how they apprehend, interpret, and respond to materials and students (Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). Students bring experience, prior knowledge, and habits of mind, thus influencing how they apprehend, analyze, and respond to the material and teacher. Materials refer to how students are engaged in the curriculum, text, other media, problems, tasks, and posed questions (Cohen & Ball, 1999). Overall, the interaction between teachers, students, and education materials in the classroom produces

worthwhile and substantial learning (Cohen & Ball, 1999). These three elements create a triangle of influence essential to quality instruction.

While most capacity building strategies in education today target individual teachers, instructional capacity goes beyond the classroom (O'Day, Goertz, & Floden, 1995). Massell (1998) points out that solely focusing on the teacher in the classroom "ignores the other parts of the system that directly impact a teacher's ability to teach" (p. 2). She identified four key organizational components external to the classroom that significantly influence instructional capacity within the classroom. First is the number and kinds of people in the district. The number and kinds of people potentially influence the way teaching is organized, the ability of teachers to access and interpret curriculum reform, and other elements directly relevant to teaching and learning (Spillane, 1996).

Second is the number and quality of social relationships with the school and district. Successful districts establish communities where adults communicate with and trust one another and are open about their teaching practices. Relationships within and outside the school can help move teachers beyond isolation and enhance professional efficacy, learning, and responsibility (Massell, 1998; Scribner, 1999).

Next, material (non-human) resources, describes the district's ability to provide a safe and rich learning environment and access to sufficient material resources. Physical facilities, technology, curriculum, and other critical educational materials can influence the quality, content, and structure of teaching and learning (Massell, 1998).

Last, organization and allocation of school and district resources highlight the way that resources are organized and structured that contribute to organizational instructional capacity. For example, resources, policies, and monies that are targeted on areas that have

little consequence for teaching and learning, or resources that are spread so thinly that the stakeholders are strained to accomplish high achievement among students and teachers.

Overall, instructional capacity involves two significant levels of the district. By focusing on the instruction in the classroom, new understandings of how leaders can increase teachers' knowledge, skill, disposition, and views of self to improve student success are generated. However, a traditional model of instructional capacity development that focuses on expanding a teachers' repertoire of well-defined classroom practice reflects a limited conception of teacher instructional capacity. External factors can also impact teaching and learning in the classroom and must be examined and understood to best meet the needs of the teacher and student.

Research Questions

The following quantitative and qualitative research questions will be used to gain insight into the interactions and complexities the superintendents has in the development and maintenance of instructional capacity:

Quantitative

The following quantitative research questions will be examined:

1. What are teachers' view of the superintendent in his/her role as an instructional leader and how do they impact instructional capacity?

2. Do teachers perceive the superintendent as influencing their ability to produce worthwhile and substantial learning?

Qualitative

The following qualitative research question will be examined:

1. How and to what degree does the role of the superintendent develop and maintain instructional capacity in the school district/classroom?

Limitations

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. The study is geographically limited to small school districts in the state of Missouri.
2. The study is limited to the sample population of stakeholders interviewed and the validity and reliability of the instrument used.
3. Teachers and principals in focus groups are asked to evaluate the district superintendent, thus creating a problem in a *hierarchy of credibility* (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003).
4. The findings of the study will be subject to the same limitations found in other studies utilizing survey methods: (a) inferring cause-and-effect relationships cannot be established easily; (b) surveys are highly standardized and cannot measure subtle differences in responses; (c) surveys are susceptible to reactivity, which introduces systematic measurement error (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993; Pedhazur, 1997).

Definition of Terms

Accountability is the willingness and ability to give an account on the district's actions, to fully describe and explain, and to accept the consequences of the district's

actions according to agreed-upon commitments. Based upon standards of behavior and performance, school accountability has mechanics for measurement, compliance, adherence, reporting, providing feedback, and assignment of power and resources (Goldberg & Morrison, 2003).

Presently schools are involved in multiple forms of accountability- bureaucratic, political, legal, professional, and market accountability (Darling-Hammond & Ascher, 1991).

Instruction is a function of what teachers know and can do with a particular student around specific materials both physical and intellectual material (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

Instructional Capacity is the interaction between teachers, students, and education materials in the classroom to produce worthwhile and substantial learning (Cohen & Ball, 1999). A teacher's intellectual and personal resources influence instructional interactions by shaping how they apprehend, interpret, and respond to materials and students (Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). Students bring experience, prior knowledge, and habits of mind, thus influencing how they apprehend, analyze, and respond to the material and teacher. Materials refer to how students are engaged in the curriculum, text, other media, problems, tasks, and posed questions (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

Instructional leadership is leadership characterized by providing resources, offering instructional resources, communicating effectively, and maintaining a visible presence within the organization (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Instructional Resource is the leadership's ability to evaluate and reinforce appropriate and effective instructional strategies, supervise staff with a focus on instructional improvement, utilize student outcome data directly related to instructional issues,

successfully apply the district's personnel evaluation policies, and knowing the importance of student learning objectives to the implementation of the instructional program (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Instructional Unit is a framework that focuses on classroom instruction to identify and analyze the interaction between teachers, students, and education materials in the classroom to produce worthwhile and substantial learning (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

Integrated Leadership is transformational leadership coupled with shared instructional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). Integrated leadership is highlighted by eliciting the instructional leadership of teachers to work interactively with the leadership to learn and perform at high levels.

Professional Development is the degree to which teachers value continuous personal and professional development and school-wide improvement. Teachers seek new information from seminars, colleagues, organizations, and other professional sources to maintain current knowledge, particularly current knowledge about instructional practices (Gruenert, 1998). It is used to develop new understandings, beliefs, dispositions, and knowledge about students, subject matter, and teaching as well as prior practice to influence how and what teachers learn about instruction (Schwille, et al., 1983; Toole, 2001).

Transformational leadership is leadership characterized by the engaging relationships with followers that inspire them to go beyond their own self-interests to accept and accomplish values-driven, higher-level goals. A leadership style that utilizes participative decision-making structures related to school improvement, emphasizes the development of school-based solutions to educational problems, and evaluates the success of efforts in

terms of a wider, rather than narrower, variety of student outcomes (Tucker-Ladd, Merchant, and Thurston, 1992).

Outline of the Study

Chapter One presents background information and identifies the need for a mixed method study on the superintendent's role in developing classroom instructional capacity. Also included is the statement of the research problem, research questions, limitations, and relevant definitions within the study are presented.

Chapter Two is a review of related literature highlighting instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and instructional capacity. The research methods and procedures for the mixed method study are presented in Chapter Three. Included in Chapter Three is mixed method methodology, population selection, data collection, data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the data collected from interviews, focus group interviews, and questionnaires. Lastly, Chapter Five includes the summary of the overall findings guided by the studies methodology, research questions, and mixed method data analysis. Additionally, implications for current practice and recommendations for future research are included.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Overview of Leadership Theory

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the topic of leadership has been researched extensively (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 1996). Many studies have examined leadership by the person, process, motivator, and/or manager but all agree that the role of the leader significantly influences the success or failure of the organization. Ironically, even with the agreed importance of effective school leadership, it has proven very difficult to define.

Bennis and Nanus (1985), after a review of 1,000 studies on leadership concluded that there were more than 350 differing definitions of effective leadership. However for the purpose of this study, as defined by Yukl (2002) leadership is "…the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives" (p. 7). While this definition presents only one perspective of leadership, other studies have examined why leaders are vital to the success of the organization.

The importance and efficacy of leadership within the educational organization has been widely researched. Shein (1992) presents the important interaction of educational leaders and their influence on the organizational culture. Mintzberg (1980) highlighted how strong leaders in schools are in a unique and powerful position to impact the organization. Bolman and Deal (1997) in their study of organizational leaders recognize

the relational and contextual nature of effective leadership through specific frames. Lastly, in Leithwood and Duke's (1999) comprehensive review of educational administration literature, they suggest that there are six major categories of school leadership seen today: instructional, transformational, moral, participative, and managerial leadership. While these studies have examined the importance and identified general constructs of leadership in the organization, research has also tracked the changing role of leadership. One position in school leadership that has experienced a tremendous amount of change is the district superintendent. Over the past fifty years, the role of the superintendent has changed from a businesslike manager to instructionally focused leadership.

Superintendent's role from management to instructional leadership

Instructional leadership was widely introduced into education during the 1980's during a time of educational change. Spurred in part by public school dissatisfaction, low student achievement, and a nation-wide economic downturn, district leaders were expected to move from managerial to instructional leadership (Anthes, 2002). Encompassed in the effective schools movement, superintendents were expected to focus on curriculum and learning and resource efficiently to promote student achievement by empowering teachers, improving instruction, and evaluating district performance. However, prior to the shift to instructional leadership, the concept of the superintendent as a district leader was significantly different.

Beginning in the 1950's, the superintendents' role shifted from a business/ management perspective, to one that pushed district leaders to respond to the political,

social, and economic issues of the period following World War II (Callahan, 1964). Prior to the 50's, the superintendents' role was characterized by efficiency models based on cost accounting, record keeping, and financial/facilities development and management. During the following three decades, new expectations and a more realistic image of the superintendents' role began taking root. During this time, new initiatives advocated by the Kellogg Foundation, American Association of Educational Administration, and the creation of the University Council for Educational Administration began improving professional preparations programs and creating professional expectations to bolster the reputation and ability of superintendents to meet new educational demands (Anthes, 2002, Callahan, 1964; and Griffiths, 1966).

Public confidence in the education system continued to decline over the next thirty year and new efforts to rejuvenate support and efficacy of educational organizations, especially focused on the superintendent, began to develop. In the 1960's and 1970's, social and political forces began lobbying the government to improve education through legislation and newly created teacher unions (Brunner, Grogan, & Björk, 2002). The National Defense Education Act (1958), Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), Economic Opportunity Act (1964), and The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), all placed new pressures on districts and superintendents forcing action to the legislative and public demand for quality education.

Beginning in the 1980's, school superintendents were expected to set an academic mission for the district through goal setting, curriculum development, teacher evaluation, student assessment, and developing an overall academic vision to improve student achievement (Lashway, 1995). The publication *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 only reinforced

the push for improved leadership at the building and district level. It created the need for instructional leadership at the district level to increase the emphasis on accountability for student achievement (Seyfarth, 1999). Superintendents also became responsible for improving instructional programs and using data to guide decision-making to blend efficiency with achievement (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2001). These new expectations for instructionally focused leadership had a dramatic impact on the superintendents' position.

It was during these initial reform movements, superintendents, while responding to the public call for school reform, began to shift their focus towards the areas of curriculum and instruction to advance the technical-core of curriculum and instruction (Elmore, 2000; Morgan and Petersen, 2002). School boards and other stakeholders gradually began evaluating superintendents on issues not directly tied to fiscal and building management. DiPaola & Stronge (2003) write about this change and how superintendents began to be evaluated on their role as a "strategic planner, cheerleader, organizational manager, fiscal officer, diplomat, and politician" (p. 2). In the end, the role of superintendents as instructional leaders was solidified and new perspectives on leadership blossomed. The role of district leadership was to be stewards of organizational *transformation* and renewal focused on *instructional* reform.

Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership was first introduced by Burns (1978) in the late 1970's as a process which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). Transformational leadership focuses on

affecting human potential, fulfilling higher order needs, and raising the level of expectation of both the leader and follower in such a manner as to stimulate increased levels of commitment and performance. Transformational leadership is a process where leaders use the strengths of the organization and the people within it to stimulate success by taking a form of "leadership by building" (Sergiovanni, 1995, p, 119).

Bass and Avolio (1994) assert four components necessary for transformational leadership to occur: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to achieve higher levels of performance.

- *Idealized influence* suggests that the leader act as a role model for others in the organization to follow. This role is also influenced by both the internal and external needs of stakeholders over their own personal needs. Additionally, a transformational leader shares risk and rewards with stakeholders, remains consistent, demonstrates high standards of ethical and moral conduct, and avoids using positional power for personal or professional gain. The results of this idealized influence are followers who identify with and emulate the transformational leader while admiring, respecting, and trusting their decision-making (Bass & Avolio, 1994).
- *Inspirational motivation* is exhibited by transformational leaders who work to provide meaning and challenge to stakeholders work. The transformational leader arouses team spirit and encourages stakeholders to envision personal and professional goals for the future. As a result, stakeholders are motivated and inspired to greater achievements. Stakeholders strive to meet the elevated

expectations created by the leadership and remain committed to organizational goals and a shared vision (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

- *Intellectual stimulation* is developed by encouraging creativity in professional practice, questioning organizational assumptions, reframing problems, and solving identified problems with innovative solutions. Organizational stakeholders are active participants in the process of identifying and solving problems. The transformational leader uses human resources through the expertise of all organizational stakeholders to solicit new ideas and creative solutions both in the building and district-wide (Bass & Avolio, 1994).
- *Individualized consideration* requires that a leader act as both a coach and mentor through being cognizant of stakeholders' need for professional achievement and personal growth. Leaders seek out and create opportunities for stakeholders to learn and develop. Communication between transformational leaders and stakeholders promote individualized two-way communication. Interactions are focused on the individual where the leadership effectively listens to stakeholders. The aim of this interaction allows leaders to delegate task and responsibility to stakeholders and monitor the outcomes while participants do not feel scrutinized (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge (1996) follow up on the work of Bass & Avolio (1994) by introducing an additional four themes of transformational leadership: identifying and articulating a vision, providing a model for action, fostering acceptance of group goals, and maintaining high performance expectations. When transformational leaders identify and articulate a vision for the organization, they work collaboratively

with school stakeholders to develop a sense of purpose and facilitate a development of a school and district-wide vision. District and building leaders who practice transformational leadership must then allocate significant resources to share the developing vision with all parts of the organization. Transformational leaders also continue to support the vision's scope in an effort to reinforce the connection between the vision and organizational and district improvement initiatives.

Transformational leaders become a role model for action rather than just sharing the vision. He/she spends time at school and professional development functions working with teachers and staff. Leaders expresses a commitment to personal professional growth by regularly requesting feedback regarding their leadership behaviors, responding constructively to feedback from stakeholders, and changing leadership behaviors based upon the new understandings. Lastly, transformational leaders, as role models, demonstrate problem-solving techniques and the ability to examine many perspectives to address district and building issues (Leithwood, et al., 1996).

Transformational leaders work to foster the acceptance of group goals. Leaders create processes and policies that enable all stakeholders to be included in the establishment and review of school and district goals and expect stakeholders to participate in individualized goals setting. Consensus building among stakeholders is important to transformational leaders to provide guidance in decision-making and organizational improvement. Additionally, the transformational leaders benefits from working closely with stakeholders by creating synergy for organizational goal implementation and development (Leithwood, et al., 1996).

Finally, Leithwood, et al. (1996) highlight how transformational leaders must maintain high performance expectations. Leaders must expect administrators, teachers, and staff to be professional, hard working, and innovative. Transformational leaders communicate personal beliefs about student achievement, learning, and evaluation. A personal belief about teaching and curriculum is shared by a transformational leader, but balanced with an appreciation for flexibility with stakeholders in decision-making. Leaders also seek to accommodate personal and organizational goals in the context of each individual building and district-wide. Lastly, transformational leaders set high expectations for stakeholders that promote and reward new strategies for enhancing teaching and learning to meet students' needs.

Leithwood (1994) believes that in the context of educational restructuring and improvement, transformational leadership skills can be very beneficial to success. However, transformational leadership cannot occur in a vacuum (Hanson, 1995). In order to balance the tension between the micro- and macro environments, transformational leaders must be able to create and implement strategic long term planning for the district, read the changing internal and external environments, and manage organizational variables to align them with the vision and goals.

To balance the micro- and macro environments, Yukl, (2002) presents seven guidelines for transformational leaders. These guidelines present practical applications and philosophical perspectives for school leaders to assist implementation of change-oriented decision making. The seven guidelines include how leaders should articulate a clear and appealing vision, explain how the vision can be attained, the need to act confidently and optimistically, express confidence in stakeholders, use dramatic and

symbolic actions to emphasize key values, lead by example, and empower stakeholders to achieve the vision.

A clear vision of what the district could accomplish help stakeholders understand the purpose, objectives, and priorities set forth by the leadership (Yukl, 2002). Vision gives everyday work a common meaning and purpose, serves as a source of self-esteem through achievement, and provides a sense of direction for decision-making. An important part of the successful adoption of the vision is the ability to communicate consistently and repeatedly to the rest of the organization in a variety of ways. Stakeholders must have opportunities to ask questions and seek further explanation beyond letters, memos, and emails. The vision can be more effective, clear, and persuasive with colorful, emotional language that includes vivid imagery, metaphors, anecdotes, stories, symbols, and slogans.

Transformational leaders demonstrate a link between the vision and a credible strategy for achieving it to stakeholders. A strategy for attaining the vision is not to be overly complex, but should inform stakeholders with a number of clear themes that are directly related to the shared values of the organization (Yukl, 2002). Transformational leaders refrain from having all the steps necessary for success, but explain to stakeholders that they will have a vital role in assisting in the development of specific actions. However, leaders must narrow the scope of the action to keep the process focused on the key issues, while not overwhelming stakeholders to cause confusion, misunderstanding, and dissipate energy.

Transformational leaders must also act confidently and optimistically (Yukl, 2002). In order to ensure confidence for the vision, school leaders must demonstrate self-

confidence and conviction. Furthermore, leaders must remain optimistic about successful implementation of the vision, especially when difficulties and setbacks arise. Transformational leaders emphasize what has been accomplished and the success of the organization rather than operate out of a deficiency model highlighting only the failure.

Transformational leaders strive to express confidence in stakeholders. Leaders work to increase the confidence level of stakeholders who are working towards the vision. School leaders must review of specific strengths, assets, and previous successes of the group (Yukl, 2002). Also, transformational leaders work to provide any necessary resources to assist stakeholders carry out the action components of the vision.

Yukl (2002) also states that transformational leaders reinforce the vision by demonstrating behavior that is consistent with the vision. Leaders must demonstrate highly visible actions and effective ways to emphasize key values. An example is the acquisition and allocation of appropriate resources that support stakeholders' actions. Additionally, symbolic actions that transformational leaders demonstrate have a substantial influence on stakeholders. Symbolic actions such as self sacrifice, unconventional approaches, and risk substantial personal loss exhibit the leaders' commitment to the vision.

Leading by example is an important way that transformational leaders influence stakeholders' commitment by setting an example of exemplary behavior in everyday interactions and decisions (Yukl, 2002). When implementing a standard for excellence consistent with the vision, leaders must observe the same standard expected for all the organization. District leaders who model these standards, especially when they are unpleasant, dangerous, unconventional, or controversial inspire others to do the same.

Values espoused by leaders are consistently reflected in their daily behavior, not just when convenient. Transformational leaders also understand the public perception of operating from the same standards expected throughout the organization.

Lastly, transformational leaders empower people to achieve the vision. Transformational leaders allow other organizational members to decide for themselves, using their own professional experience and expertise, the most appropriate action to achieve the vision (Yukl, 2002). Delegating decision-making and authority empowers stakeholders to do the work necessary for school improvement. Also, leaders must empower stakeholders by reducing the bureaucratic inhibiters that stifle creativity and innovation. Transformational leaders must not only provide necessary resources, but also remove road blocks to enable stakeholders make the necessary changes for organizational success.

Transformational leaders create the necessary components for change by supplying resources, act as a role model, remove organizational constraints, and a change of organizational culture (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Transformational leadership in its highest sense moves the culture of the organization form a static orientation to a climate of creative awareness and response. Foster (1989) writes:

> "Leaders thus are essentially involved in the creation of new social realities, and their role is largely to convince followers that the current realities are not cast in concrete but can indeed be changed for the better. Such leadership is both optimistic and renewing in its orientation, because its purpose is to evaluate the organization and its members to higher levels of moral response and commitment" (p. 41).

Creating a climate based on new social realities within the organization, transformational leaders focus upon the internal and external interactions to ensure management, survival, and growth of the organizational goals (Schein, 1992). Leaders

must identify, understand, and harness the organization's culture to foster a change in stakeholders' assumptions, beliefs, and behavior.

Organizational culture is an important tool for the implementation of the vision. However, Sergiovanni (1999) asserts "transformational leadership work best in an organizational world that is tightly structured but loose culturally" (p. 84). Transformational leaders have a unique view of how schools are organized and work. School practices and operations are interrelated and dependent on each part. Schools are organic in nature (Bolman and Deal, 1997) where a complex interactive relationship between the leadership's vision and instructional practices exist. Transformational leaders integrate the role of the leader within the organization with a strict focus on instructional development and improvement. While transformational leadership has been widely researched from a principal's perspective, there are a few studies specifically focusing on the superintendent. Even with the limited research the importance of superintendents as transformational leaders is evident.

Transformational Leadership and the Superintendent

Superintendents, as the top decision-maker within the school district, are in a unique position to foster change throughout the organization. Research has found that superintendents who are transformational leaders are characterized as having a clear vision, a roadmap for success, advocates for professional leading and collaboration, and have high expectations for school and classroom improvement (Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992; Mullin and Keedy, 1998). Studies have also identified specific beliefs, skills, traits, and strategies associated with building and district level administrators as a

transformational leader (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Björk, 1993; Carter, & Cunningham, 1997; Duignan, 1980; Geijsel, Sleegers, & van de Berg, 1999; Griffiths, 1966; Kowalski, 1999; Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; and Trump, 1986).

In a comprehensive study of transformational leadership, Kirby, Paradise, and King (1992) examined six school districts and their leaders. Using Bass and Avolio (1994) framework, the study found that superintendents who were transformational leaders were most effective when they focused on individual considerations and intellectual stimulation.

Superintendents, who were characterized as focusing on intellectual stimulation, had a clear vision for the district. Teachers perceived the superintendents' vision as being influential in the classroom and building decision-making. The research highlighted how superintendents assisted in identifying building and classroom problems and worked to provide the necessary resources to generate innovative solutions. They sought to embrace teachers' expertise and creativity when dealing with instructional and program decisions, but chose not to get overly involved (Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992). Teachers felt this leadership style was not only empowering, but often effective with classroom and building problems.

Superintendents in the study used professional development as a key component to influence teacher knowledge, beliefs, and practices about teaching and learning. By focusing on the individualized consideration of teachers, theses transformational leaders elicited an unusually high commitment to the mission and vision. These transformational leaders also demonstrated a high commitment by modeling and taking extreme measures to support their vision for the district. Overall, the Kirby, Paradise, & King (1992) study

provides a unique understanding of how superintendents as transformational leaders can be impact teachers.

Mullin and Keedy (1998) examined transformational leadership of superintendents in districts who have recently undergone successful change initiatives. The study focused on superintendents who where effective in taking domains of transformational leadership and putting them into practice. The data demonstrated that superintendents went beyond articulating a vision, but used personal and professional values and beliefs as an ethos for change. Their values and beliefs often focused on researched-based and child-focused practices and policies. Superintendents developed consensus throughout the organization through creating shared goals and beliefs among followers.

Transformational superintendents were successful as developing problem solving skills among teachers (Mullin & Keedy, 1998). Examples of this cited how teachers were encouraged to take chances and not fear failure. Superintendents formed alliances and used successful teachers as agents of change in the classroom as well as the building level. Teachers were also encouraged to have access and utilize current research and innovative teaching strategies within the classroom. Lastly, superintendents recognized and responded to problems in the change process by delegating responsibility and decision-making to teachers and principals. Through challenging teachers to use their own knowledge, expertise and skill, transformational leadership became an important tool for success.

Lastly, the study found that superintendents that are transformational leaders worked to build the learning capacity of schools through developing a collaborative culture (Mullin & Keedy, 1998). The collaborative culture began with communication networks

were created at all levels of the organization to push dialogue between the classroom and district office. The collaborative culture also allowed teachers and principals to evaluate and improve instructional practices. Diverse opinions were elicited to bring many voices for potential solutions and problems of practice. Most importantly, the superintendent fostered a collaborative culture by lifting the perspectives of the teachers from the classroom to the broader perspective of the whole organization.

In 1999, Geijsel, Sleegers, and van de Berg examined how school administrators as transformational leaders influenced teachers' practices with large scale district change. By examining transformational leadership to foster innovation among district programs, the research also concluded that transformational leaders have the greatest impact on teachers when they focus on vision, individual considerations, and intellectual stimulation. They concluded that transformational leaders indirectly changed teachers' practices the most through focusing on individualized consideration of the teachers through assistance with the day to day pressures of change and through intellectual stimulation primarily through professional development opportunities and activities.

Lastly, Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002) research specifically identifies how successful superintendents as transformational leaders increased the levels of commitment and performance of teachers for change within the district. Their study found that transformational leaders had a modest effect on teachers' commitment through vision building, intellectual stimulation, and context beliefs. Interestingly, the study found that transformational leadership had a significant impact on teachers' belief in their capacity to change. Lastly, transformational leaders increased teachers' perceptions of

capacity or self-efficacy through feedback on job performance, modeling expectations, and positive verbal affirmation.

While the Geijsel, Sleegers, and van de Berg (1999) and the Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002) data did not specifically examine the superintendent, the research does examine the role that transformational leadership did have on teacher's perceptions and their ability to change. Because the purpose of this study was to examine the role of the superintendent on instructional capacity, the relationship between transformational leadership and the ability to impact teacher knowledge, beliefs, and practices is necessary to fully understand what leadership characteristics are associated with high achievement. A critical component of instructional capacity and a necessity to foster school improvement is the commitment of teachers.

Lawler (1985) asserted that teachers are less concerned with the personality of leaders and more influenced by the nature of the work itself and by opportunities for professional development. Transformational leadership, especially from the superintendent, will impact the organization. Through elevated commitment and impacting the teachers' inner belief for excellence, superintendents are critical players in change initiatives. MacDonald (1991) writes: "…it is the quality of the teachers themselves and the nature of their commitment to change that determined the quality of teaching and the quality of school improvement" (p 3). Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) go even further by concluding that transformational leadership is necessary to build school capacity for instructional improvement because it directly influences teacher commitment.

Instructional Leadership

Many different definitions of instructional leadership exist. Leithwood (1994) defines instructional leadership as a series of behaviors designed to directly affect classroom instruction through areas such as supervision, staff development, modeling, and coaching. While Zepeda (2003) defines instructional leadership as "strong leadership that promotes excellence and equity in education and entails projecting, promoting, and holding steadfast to the vision; garnering and allocating resources; communicating progress; and supporting the people, programs, services, and activities implemented to achieve the school's vision" (p. 4).

The Leithwood and Zepeda definitions of instructional leadership promote the idea that leadership roles are found in a variety of persons in addition to principals and superintendents such as teachers, parents, students, and the local community. Instructional leaders demonstrate knowledge, respect, and responsiveness to diverse cultures, contributions, and experiences that are part of the greater community. Instructional leaders have specific expectations and holds staff accountable for challenging all students with a rigorous, culturally relevant curriculum- demonstrating high expectations for each student. Lastly, instructional leaders ensure that each school has financial, material, and programmatic resources adequate to provide each student an equitable opportunity to learn.

Leithwood's and Zepeda's definitions also describe instructional leadership behaviors that demonstrate the knowledge and actions of well informed school leaders. Instructional leadership empowers educational stakeholders and embraces the diversity of each individual to help make an optimal learning experience for all. District leadership hold

staff and students accountable for high achievement and are responsible for providing the necessary resources to generate increased instructional capacity. While these definitions highlight the behaviors of strong leadership, instructional leadership is also defined by leadership characteristics.

Smith and Andrews (1989) define instructional leadership as characterized by providing resources, offering instructional resources, communicating effectively, and maintaining a visible presence within the organization. These characteristics reflect the belief that school leaders have a moral duty for improving the learning of every student by using all personnel and institutional resources in addition to professional knowledge and expertise (Fullan, 2003).

In Smith and Andrews's (1989) study, instructional leaders who are resources providers demonstrate an effective use of time and resources. District leaders who are instructionally focused specifically use resources to increase instructional effectiveness and student achievement, and develop institutional capacity for providing a strong learning environment (Lashway, 2002).

Instructional leaders as resource providers have the ability to coordinate resources that are aimed at executing policies that can help buildings achieve academic goals for students, encourage professional development activities to meet teacher's needs in the classroom, demonstrate an ability to motivate staff members, and are well informed about current instructional resources within and outside the district. Strong leaders view resources as more than just money and supplies. Instructional leaders have a broad understanding of institutional resources by planning and developing programs,

motivating students, staff, and parents, and fostering productive relationships between all levels of the organization (McEwan, 1998).

Strong instructional leaders obtain resources and use them to support effective instructional practices (National Institute of Education, 1982). A primary way that leaders influence instructional practice is through supporting the study of teaching and learning in the classroom by following current trends and issues, encouraging attendance at educational workshops, seminars, and conferences, in addition to using inquiry to drive staff development (Blase & Blase, 1998; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992). Effective district leaders ensure that teachers have collaboration time to exchange ideas, share instructional strategies, and solve common problems. Also, instructional leaders increase the learning time by relating resources utilization to goals, providing staff development for teachers, and increasing allocations to academic subjects (Murphy, 1992).

Smith and Andrews (1989) highlight how instructional leaders served as an instructional resource for the district. As an instructional resource, superintendents have an ongoing dialogue with their staff as a means for encouraging the use of a variety of instructional materials and strategies. In turn, teachers seek out their superintendent to discuss ideas, concerns, and questions involving classroom practices and instruction. To foster this relationship, superintendents as instructional leaders need to continually practice and model ongoing personal learning to remain up to date on new developments in classroom pedagogy and curriculum. They must regularly read educational research and literature, curriculum development, human learning theories, effective pedagogy, and classroom best practices.

Instructional leaders promote the importance and value of classroom level data as tools for decision-making (Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2001; McEwan, 1998; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Effective instructional leaders monitor and evaluate student progress in addition to ensuring systematic monitoring of student progress to emphasize the use of test results for program efficacy and improvement (Heck, 1992). Additionally, superintendents as instructional leaders are lead facilitators to ensure that various forms of building and district level data are collected, analyzed, and distributed in a manner that allows for stakeholders to review and discuss findings. Overall, strong instructional leaders facilitates the examination of district and building level data to inform a greater understanding of the existing practices, evaluate organizational goals, and identify challenges and opportunities for systemic improvement.

Smith and Andrews (1989) also identify instructional leaders as an individual, through clear and open communication, provides a clear vision of the school's ethos, initiates discussions on classroom instruction and student achievement, sets clear performance and evaluative criteria for students and staff, and provides frequent feedback on teachers' classroom performance.

Clear and open communication is necessary for organizational change and improvement using the vision and mission of the school (McEwan, 1998). District leaders must know how to facilitate small and large group meetings, establish a positive working relationship with students, staff, parents, and other community groups (Schmeider & Cairns, 1996). Instructional leaders define the purpose of schooling, establish school wide goals, and communicate those goals to members throughout the organization. Moreover,

principals and superintendents seek to establish a consensus on objectives, methods, evaluations, and set clear priorities for the organization (Eberts & Stone, 1998).

Instructional leaders also have regular discussions with teachers about classroom instruction and student achievement. Leaders often have teacher discussions during in addition to outside of formal meetings and instructional conferences that encourage teachers to think reflectively and critically about their learning and professional practice (Blase & Blase, 1999). Instructional leaders encourage reflection by making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry to gather advice, and giving praise. Superintendents as instructional leaders engage in communication that stresses classroom teaching, curriculum, and staff development to help principals and teachers evaluate and develop professional knowledge and skills. Schön (1988) writes that strong instructional leaders focus on support, guidance, and encouragement of reflective teaching.

Lastly, Smith and Andrews (1989) highlight how district leaders that are instructionally focused have a visible presence in the organization by interacting with the staff and students in school, attending department and building meetings, and initiating spontaneous conversations throughout the year.

District leaders who are instructional leaders make informal building and classroom visits (Heck, 1992; Blase & Blase, 1998). By meeting with students and staff, the instructional leader's presence consistently displays attitudes, behaviors, and reinforces the values of the district. Informal interaction with superintendents motivates students and teachers, monitors instruction, allows the leadership to be accessible and provide support, and keeps staff informed of district issues. Additionally, this visible presence

allows leaders to know what is going on in the building and classroom on a daily basis (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1998).

Instructional leaders seek to model lifelong learning and professional growth. By making a priority to model their own commitment to personal growth, superintendents communicate the importance of professional growth. Instructionally focused leaders seek to create additional professional development activities that enhance instructional capacity (Cohen & Ball, 1999). They create and foster study groups, share current research and publications from professional journals, make presentations at conferences and write articles to share experience and knowledge, and engage in action research projects in the district.

Hoy and Hoy (2003) focused in-depth on the role of instructional leaders who are learning-centered. Their research focuses district leaders specifically on classroom teachers, students, and how to create greater capacity to improve the learning environment. Hoy and Hoy also advocated it is the leaders role to focus on academic excellence, continual improvement, and teacher development. Academic excellence should be a strong motivating force in the school (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). Instructional leaders should create a learning environment that is “orderly, serious, and focused on high but achievable academic goals” (p 4). The district leader must demonstrate in both words and actions a belief that all students can achieve, while developing a school culture in which teachers and students respect hard work, each other, and academic success.

Instructional leaders must ensure that instructional excellence and continuous improvement are ongoing and are supported by the leadership as well as the staff. Daily activities such as student growth and achievement, school climate, pedagogy, teacher and

student motivation, faculty morale, and parental involvement should be systematically monitored, assessed, and evaluated regularly with an aim to learn and improve existing program, policies, and practices (Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

Instructional leaders also focus on teacher development. The recognize that teachers are at the center of instructional improvement, and only teachers themselves can change and improve instructional practices in the classroom (Hoy & Hoy, 2003; Blase & Blase, 1998). District leaders are pushed to motivate and provide incentives for teachers to professionally develop and continually refine instructional practice. Instructional leaders must provide constructive support and obtain the resources and materials necessary for teachers to be successful in the classroom. To also help in the professional development of teachers, a focus on instructional leadership requires district leaders to be familiar with the latest developments in teaching, learning, motivation, classroom management, assessment, organizational leadership, and they must share best practices with education stakeholders. Lastly, celebration of academic excellence of students and their teachers must occur to reinforce the vision and culture of success (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

The Superintendent as Instructional Leader

Research on instructional leadership and the impact on student achievement, specifically focused on the superintendentency, is limited but growing. A core component of the new expectation for superintendents is a clear inclusion of both leadership and management competencies that stipulate the importance of providing instructional leadership as a major function (Gumpton, 2003). The blending of both traditional

managerial and current requirements of leadership focused on instruction has been examined in numerous ways.

The Center for Policy Studies in Education Research (2003) indicated that superintendents who are characterized as instructional leaders are examined in numerous ways such as leadership domains, skills, and behaviors. Through the examination empirical studies focused on superintendents as instructional leaders, standards of practice and new understandings of the traits, skills, and behaviors associated with successful leadership highlight a new focus on instruction and curricula.

By examining the superintendents' role through leadership domains provide a framework that blends the traditional understandings of district leadership with a drive for instructional leadership, thus creating new idea of superintendents as instructional leader. Thompson (1990) believes that there are four instructional leadership domains that can describe superintendents as instructional leaders: functional, programmatic, interpersonal, and contextual.

Functional- instructional leadership standards that address the organizational process and techniques by which the mission of the school is achieved. They provide the educational programs to be realized and allow the institution to function.

Programmatic- instructional leadership standards that focus on the scope and framework of the educational programs. They reflect the core technology of schools' instruction, and the related supporting services, developmental activities, and resource base.

Interpersonal- instructional leadership standards that recognize the significance of interpersonal connections in schools. They acknowledge the critical value of human relationships to the satisfaction of personal and professional goals and to the achievement of organizational purpose.

Contextual- instructional leadership standards that reflect the world of ideas and forces within which the school operates. They explore the intellectual, ethical, cultural, economic, political, and governmental influences upon schools, including traditional and emerging perspectives.

These four leadership domains examine the role of superintendents both as instructional leaders and district managers. Domains have provided a lens that allows the role of superintendents to be examined as a policy maker, philosophic leader, program administrator, and relationship builder. From this perspective, the challenges and opportunities, best practices, and current trends for instructional leaders are can be addressed through additional studies on superintendents as instructional leader.

Studies on the instructional leadership of the superintendent have also identified specific characteristics that are present in instructionally focused districts. Wimpelberg (1987), using empirical studies, identified five key indicators of superintendents as instructional leaders. First, there must be a consciousness at the district level that forges cooperation and collaboration *between* schools and central office, *among* schools, and among teachers *within* the school. Huberman and Crandall (1983) found that while

principals were responsible for school implemented change, superintendents actually gave the thrust and momentum to building leaders allowing them to carry out the reform.

Secondly, superintendents must foster district relationships through an exchange process where the central office and building administrations simultaneously challenge and support each other. Cuban (1984) found in his study that the most effective superintendents were ones that sought to tighten district practices to school action did so without mandating the same effort district wide, but carried it out school-by-school basis working closely with the building administration and faculty.

Next, Wimpelberg (1987) highlighted how superintendents have the highest potential for instructional leadership by way that they have organizational authority to supervise and evaluation principals and support building leaders. This is evident through Purkey and Smith's (1985) study where they observed superintendents often engaged in developing and negotiating relationships between top down administrative leadership and bottom-up teacher leadership. Superintendents also worked cooperatively with the school board, teacher union, and school principals to nurture instructional revitalization in a methodical manner for it to survive organizational politics.

Fourth, superintendents that are instructionally focused ensure that individual buildings develop both a technical and cultural consciousness of the school (Wimpelberg, 1987). At the basic level, superintendents push building administrators to understand and evaluate the technical consciousness of the school which involves scheduling, activity coordination, resource allocation, technology, and communication processes. In addition, superintendents make sure principals continually evaluate student achievement so resources can be allocated appropriately.

Superintendents as instructional leaders push building principals to create relevance between the student, parent, and teacher on district instructional initiatives. In Rosenholtz (1985) study, superintendents were critical in encouraging principals to explore the meaning, relevance, and value in each school, thus allowing education stakeholders the opportunity to internalize the common vision.

Lastly, Wimpelberg (1987) identifies superintendents that are instructional leaders have a deep knowledge and intimacy with schools. Instructional leaders use classroom and building data to create a picture of the school's effectiveness and then use communication networks to share findings for improvement. Hall (1980) highlights how superintendents as instructional leaders who successfully implemented a new curriculum often were in the buildings on a weekly, if not on a daily basis to monitor progress and gather evaluative data. However, not only was evaluation consistent, but superintendents in the study demonstrated how this continued over a long period of time. These five indicators are focused on the behaviors, beliefs, and practices of the superintendent as the instructional leader, other studies have focused on identifying superintendents that use their organizational authority to focus on instructional leadership.

Kent Peterson (1984), in his study examined how superintendents used six mechanisms of control to influence instructional practices and policies: supervision, input control, behavior control, output control, selection-socialization, and environmental control. Superintendents that were instructionally focused used supervision of building principals to ensure that district outputs and evaluation benchmarks were achieved. Interestingly, principals responded that the superintendent had tighter constraints on administrative tasks and looser constraints on specific instructionally related decision. In

essence, giving the principal substantial decision-making authority in instructional issues tailored to the individual building.

Superintendents the study also used input, output, and behavioral controls over principals to bolster instruction. Input, simply stated, identified how participating principals were given limited discretion by superintendents over school budgets, but the final decision in teacher hires and transfers. Output controls, almost exclusively student achievement scores, were used by superintendents as a way to influence building instruction. Behavior controls described how principals were influenced through district-level reporting and attendance requirements, formalization of teacher evaluations, and standardization of curriculum objectives and classroom resources.

Lastly, Peterson (1984) found that selection socialization and environmental controls were an important and widely used method for instructional success. Superintendents hired and assigned building administrators who shared the norms, values, and beliefs of the district. Instructional leaders were hired and assigned according to the district superintendent, thus supporting the instructional vision of the district. Environmental controls also impacted instruction through community and parental opinions and preferences to evaluate building success. Overall, while these six manifestations of superintendents as an instructional leader examines organizational control, additional studies have identified specific behaviors and characteristics of effective district leaders.

In a 2002 study of ten schools, Geoff Southworh identified six common themes that associate instructional leadership with school superintendents: working hard, determination, positive disposition, approachability, teamwork, and school improvers. First, respondents felt that superintendents had an elevated capacity to successfully

process a tremendous amount of work and the superintendents' work ethic was a symbol of care, concern, and commitment to instructional improvement.

District leaders also demonstrated an aggressive determination for increased levels of success. Superintendents often secured additional classroom resources through external funding, improved building physical environments through capital improvement campaigns, and exhibited an overall low threshold for inferior teaching and learning resources.

Third, district leaders were generally regarded to believe individual schools could improve and achieve more because the parents, teachers, and students had passion to be successful. Instructionally focused superintendents were quick to acknowledge success occurring in schools and characterize increased achievement as hard work from the principals, teachers, and students.

Fourth, an important attribute identified in the study was the approachability and access to superintendents. Teachers and principals overwhelmingly felt superintendents were not remote and often seen within the building. Conversations were authentic and the superintendent was willing to listen and share ideas and plans with the staff. Superintendents who were instructional leaders in the study also worked hard to develop cohesive teams composed of principals, teachers, staff, and central office. These teams were characterized by professional openness and debate, unity of purpose, clear and shared educational goals and values, consistency in teaching and planning, continuity in the curriculum, and utilization of best practices in classroom instruction. Superintendents worked to coordinate all levels of the organization and to foster professional collaboration.

Lastly, Southworth (2002) found that superintendents who participated in the study sought to continually improve their district. While some districts were low achieving and others highly successful, all superintendents were not satisfied with current district performance. As the instructional leader, superintendents were working to avoid complacency. Superintendents modeled a positive attitude for learning and continued to push to improve continually student achievement.

Petersen (1999) examined the role of the superintendent as the instructional leaders and organizational factors that supported instructional improvement. In his study, superintendents that focused on the core technology of curriculum and instruction were characterized by five emerging themes: creation of a vision, increased visibility, modeling of academic expectations, developing relationships with the school board, and the management of instructionally oriented programs.

Superintendents in the study consistently developed and communicated a clear vision for instruction within the district. Leaders often presented comprehensive building and district-wide goals as a plan to accomplish organizational change focused on instruction and curriculum. The implementation of the vision also required superintendents to be risk takers for decisions that they believed were in the best interest of the students. This required superintendents to make unpopular decisions at the potential cost of loosing district support.

Superintendents in the study also were described as having high visibility at the classroom and building level. Because superintendents were instructionally focused, they were characterized by supporting teachers, monitor instruction, and have an intimate understanding of what is happening across instructional programs. Superintendents used

their high visibility to focus on evaluating the technical core of classroom instruction through frequent building and classroom visits and interacting with the school faculty. Not only did superintendents develop and sophisticated understanding of what was occurring within the school, but that this behavior also served as a way to manage, reinforce, and evaluate the progress of instructional and curriculum improvement.

Modeling of valued district behavior was also found to characterize superintendents as instructional leaders. Typically, modeling professional practice occurred through superintendents focusing the instructional core through in-services, meeting agendas, staff development, and allocation of resources for teacher development. District leaders were critical in setting the instructional agenda through coordinated efforts focused on instructional improvement and used themselves as an example. Closely linked with superintendents modeling professional practice, as instructional leaders they also served as cheerleaders for examples of district success. Publicly highlighting and rewarding successful district program and practices helped created momentum for instructionally related reforms.

In Petersen's (1999) study, superintendents identified as instructional leaders were also found to use organizational structures and management techniques to facilitate successful instructional development. Working with a supportive school board for instructional change, superintendents were found to have two critical management freedoms for improvement: placing appropriate personnel in critical instructional positions and the creation of a district hierarchy that required district resources to support the core departments of instruction.

Superintendents in the study required building principals to develop detailed and comprehensive plans focused on instruction. From these plans, superintendents were able to evaluate principals as effective instructional leaders and either provide the necessary support for the plan or replace the principal with a new administrator more aligned with the superintendents' instructional vision. Respondents highlighted how often times building leaders were replaced because they did not align themselves with the new vision of instruction from superintendents.

Instructional leadership, as outlined through the literature, provides the foundation for instructional improvement. Superintendents, because they are the most influential decision-maker within the organization, are in a very important role. Successful districts have superintendents that utilize a blend of transformational and instructional leadership to improve district performance. By examining the interaction between transformational and instructional leaders, new understanding of effective district and building leadership can be explored.

Transformational and Instructional Leadership Integrated

Two studies have investigated the integration of transformational and instructional leadership. In Hallinger's (2003) conceptual study, he highlighted the need for a new understanding of leadership that integrates the similarities of instructional and transformational leadership approaches. Marks and Printy (2003) propose an integrated model of leadership in their study of school leaders to elicited higher levels of performance and commitment from teachers. While the research on the integration of

transformational and instructional leadership is limited, it does reveal a new role for school and district leaders.

Hallinger (2003) examined empirical research on transformational and instructional leadership. A key finding in his study reflects the similarities in the focus of transformational and instructional leadership models. Hallinger (2003) specifically focused transformational and instructional improvement-orientated activities and concluded that both models have leaders who (p 343):

1. Creating a sense of purpose in the school;
2. Focus on developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture focused the improvement of teaching and learning;
3. Shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the goals set for staff and students;
4. Organize and provide a wide range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and development for staff;
5. Being a visible presence in the school, modeling the values that are being fostered in the school.

Lastly, Hallinger (2003) concluded that instructional leadership can itself be transformational. When school leaders elicit high levels of commitment and professionalism from teachers and work interactively with teachers on shared instructional leadership capacity, schools perform at higher levels than those who don't. Integrated leadership also creates a level of sustainability for improvement, often found lacking in district change initiatives.

Marks and Printy (2003) also conducted a study that compared instructional and transformational leadership. Specifically, the interactions of school leaders and teachers around instructional matters in an effort to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance were examined. Their research highlights how transformational leadership was important for supporting the commitment of teachers around instructional issues. They attribute leaders are successful because they use transformational leadership as an ethos for change while focusing improvement around curriculum and instruction as benchmarks for success.

Marks and Printy (2003) also discovered that leaders who operate from integrating transformational and instructional leadership create a climate of organizational self renewal. The goal of the integrated leadership approach is to raise the consciousness about the importance of organizational goals by inspiring all members of the organization to transcend self-interest and use wider organizational perspective (Marks & Printy, 2003). Focused on instructional innovation, teacher inclusion in the decision-making processes in the central area of curriculum, instruction, and assessment was central to leaders in the study. Integrating transformational and instructional leadership, the authors concluded became an inclusive concept where teacher were empowered to share in the decisions-making processes related to instruction and curriculum.

Marks & Printy (2003) write that “this shared instructional leadership is an inclusive concept, compatible with competent and empowered teachers” (p. 374). Teachers assume shared instructional leadership responsibility as they interact with other adults in the organization around school reform efforts, encourage others to improve professional practice, and learn together with school colleagues (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

In a shared instructional leadership model, leaders become a facilitator of teacher growth and use teachers who have the requisite expertise and knowledge to exercise leadership collaboratively with the school and district leaders. As teachers and administrators research and learn together, they encourage each other to identify problems and seek solutions to instructional problems and/or improvement. Shared instructional leadership is not dependent on the individual's position or role in the organization. Personal expertise and resources from all educational stakeholders are utilized to gather information from a pool of teaching and learning experts.

The integration of transformational and shared instructional leadership creates an organizational vision and individual motivation focused on teaching and learning facilitated through a shared decision-making model (Firestone, 1996). Marks & Printy (2003) support the integration of the two theories by stating that:

> "…[transformational leadership]places vision building to create a fundamental and enduring sense of purpose in the organization, the model lacks an explicit focus on teaching and learning. Instructional leadership, emphasizing the technical core of instruction, curriculum, and assessment provides direction and affects the day-to-day activities of teachers and students…" (p. 377).

Essentially, transformational leadership builds organizational capacity whereas instructional leadership builds individual and collective capacity. When school leaders who are transformational leaders accept their instructional role and put it into action, in collaboration with teachers, they practice an integrated from of leadership that will impact instruction capacity in the classroom and across the district.

Instructional Capacity

Research on school improvement has highlighted the how schools are complex organizations affected by individual teachers, leadership, materials, students and other complex factors such as the local, state, and federal agencies, and universities, (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Massell, 1998). A significant focus, over the past three decades, of school improvement and reform has been on curriculum and instructional practices (Gress, 2002; Massell, 1998). A broad understanding on relationships between the many influences affecting the classroom and how they create challenges and opportunities for instructional practices is necessary to help schools and students succeed. Instructional capacity provides a framework that allows for an extensive and critical examination of the many factors that impact teaching and learning at both the organizational and classroom level. By examining the internal and external influences on the instructional unit, new approaches to leadership, teaching, and student achievement can be generated (Splillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002).

Instructional capacity is defined in numerous ways. Massell (1998) examines instructional capacity from the classroom and organizational levels. She defines capacity as "the property of people, technology, and institutions to effectively promote teaching and learning" (p. 5). While this definition is broad in scope, it highlights seven specific elements which interact to impact instructional capacity both in the classroom and district wide.

Teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions- this element describes the level of knowledge teachers have in their content area, the skills teachers have to teach subject matter, willingness to be engaged in continuous learning, and their understandings of

student learning and dispositions. The combinations of these critical factors interact to impact teacher effectiveness in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1996b). Teachers' dispositions highlight the importance of a willingness to engage in new ideas, to question, to test ideas and practices, and to explore different approaches to pedagogy.

Students' motivation and readiness to learn- improving students' motivation and readiness to engage in learning is a critical component of knowledge production within the classroom (Cohen & Ball, 1999). Many students' lives are in chaos caused by poverty, violence, peer pressure, and lack of direction which drains motivation and the necessary mindset for learning. Students must have an optimal internal purpose, goal, and incentive to achieve in the classroom.

Curriculum material for students and teachers- high quality instructional materials and a strong curriculum is critical to increasing achievement in the classroom. Over the past two decades, there has been sharp criticism of curriculum and materials used in the classroom (Massell, 1998). Textbooks especially have been critiqued as teaching students isolated facts, having little depth, and focusing on memorization. A strong curriculum is aligned to content standards, a common framework, and is centered on current learning theories (Gress, 2002).

Numbers and kinds of people- the number and kinds of people influence the way teaching is organized, ability of teachers to interpret curriculum, and other elements directly relevant to teaching and learning (Spillane, 1996). Many people within the school provide support directly within the classroom such as administrators, teacher's aids, support staff, curriculum specialist, and diagnosticians. The amount and quality of

teachers, staff, and school leaders influence the availability of support, levels of expertise, and student/educator ratios in buildings.

Number and quality of social relationships- schools focused on increasing instructional capacity establish professional communities where teachers trust each other and are open to share high quality teaching practices (Massell, 1998). Districts use professional learning communities to encourage innovation and risk-taking, experimentation, and teacher-driven research. Also, quality relationships within and outside the organization move teachers beyond isolation and enhance teachers' sense of professional efficacy and responsibility.

Material (non-human) resources- instructional capacity is also influenced by the school's ability to provide a safe and rich learning environment with access to sufficient material resources (Massell, 1998). Adequate facilities, building maintenance, and technology all influence the quality, content, and structure of teaching and learning. Strong districts seek outside funding and support for gaps in budgets and also enhance the mission of the school.

Organization and allocation of school and district resources- the way resources are organized and structured can create challenges and opportunities for instructional capacity (Massell, 1998). District and building resources need to be targeted on areas that are directly related to teaching and learning. Districts that allocate time, money, and manpower to areas unrelated to instruction, spread resources thinly so that few activities in the school are accomplished well. In the end, district leaders can negatively influence teaching and learning by minimizing instructional capacity in the classroom.

The previous seven dimensions define instructional capacity at the classroom and district level. Massell (1998) identifies institutional people, practices, and polices that can promote or inhibit instructional capacity. On the other hand, O'Day, Goertz, & Floden (1995) take a different and deeper analysis of how instructional capacity interacts with organizational capacity. In their study, researchers examine classroom instructional capacity and the interdependence it has with organizational capacity (O'Day, et al., 1995). They believe that in order to increase instructional capacity in the classroom, successful districts recognize the importance of organizational capacity.

O'Day, et al. (1995) highlight five dimensions of organizational capacity that influence instruction in the classroom:

- *Vision and Leadership*- The importance of district leaders is to develop a vision and mission and articulate and mobilize support (human, financial, material) focused on instruction. A vision of instructional capacity focuses on curriculum and instruction, improved achievement for all students, and teacher responsibility for student learning.
- *Collective Commitment and Cultural Norms*- Leaders displays a sense of collective commitment and responsibility for students and creates a sense of organizational culture that stresses ongoing reflection and improvement. Leaders develop specific tools, benchmarks, and processes to evaluate progress towards increasing student learning. In the end, the intention should be to ensure that these practices will become institutionalized.
- *Knowledge and Access to Knowledge*- Leaders promote the development of professional learning communities in schools to build instructional capacity.

Both as an individual and as a member of a content department, teachers need to have access to the necessary knowledge to implement a new vision in improving student achievement by focusing on instructional capacity. Additionally, school leaders ensure that where the required knowledge does not exist within the organization, new and outside experts, resources, and professional development needs to be provided to supplement current knowledge.

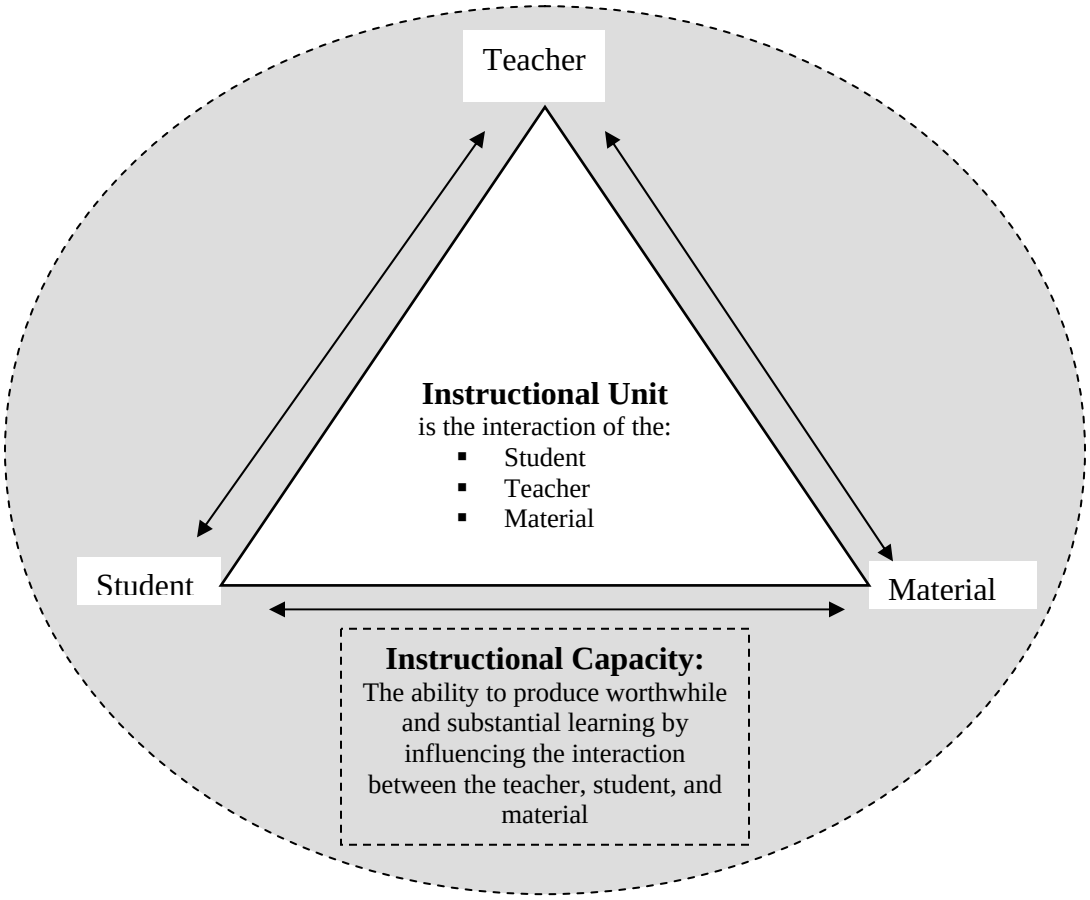
- *Organizational Structures and Management*- District leaders link organizational structures and reform efforts with improving instructional capacity. Successful districts do not see structural changes as the goal, but any changes need to be directly linked to learning goals and, if necessary, new changes need to evaluated and changed if they do not improve teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, 1996a).
- *Resources*- Leaders provide support for the development of instructional capacity through monies, personnel, facilities, materials, and time. Professional development, common planning periods, and an increase in classroom instruction time are needed to increase student achievement. Materials for instruction that reflect curriculum standards and meet the needs of a diverse student body are critical for success.

O'Day, et al. (1995) has a view of instructional capacity focused on the organizational culture, structure, and leadership. This perspective highlights the need for school leaders to recognize and pursue school reforms at the organizational level to impact instructional capacity in the classroom.

Cohen and Ball (1999) take the definition of instructional capacity and view elements at the classroom level. The central focus in Cohen and Ball's (1999) understanding of instructional capacity is the interactions between *teachers* and *students* around educational *material*. These three elements of the classroom combine to make the *instructional unit*. The instructional unit is described by Spillane and Seashore-Louis (2002) as the interaction of each of these elements as: "teachers' intellectual resources influence how they understand and respond to materials and students. Students' experiences, understandings, dispositions, and commitments influence what they make of teacher direction and materials. Materials, as well as the intellectual tasks, mediate teacher and student interactions" (p. 84).

Using the instructional unit to identify the interaction of the components of any classroom, instructional capacity describes how a focus on instructional improvement will influence each individual element. Instructional capacity is defined by Cohen and Ball (1999) as "the capacity to produce worthwhile and substantial learning is a function of the interaction between the three elements, not the sole province of any single one" (pp. 2-3). Figure 1 graphically represents the interaction of the instructional unit and how instructional capacity can influence the elements relationship.

Figure 1- Influence of Instructional Capacity on the Instructional Unit



To understand how instructional capacity influences the interaction of the elements of the instructional unit, Cohen and Ball (1999) examine each part: teacher, student, and material.

Cohen and Ball (1999) write that a teacher's "intellectual and personal resources influence instructional interactions by shaping how teachers, apprehend, interpret, and respond to materials and students" (p. 3). Teacher resources in the interaction with students and materials include the instructors' knowledge, understanding of content, and flexibility of content understanding. Specifically, teacher resources are influenced by

their relationships with students. Teachers need to have an acquaintance with a students' knowledge and have the ability to relate to, interact with, and learn about each student. Also a teacher's ability to represent and extend content and personal knowledge, and to establish classroom environments combine to mediate how teachers shape instruction. Overall, a teacher's ability to use, develop, and extend his or her knowledge and capabilities can considerably affect instruction by how well they make use of students and materials (Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002; Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

While most research on instructional capacity has focused on teachers, student experience, understanding, interest, commitments, and engagement also influence instructional capacity in the classroom (Cohen & Ball, 1999; O'Day, et al, 1995). A student will bring experience, prior knowledge, and habits of mind into the instructional unit. These factors will influence how they apprehend, interpret, interact, and respond to curriculum and instructional materials and the teacher. A student will also interact with other students in the same learning environment, thus having a significant impact on instructional capacity in the classroom (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

Materials in the instructional unit consist of teachers and students being actively engaged in the learning process. Students interact with the teachers and materials through the textbooks and other instructional media, as well as problems, tasks, and questions posed by the instructor. Cohen and Ball (1999) and Spillane & Thompson (1997) write that instructional materials can mediate students' engagement with the content to be learned through the materials themselves. Materials can also mediate instructional capacity by constraining or enabling students' and teachers' opportunities to learn and

teach. The more capable the teacher, the richer instructional materials, and the willingness of the student all interact to facilitate the learning environment.

Instructional capacity can be defined and implemented in numerous ways. Focusing on instructional capacity at the classroom, organization, or district level highlights the challenges and opportunities that district leaders face implementing school reforms focused on student achievement. Beyond defining instructional capacity, critical themes need to be recognized to fully understand instructional capacity across the classroom to the district.

Instructional capacity is not a fixed attribute of interactions in the instructional unit. That is, the dynamic interactions between the instructional unit (student, teacher, and materials) are influenced simultaneously by each part. Every part of the instructional unit is related to the other and depends on the strengths and weakness of the dimension. Cohen and Ball (1999) explain this issue as:

> "In discussing what students bring to a task it is important to recognize that is depends in part on what teachers can see and use in students. One reason that different teachers elicit different responses and work from the same student is what teachers know, believe, and can do shapes their perceptions of what students bring, the opportunities they subsequently extend to students, and their interpretation of students' ensuing work" (p. 4).

This dynamic relationship is also evident in students and teachers interaction with classroom materials. For example, the use of reading materials in an elementary school classroom would be shaped by the nature of the text and the approaches (whole language or phonic based instruction) used to develop students' reading comprehension, interpretation, and analysis. Additionally, materials are shaped by students' ideas and prior experiences. Willingness to engage in classroom activities, scholastic ability, and

interest in activity will impact the interaction between the student and the material. A change in students, teachers, or materials has the potential to alter the relations of each part of the instructional unit and hence affect instructional capacity.

While this interaction between the elements of the instructional unit is dynamic and directly related to each part, teachers have a unique role in instructional capacity (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Massell, 1998; O'Day, et al., 1995; Spillane & Jennings, 1997). A teacher's knowledge, experience, and skills affect the interactions of students and materials in ways that neither can. Teachers mediate instruction and their interpretation of educational materials affects curriculum success, and their understandings of students affects students' opportunities to learn. Because teachers mediate all relationships within the instructional unit, they have the unique potential to influence classroom capacity significantly. Therefore, school and district leaders must not only target students and materials but especially teachers to improve instruction and student achievement.

Instructional Capacity and District Leadership

The challenge that district leaders face to increase instructional capacity in the classroom is significant. Spillane & Seashore-Louis (2002) identify four key challenges educational leaders need to address to focus on instructional capacity. First is the need to reorient education stakeholders to focus on teaching and learning. Leaders need to generate and sustain conditions that support the development of classrooms and schools as sites for learning and research (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992). This requires district and building leaders to have content, pedagogical, content-specific, curricular knowledge,

and knowledge of human learning to enable them to support teachers, acquire necessary instructional materials, and develop positive relationships with students.

Also, district leaders must look to others in the organization for advice and expertise (Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). Because district leaders would need a tremendous amount of curriculum, pedagogical, and human learning knowledge to focus on the development of instructional capacity, assistant principals, curriculum specialists, and teacher leaders play a role in school improvement and capacity development. Also, involving other members of the organization in the development of the necessary programs, policies, and practices focused on instructional capacity will motivate participants to support district changes (Senge, 2000).

Next, district leaders must develop social trust within the organization (Leithwood, 1995). Time to meet with teachers and staff to discuss instructional capacity development will create the environment necessary for vision implementation. Structural features of the district such as meeting times, professional development activities, and scheduling must focus on instruction and learning. Site-based management that permits a strong teacher voice in the development of policies that affect teaching and learning conditions is also important for the development of social trust within the organization.

Finally, Spillane and Seashore-Louis (2002) write that leaders must cultivate a professional network for themselves and district staff that extend beyond the building and district. Teachers' involvement with professional networks that extends beyond their immediate workplace is an important source and support for instructional improvement (Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). Working with other leaders and teachers involved in similar activities focused on instructional capacity will provide external points of view

and expertise to provide motivation, engagement, and information necessary for success. School leaders must also continue to develop and sustain such networks and ensure that they support ongoing rich discussions about teaching and learning.

Chapter Summary

The importance of strong leadership within school districts is critical. Current political and social changes have made the role of effective leadership an ever-changing target. Over the past fifty years, a shift in educational leadership from a management paradigm to one characterized by transformation, inclusion, and a focus on instruction has moved the district superintendent to the head of the class. Couched in the effective schools movement, manifested through government legislation and public dissatisfaction, superintendents are now, more than ever, expected to transform beliefs and practices to advance the technical-core of curriculum and instruction.

It order to embrace this new expectation for teaching and learning, studies have examined how superintendents use both transformational and instructional leadership to impact classroom achievement. Effective district leaders use transformational leadership to intellectually stimulate teachers, all the while gaining their trust and increasing commitment to district change initiatives. Superintendents also used instructional leadership to focus the vision and mission toward curriculum and instruction. Additionally, recent research proposes that effective leaders operate from both transformational and instructional leadership domains. In an integrated leadership approach, school leaders seek to use instruction as a way to transform teacher knowledge,

beliefs, and practices. Through these three construct of leadership, new understandings of how and what superintendents do impact classrooms can be explored.

Chapter 3

Method

Rationale

The role of school superintendent has significantly changed over the past two decades (Petersen & Barnett, 2003). Internal and external influences such as federal and state legislation, increased global competition, new building and district accountability expectations, and performance reporting have pushed the superintendent to become increasingly focused on student performance in the classroom. New education polices such as *Goals: 2000* (1994) and *No Child Left Behind* (2002) make district administrators accountable to ensure that each district improves. Demands for the superintendent to become attentive and knowledgeable in all areas of education within the district, specifically instructionally focused, are expected now more than ever (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). With a current shift to a focus on classroom instruction, new challenges await the superintendent.

The new demand for superintendents to become increasingly focused on classroom achievement creates the need for instructional leadership in district administration (Gupton, 2003). Unfortunately, many superintendents often are not able to become instructional leaders due to the lack of knowledge, expertise, and instructional background necessary for instructional leadership (Fusarelli, Cooper, & Carella, 2002). Traditional administrative responsibilities such as district finance, personnel, and working with the school board require significant time and energy leaving little opportunity for district leaders to focus on instructional issues. In addition, preparation

programs for superintendents often fail to prepare district leaders for a role as an instructional leader (Kowalski & Glass, 2002).

The previous studies have highlighted many challenges superintendents as an instructional leader face. While the difficulty superintendents have being an instructional leader is recognized, research has demonstrated how superintendents are critical players in successful instructional reform (Elmore, 2000; King, 2002). Research has also demonstrated how superintendents who focus on instructional leadership exhibit specific behaviors, traits, and practices which influence classroom achievement (Bredeson, 1996; Herman, 1990; Murphy & Hallinger, 1986, Petersen 1999). This study is an effort to better understand the challenges and opportunities superintendents faces as an instructional leader and the influence superintendents exert on instructional capacity.

Instructional capacity focuses school improvement on the success of the individual through the interaction of the teacher, student, and instructional materials in the classroom (Cohen & Ball, 1999). An understanding of superintendents' role on the interaction among these three factors will identify challenges and opportunities facing district leaders. Specifically, using the lens of instructional capacity, this study will examine teacher and principal perceptions of the superintendent that promote instructional improvement and successful academic achievement.

Purpose of Study

This study examines the role of superintendents as an instructional leader by using teacher and principal perceptions of their superintendents' ability to develop and maintain instructional capacity in the classroom. Using concurrent mixed methods, this study seeks

to better understand a superintendents role in developing and maintaining instructional capacity by converging both quantitative data for broad numeric trends and qualitative data for a detailed view of the superintendent's influence on instructional capacity. Instructional leadership questionnaires were used to measure the relationship between the teachers' and principals' views of the superintendent as an instructional leader and the superintendent's role in the development of instructional capacity. At the same time, the superintendent's role in developing and maintaining instructional capacity was explored using focus groups comprised of teachers and principals in school districts located throughout Missouri.

Sample Selection

The sample for this study was selected from the 524 school districts in the state of Missouri. Selection criteria was used to identify characteristics and performance measures associated with high achieving districts in an attempt to select sites that face instructional and budgetary challenges, yet still exhibit high student achievement. Districts were identified and selected based on the following criteria to ensure high quality data collection. All school districts selected:

1. have one superintendent responsible for the overall administration of the district;
2. have a grade span of Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12);
3. have a superintendents with a minimum of five years experience as a superintendent and at least one year experience at their present district;

4. are identified by the PEER[1] Report (2003 & 2004) as having strong student achievement across all grade bands (Elementary, Middle, and High School).
5. are recognized at the state level as fully accredited and meet the districts annual yearly progress (AYP) in communication arts and mathematics;
6. have a graduate rate higher than the Missouri state average;
7. are characterized as having low per pupil expenditure (PPE) and a high to very high percentage of students in the free and reduced lunch (FRL) program when compared to their PEER group and the Missouri average.

Because the study uses specific criteria to generate a selection pool, the final sites for data collection were chosen for this study purposively. Purposive sampling was used because of the ability to generate substantial data from a specialized group. Current research indicates that purposive sampling is preferable for many studies. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) speak to this issue:

> "Random or representative sampling is not preferred because the researcher's major concern is not to generalize the findings of the study to a broad population or universe but to maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context under study. Purposive and directed sampling increases the range of data exposed and maximizes the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms" (p.82).

Kerlinger (1986) went further and explained purposive sampling as a type of non-random sampling which is characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain

[1] A PEER group is a cluster of districts similar on the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch program (FRL) and the district's per pupil expenditure (PPE). Each PEER group presents data about district characteristics and outcomes. The outcomes feature various measures of school district performance on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) examinations in Mathematics and Communication Arts. PEER group performance data is aggregated by grade level across similar districts for comparison.

representative samples by including typical areas or groups in the sample. Therefore, using a purposive selected sample allowed data to be collected in rural Missouri districts that demonstrate effective instructional leadership, face significant adversity, and still demonstrating high student achievement.

Sample

Beginning with the PEER selection criteria, a general pool of ninety-three districts were identified. Then, using the remaining selection criteria, fifteen districts were identified as meeting requirements and were contacted to participate in the study. School district superintendents were contacted via an introductory letter, reply postcard, and phone to participate in the study. A total of seven districts participated in the study to ensure a sufficient amount of data and to allow for cross district comparisons.

The seven sites that participated in the study are located throughout the state of Missouri (Figure 2). All superintendents who participated in the study had experience as district leaders, and the sample consisted of four male and three female superintendents. Districts were generally located in rural communities that serve low to moderate socioeconomic families. All but one district had a per pupil expenditure (PPE) lower than the state average, while the percentage of students participating in the free and reduced lunch (FRL) program was at or above the state average in five districts. The additional two districts had a FRL below the state average. Additionally, all the districts had met the annual yearly progress (AYP) in both mathematics and communication arts at the elementary, middle, and high school.

Figure 2- Statistical Profile of Participating Sites

	Supt. Yrs in Dist.	# of students	PPE	Grad %	FRL %	Math AYP	Com. Arts AYP
Missouri Avg.			$7,345	84.2	39.21	Not Met	Not Met
District 1	18 years	1463	$6,938	85	39.42	Met	Met
District 2	14 years	1300	$6,234	86.80	56.97	Met	Met
District 3	7 years	612	$6,489	97.50	50.20	Met	Met
District 4	8 years	702	$5,370	95.80	52.69	Met	Met
District 5	14 years	764	$5,859	92.3	55.52	Met	Met
District 6	4 years	686	$6,548	86	19.95	Met	Met
District 7	13 years	728	$7,992	94.90	15.55	Met	Met

District 1 is located in a rural community with light industry and moderate commercial activity. It has the largest population in the study with 1,463 students. The school has an excellent reputation in the community with a long serving superintendent. While the district has a FRL percentage equal to the state average, it has a PPE of $6,938 which is below the state average.

District 2 is located in a very rural agricultural region and serves 1,300 students. It has the highest free and reduced lunch percentage in the study at 56.97% District 3 also has a PPE of $6,234 which is below the state average. However, it still is above the state average in graduation rate and continually meets AYP.

District 3 is a rural community located near a thriving industrial community. It has a small student population of 612, and the superintendent has served for 7 years in the district. The district has a moderately high FRL at 50.2% and a PPE below the state average at $6,489. Even with these challenges, it still graduates 97.5% of its students.

District 4 is located in a largely agricultural region and is the largest employer in the community. It has a student population of 702 and is in the process of expanding district facilities to accommodate growth. It has a moderately high FRL at 52.69% and the lowest per pupil expenditure in the study at $5,370, which is well below the state average. The district, however, still graduates 95.8% of its students.

District 5 is located in a rural community that relies primarily on farming and light industry. It has a small student population of 764 and a superintendent who has served 14 years as a district leader. The district has a low PPE of $5,859 and a high FRL of 55.52%. However, it still meets AYP in both mathematics and communication arts and has a graduation rate of 92.3%.

District 6 is located in an agricultural and industrial community located near a major urban center. It serves 686 students and is strongly supported by the local business community. While the superintendent has only four years in the district, he/she has 10 years total experience as a district leader. While District 6 has the lowest FRL percent in the study (19.95%), it also has a PPE that is below the state average. It also has the lowest graduation rate in the study at 86%, still above the state average of 84.2%.

District 7 is a rural, agriculturally based community located near a major urban center. It has had the same superintendent for thirteen years and is experiencing moderate district growth. It has the highest expenditure per student in the study at $7,992 and a low FRL of 15.55%. Additionally, District 7 has a graduation rate of 94.9%.

Research Questions

The following quantitative and qualitative research questions were used to gain insight into the interactions and complexities superintendents have in the development and maintenance of instructional capacity:

Quantitative Research Question

3. What are teachers' views of the superintendent in his/her role as an instructional leader and how do they influence instructional capacity?
4. Do teachers perceive the superintendent as influencing their ability to produce worthwhile and substantial learning*?*

The two hypotheses were tested in the quantitative section of this study. The first hypothesis is a test of zero-order correlations among the factors of superintendents' instructional leadership, instructional capacity, and teacher professional development and instructional practices, superintendents' social influences, superintendents' expertness, and superintendents' trustworthiness. The second hypothesis is a test of the predictive linear relationships among the factors of superintendents in instructional leadership, instructional capacity, and teacher professional development and instructional practices using a regression analysis.

Hypothesis One

The first hypotheses tested in this study was: There are no significant correlational relationships between teacher views and district superintendents, as measured by the

factors and subscales of Dorn's (1984) Social Influence Scale, and the factors of instructional leadership, as measured by McEwan's (1998) Instructional Leadership Behavior Scale, and the factors and subscales of instructional capacity as measured by the Public School Teacher Questionnaire and School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000). Pearson product moment correlations were also conducted.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis tested in this study was: There are no predictive linear relationships between teacher perceptions of superintendents' "instructional leadership" factors, as measured by McEwan's (1998) Instructional leadership Behavior Scale, factors of "professional development and instruction" as measured by questions derived from the Public School Teacher Questionnaire and School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000) and factors of "instructional capacity" also derived from the Public School Teacher Questionnaire and School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000). A multiple regression was conducted to determine the predictive linear relationship between the factors of instructional capacity (Dependent Variable) and the factors of perceptions of superintendents' instructional leadership (Independent Variable) and factors of teacher professional development and instructional practice (Independent Variable).

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

H_{01}: There are no significant correlation relationships between teacher views and the district superintendent, as measured by the factors and subscales of Dorn's (1984) Social Influence Scale, and the factors of instructional leadership as measured by McEwan's (1998) Instructional Leadership Behavior Scale, and factors of instructional capacity and professional development and instructional practices as measured by the Schools and Staffing Survey (1999-2000).

H_{02}: There are no significant predictive linear relationships between the perceptions of superintendent instructional leadership factors as measured by McEwan's (1998) Instructional Leadership Behavior Scale and the factors of district professional development and instructional practices and instructional capacity as measured by the Schools and Staffing Survey (1999-2000).

Qualitative Research Question

The following qualitative research question was examined:

1. How and to what degree does the role of the superintendent develop and maintain instructional capacity in the school district/classroom?

The qualitative research question was focused on gathering what teachers and principals believe about how superintendents' influences the interaction between themselves, students, and classroom resources. Using a two-part domain analysis to analyze focus group data, the qualitative research focus of this study used the

professional experience of district teachers to identify specific behaviors, traits, and practices of successful superintendents.

Mixed Methodology Data Collection and Analysis

Concurrent mixed method procedures allowed for quantitative and qualitative data to be collected at the same time (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Figure 3 outlines the data collection and data analysis phases of the study.

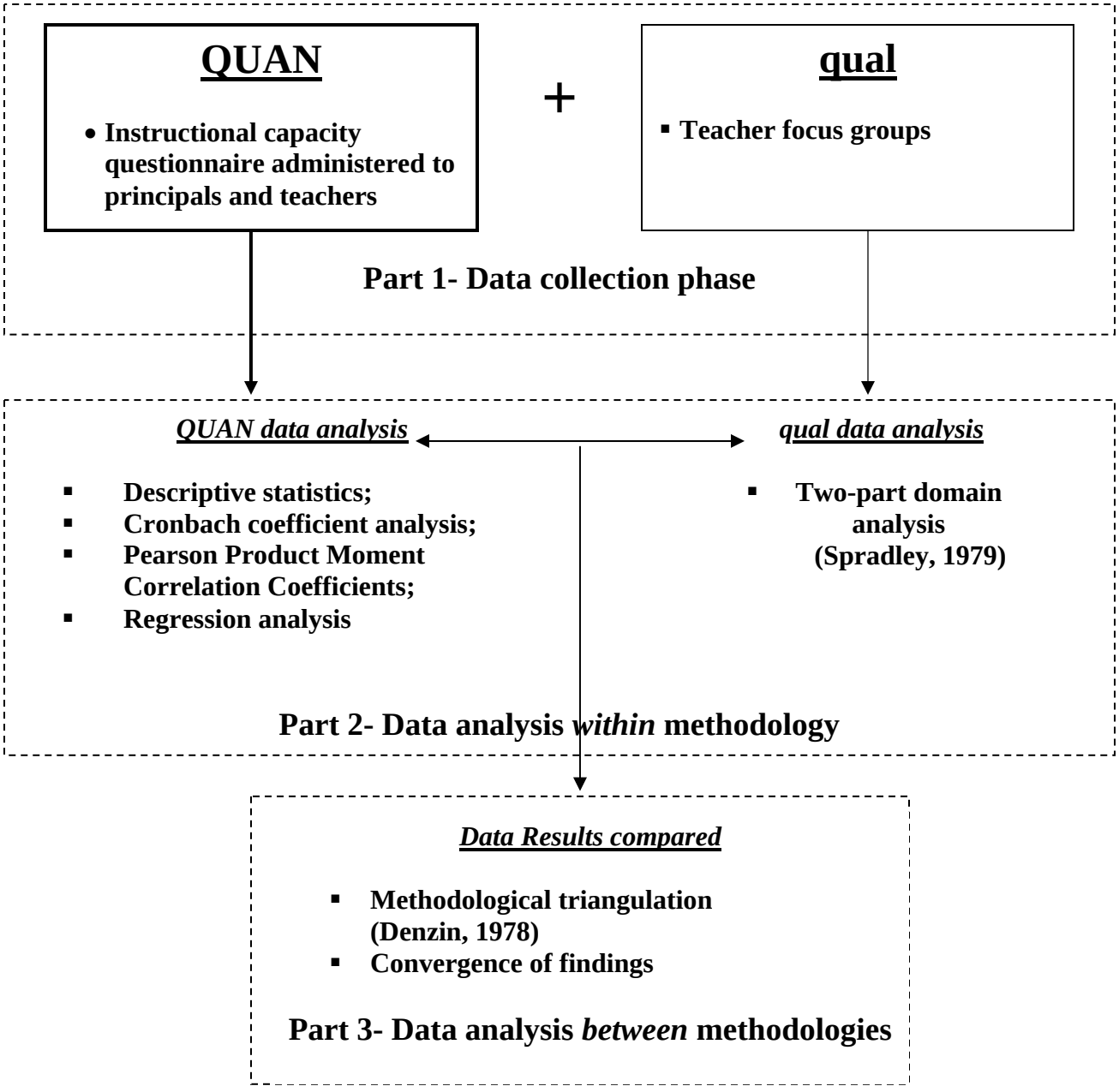
The data collection and analysis consisted of three separate parts. Part one used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gather data using a survey instrument and teacher focus groups. Quantitative data was the *dominant* method while the qualitative data was the *less-dominant* method (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The quantitative data was dominant to allow for a broad investigation into the perceptions that stakeholders have on the superintendent's role in instructional capacity. The qualitative data became less-dominant because the in-depth interviews supplemented the quantitative data by providing additional, supplemental data on the central research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Part two is the analysis of the data that occurred within both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies individually. Collected data was analyzed separately to generate two data sets that will be converged in the last past of the study's analysis.

The third part of the analysis merged both the qualitative and quantitative findings using methodological triangulation. The data results were integrated in the final interpretation phase to converge the findings as a way to further strengthen the internal

and external validity with a goal to examine the superintendent's influence on instructional capacity.

Figure 3- Data Collection and Analysis Flowchart



Part 1- Data Collection

Quantitative Data Collection

Data was collected in seven Missouri school districts using two methods: survey and focus group interview data. The questionnaire was administered to measure the relationship between teacher and building administrators' perceptions on the role of the superintendent in developing and fostering instructional capacity within the school district. During the primary data collection, the survey was given to all regular certified teachers and building principals within each district. The survey collected demographic data, capacity issues related to professional development, school and district climate, superintendents as an instructional leader, and perceptions of superintendents' influence.

One instrument was utilized in this study to collect quantitative data: *A study of the district superintendent's role in the development and maintenance of a school district instructional capacity* (Appendix B). The questionnaire was used to collect data related to teacher and principals' perceptions of superintendents' influence on classroom/district instructional capacity. Prior to the full data collection phase, the survey instrument was field tested with thirty-seven regular certified classroom teachers to ensure internal consistency and overall validity of the data. Upon analysis of the pilot, the survey was found to meet the needs of the study within current quantitative methodological standards.

The survey had four primary parts: teaching demographics, professional development, instructional practices and capacity, and the superintendent's instructional leadership. Demographic, professional development, instructional practices, and instructional capacity items on the questionnaire were derived from selected questions on the Public

School Teacher Questionnaire and School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000) developed by the United States Department of Education. Instructional leadership items were adapted from empirical studies focusing on the role of superintendents as instructional leader and McEwan's (1998) *Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership*. Lastly, Dorn's (1984) social influence model was used to identify items that assessed teacher perceptions of superintendents' characteristics of social influence associated with transformational processes.

Item descriptions are as follows:

1. Demographic questions (Section I- Items A-F) asked respondents to identify their main assignment, years of experience in education, length of time at their present school, highest degree attained, major field of study, and present grade level. A combination of both closed and open ended questions were used.
2. Professional development questions (Section II- Items G-K) asked teachers to identify professional development (PD) activities in which they have participated, types of district support for PD, general opinions on the influence of PD, and which district employees were responsible for deciding, planning, and conducting PD activities. A combination of both closed and open ended questions were used with a seven point Likert *agree\disagree* scale.
3. Instructional capacity questions (Section III- Items K and L) asked teachers to identify how much influence the superintendent has on items related to the instructional capacity (instruction and the instructional unit). Seven point Likert *no influence/ very influential* and *agree\disagree* scales were used. Teachers were also queried about general classroom planning and teaching. A

combination of both closed and open ended questions were used with a seven point Likert *agree\disagree* scale.

4. Superintendent instructional leadership questions (Section IV- Items S-Y) asked respondents to identify their perceptions of the superintendent as an instructional leader. A seven point Likert *agree\disagree* was used. Additionally, Dorns' (1984) Social Influence Model was used to evaluate how teachers perceived the superintendent's social capitol. A seven point word pair rating scale was used.

Qualitative Data Collection

Simultaneously, qualitative data were collected on the role of superintendents in fostering instructional capacity. Semi-structured ethnographic qualitative focus group interviews consistent with qualitative data collection techniques were used (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2003). Teacher interview data were collected by seven focus groups consisting of five to eleven participants. Protocols were used in all focus groups with classroom teachers, principals, and the superintendent (Appendix A). All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim to allow for triangulation and a convergence of findings.

Because a significant part of this study is focused on teacher experiences and perceptions at the classroom level, focus groups were ideal for uncovering factors that influence opinions, behaviors, motivations, and organizational outcomes (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups were also ideal for this study because of the type and depth of data needed to explore superintendents' influence on instructional capacity.

Additionally, focus groups promote self disclosure that is achieved when participants feel comfortable among peers. Common experiences elicit comments that disclose crucial information in nonjudgmental environments (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Focus groups were conducted within each of the seven school districts and consisted of five to eleven classroom teachers. Participants were selected for the focus group through district-wide announcements from the superintendent's office. While focus group data collection was aligned with contemporary methods, because the participants were ultimately selected by the superintendent, there were limitations to the findings.

Krueger & Casey (2000) highlight two potential problems of focus group data when participants are selected by supervisors. The selection of the focus group ultimately created a situation where the superintendent acted as a gate keeper. First, there is a potential for participant bias when persons were selected based on their level of support and allegiance to the superintendent which could inhibit the diversity of group responses. Additionally, there is potential for focus group participants to be "clones" (p. 81), who share similar values, beliefs, and opinions of superintendents. While these are significant factors influencing the validity of the data, specific precautions were taken to decrease participant bias.

Krueger & Casey (2000) highlight while it is often necessary to give the selection of participants to others, it is necessary to maintain some control over the selection process. To limit the potential for participant bias, Krueger & Casey (2000) suggest that if others are doing the recruiting, the person doing the selection should fully understand the purpose of the study and be provided with some parameters for participant selection. To accomplish this, a detailed summary describing the purpose of the study was provided in

a letter to each superintendent and the following participant criteria was shared. The focus groups reflected the following criteria:

1. a balance of male and female classroom teachers;
2. participants with various levels of teaching experience;
3. at least one representative from each grade band (i.e. elementary, middle, jr. high, and high school).

Additionally, to ensure that participation in the focus group was voluntary, each focus group member was given the opportunity not to participate before each session started. Participants were instructed that all responses would not be shared with either the principal or the superintendent. Lastly, to encourage participation, the importance of the study was explained to focus group members, and snacks were also provided.

Part 2- Data Analysis Within Methodologies

Quantitative Data Analysis

Four types of analysis were used on the completed survey instruments. Using the SPSS program for all data analysis, descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) were computed for the purposes of summarizing the demographic characteristics of the sample and the ratings for each item appearing on the survey. Second, Cronbach coefficient analyses were calculated on each questionnaire item to ensure internal reliability of the scales and subscales. An alpha score of .8 or greater is desirable to validate reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). Third, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were calculated to test the overall strength and relationship of the subscales that measure, instructional leadership of the superintendent,

instructional capacity, professional development, and instructional practices supported by the district superintendent. Lastly, based on the strength of the correlational analysis, a composite was formed and independent variables were submitted to regression analysis. Lastly, regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the superintendent on instructional capacity and the magnitude of the relationship (Allison, 1999).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Perceptions of the superintendent and personal experience of focus group participants were gathered to assist in the development of codes and themes for qualitative data analysis. By focusing on teachers' ways of thinking and their personal experiences in relation to superintendent influences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), data analysis focused on categorizing participants' responses in ways of thinking about the superintendent and the instructional unit to gain further insight into how superintendents influences instructional capacity in teachers' classrooms. To accomplish the qualitative data analysis, the focus groups data were analyzed in three separate stages.

First, the data was analyzed by creating coding categories focused on the ways teachers and principals think about their superintendents and instructional capacity (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003). The advantage of this type of data analysis is the emergence of common meanings over such a broad phenomena such as superintendent influence and classroom instructional capacity. Coding categories were generated by examining themes using the primary focus areas of superintendents and instructional capacity outlined by the quantitative data analysis. Using the quantitative focus areas was necessary to ensure

that data from both methodologies could be analyzed in a systematic manner for the mixed method triangulation analysis (Creswell, 2003).

Next, the coded categories were submitted to analysis focusing on the common themes which generated cover terms (Spradley, 1979). The cover terms specifically focused on narrowing the qualitative data to examine primary areas of superintendents and instructional capacity. Cover terms such as vision and leadership, resource management, and curriculum development created clear boundaries for coded categories to focused on the three primary areas of superintendents' influence- instructional capacity, instructional leadership, professional development and general practice.

Last, the qualitative data was submitted to a two-part domain analysis (Spradley, 1979). The domain analysis consisted of analyzing the cover terms for a semantic relationship to each of the three focus areas. The domain analysis specifically looked at teacher perceptions of attributes demonstrated by instructionally focused superintendents, functions that superintendents used to influence instructional capacity, rationale of superintendents focusing on instructional capacity, means-end to examine the ways instructional capacity is influenced, and cause and effect focused on the results of superintendents focusing on instructional capacity.

All interviews were transcribed, examined, and categorized across district responses. Data were entered into Nudist 5.0 software to help organize data and assist in data analysis. At no time did anyone besides the researcher have access to either the data or the corresponding names of the interviewees. All tapes sent off for transcription carried pseudonyms. Prior to interviews, all subjects signed an informed consent and were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary, and that they were free to stop

participation in the interview at any time (Appendix E). Interview data was subjected to a member check, and an outside researcher assisted in the data analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Part 3- Data Analysis Between Methodologies

Part three consists of integrating the findings from both the analyzed quantitative and qualitative data. To integrate the findings, *methodological triangulation* was used (Denzin, 1978). Because of the mixed method design, both the qualitative and quantitative must be consistent to methodological triangulation methods (Denzin, 1978). To accomplish this, the qualitative data analysis focused on gathering additional data to further explain and offer additional insights into the quantitative data findings (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). By using a dominant (quantitative) and non-dominant (qualitative) methodology for data collection, presentation and analysis, internal validity of the entire study was strengthened.

The qualitative data were coded using constructs initially examined in the quantitative data (Superintendent and Instructional Capacity, Superintendent's Instructional Leadership, and Professional Development and Instructional Practice). Using Spradley's (1979) domain analysis, the three domains were used as a framework to organize and analyze themes which were generated from qualitative coded data. The advantage of using domain analysis in this study was the ability to merge the qualitative data with domains examined in the quantitative data. Specifically, the themes generated from the qualitative data analysis could be compared to quantitative data by using the same domain to analyze data across methodologies (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie,

1998). Using Spradley's (1980) domain analysis provided a systematic mechanism to compare the three areas of analysis of the quantitative data with the generated themes from the qualitative data.

Integration of the two types of data helped increase the claims of the study and provided further explanation of the findings. Converging analyzed survey data findings and themes developed from interviews presented an understanding of the superintendent and instructional capacity. Overall, this type of methodological triangulation allowed the convergence of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research questions (Creswell, 2003).

Rationale for Using a Mixed Method Design

The rationale for utilizing any method for a study rests with the purpose and assumptions of the research questions (Creswell, 2003; Newman & Benz, 1998; and Patton, 1990). Tashakkori and Teddie (1998) highlighted "the best method is the one that answers the research question(s) most effectively and with foremost inference quality. Mixed methods are often more efficient in answering the research questions than either qualitative or quantitative alone" (p.167). The choice of using a mixed method design for this study was directly linked to the types of research questions.

The first set of research questions investigated the relationship between teacher and principals' perceptions of the superintendent related to instructional capacity, and the second set of questions investigated the role of a superintendent in developing instructional capacity and how they influenced the instructional unit in the classroom. Each set of questions required different research methods to sufficiently and accurately

explore the phenomenon. The advantage of a mixed method approach to this study was the blending of strengths and overcoming the internal weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methodology.

A mixed method approach calls for a more integrative methodological approach, focusing on the needs of the individual researcher to combined methods at his disposal. Brewer & Hunter (1989) state the importance of investigating a research problem with a variety of methods that have non-overlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strength. By using a concurrent triangulation strategy to analyze and interpret data, this mixed method study allowed the findings to be confirmed, cross-validated, and corroborated.

Finally, a mixed method study allows researchers to expand understanding from one method to another and to merge findings from different data sources. It allows one set of data to complement the other to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complexities the superintendent has in developing and maintaining instructional capacity.

Chapter 4

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Introduction

The superintendent's role as the school district leader has changed dramatically since its inception in the early twentieth century. The role has changed over time from business and human resource management during the efficiency movement to the educational statesperson motivated by social and economic responsibility in the 1950's. Now, with the present pressure focused on performance and accountability with No Child Left Behind (2002), the superintendency has been in a continual state of change. Both internal and external pressures have created the need for the superintendent to become, more than ever, focused on the individual classroom- especially in areas of classroom curriculum and instruction.

To facilitate the focus on instructional issues, the role of the superintendent has evolved into that of an instructional leader. Instructionally focused superintendents recognize their ability to support teachers and students at the classroom level and use their expertise to challenge organizational policies and practices. In order to influence student achievement district wide and within the individual classroom, district leaders are focusing on issues of instructional capacity.

Classroom instructional capacity, or the relationship between the teacher, student and the curriculum, provides a lens to investigate the superintendent's influence on the interaction between each part of the instructional unit (Cohen & Ball, 1999). Using

instructional capacity as a lens of analysis, Chapter 4 presents the findings investigating the role of the superintendent's influence on classroom instructional capacity.

Study Design

Both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected to determine the (a) relationship between teachers' views of the superintendent as an instructional leader and the superintendent's role in the development of instructional capacity; (b) the superintendent's role in the development and maintenance of classroom instructional capacity; and (c) relationship between superintendent characteristics and classroom instructional capacity. Data collection consisted of both survey and focus group data gathered in seven rural school districts in the state of Missouri. The first part of chapter four will present the findings gathered from the quantitative survey followed by the findings of the qualitative focus group presented.

Quantitative Presentation of Findings

A total of seven districts were selected to participate in the study. Quantitative data, collected through a single survey instrument, were collected from each district. Demographic data reflects the total of all survey respondents, district assignment, highest degree attained, present grade-level assignment, average number of years of total professional education experience, and average number of years at current position.

A total of three-hundred nineteen surveys were collected (Figure 4). District 2 had the highest number of surveys with 65 collected representing 20.4% of the total amount. District 1 had the least number of surveys with only 26, or 8.2% of the total amount.

Districts 4, district 5, and district 7 had similar amount of collected surveys with 46%, 45%, and 49% respectively.

Figure 4 - District Surveys Collected

	Surveys Collected	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
District 1	26	8.2	8.2	8.2
District 2	65	20.4	20.4	28.5
District 3	58	18.2	18.2	46.7
District 4	46	14.4	14.4	61.1
District 5	45	14.1	14.1	75.2
District 6	30	9.4	9.4	84.6
District 7	49	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	319	100.0	100.0	

District Assignment

District assignment required respondents to identify their primary position within the district (Figure 5). Responses consists of a six point scale where 1 = Assistant Principal, 2 = Regular Full-Time Teacher, 3 = Regular Part-Time Teacher, 4 = Long-Term Substitute Teachers, 5 = Teacher Aide/ Paraprofessional, and 6 = Other Professional Staff.

Figure 5- Total District Assignment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Assistant Principal	3	0.9	0.9	0.9
Regular Full-Time Teacher	274	85.9	85.9	86.8
Regular Part-Time Teacher	7	2.2	2.2	89.0
Long-Term Substitute	2	0.6	0.6	89.7
Aide/Paraprofessional	6	1.9	1.9	91.5
Other Professional Staff	27	8.5	8.5	100.0
Total	319	100.0	100.0	

All 319 surveys had responses to the item. As expected, regular full-time teachers constituted the biggest population at 274 or 85.9% of all survey participants. The second highest assignments were “other professional staff” with 27 surveys at 8.5% of the total respondents. The two smallest populations responding to the survey included 3 “assistant principals” and 2 “long-term substitutes” for a combined percentage of 1.5%.

Highest Degree Attained

Survey respondents were asked to identify their highest degree attained (Figure 6). Six identifiers for degrees were used. 1 = High School/G.E.D.; 2 = Associate degree; 3 = B.A./B.S.; 4 = M.A./MS; 5 = Education Specialist; and 6 = Doctoral. Of the 305 total responses, 46.4% or 148 respondents had a bachelor’s degree. Participants with a master’s degree had the second highest rate with 138 surveys or 43.3%. Associate’s degree was the third highest percentage of degrees attained with 3.1%, with the lowest percentage of respondents having education specialist and doctoral degrees at 2.8% combined.

Figure 6- Highest Degree Attained

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Associate Degree	10	3.1	3.3	3.3
	BA/BS	148	46.4	48.5	51.8
	MA/MS	138	43.3	45.2	97.0
	Ed.S	6	1.9	2.0	99.0
	Doctoral	3	.9	1.0	100.0
	Total	305	95.6	100.0	
Missing	System	14	4.4		
Total		319	100.0		

Grade Level

Respondents were also asked to identify the grade level at which they taught within the past year (Figure 7). A five point scale was used where 1 = Elementary; 2 = Middle/Jr. High School; 3 = Secondary; 4 = Alternative School; and 5 = Other. The results indicated that almost half of all respondents were identified as working in an "Elementary" school with a total 157 or 49.2%. The second highest rate of responses was from the "Secondary" school employees at 27.9% or a total of 89 participants. The third most significant population that responded to the survey was "Middle/Jr. High School" faculty with 47 surveys or 14.7% of all surveys received.

Figure 7- Grade Level Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Elementary	157	49.2	49.4	49.4
	Middle/Jr High	47	14.7	14.8	64.2
	Secondary	89	27.9	28.0	92.1
	Alternative	4	1.3	1.3	93.4
	Other	21	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	318	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	0.3		
Total		319	100.0		

Number of Years of Total Education Experience

Respondents were asked to list the total number of years of experience in education (Figure 8). The total range for respondents was a scale from 0 to 30+ years of experience in education. The majority of respondents had 0 to 5 years of experience with 28.2% of all surveys (N = 90). The second highest population with 21.6% of surveys had 6 to 10 years of educational experience (N = 69). The total percentage of 0 to 10 years of experience combined to have 49.8% of all surveys (N = 159). There was a slight increase in years of experience in the 21 to 25 year category. This population had the third overall highest percentage with 11.6% (N = 37).

Figure 8- Total Years of Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	0-5	90	28.2	30.0	30.0
	6-10	69	21.6	23.0	53.0
	11-15	40	12.5	13.3	66.3
	16-20	29	9.1	9.7	76.0
	21-25	37	11.6	12.3	88.3
	26-30	22	6.9	7.3	95.7
	30+	13	4.1	4.3	100.0
	Total	300	94.0	100.0	
	System	19	6.0		
Total		319	100.0		

Figure 8a presents the average number of years of education experience of all participants. The average years of experience is 12.51. The median of years of experience is 10.00, while the mode is 3 years.

Figure 8a- Total Average Years of Experience

N	300
Mean	12.51
Median	10.00
Mode	3(a)

a Multiple modes exists. The smallest value is shown

Number of Years of Experience in Current District

Respondents were also asked to list the total number of years they have been employed in their current district (Figure 9). Total responses ranged from 1 to 40 years. Almost half of the respondents (48.3%) were under five years of working within the

district. The second most identified years of experience in their current district was 6 to 10 years with 23.5% of all surveys. The cumulative percentage of 1 to 10 years was 74.8%. There was a significant drop off of district experience from 11 to 40 years. The overall average years of experience in the district was 8.18 (Figure 9a). The median number of years in the district was 5, while the mode was 3.

Figure 9- Years of Experience in Current District

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Years	0-5	154	48.3	50.3	50.3
	6-10	75	23.5	24.5	74.8
	11-15	25	7.8	8.2	83.0
	16-20	20	6.3	6.5	89.5
	21-25	21	6.6	6.9	96.4
	26-30	7	2.2	2.3	98.7
	31-35	3	.9	1.0	99.7
	36-40	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	306	95.9	100.0	
	Missing	13	4.1		
Total		319	100.0		

Figure 9a- Average Total Years in Current District

N	Valid	306
	Missing	13
Mean		8.18
Median		5.00
Mode		3

The demographic data highlight how survey respondents were primarily classroom teachers with undergraduate and graduate education. The survey data were mostly collected from elementary school teachers with very few from middle level teachers. However, much of this discrepancy is due to three districts having a building configuration of kindergarten through sixth grade; thus, having only 7th and 8th grade levels deemed as a middle school. Over half of all the survey respondents had fewer than ten or less years of experience as classroom teachers. Additionally, many of the teachers had less that five years experience of teaching in their current district. Because of focus in small and rural districts, these figures are not uncommon. High turnover rates, an aging teaching staff, and the employment of beginning teachers are reflected in the demographic data.

Overall, the demographic data presents a consistent picture of the survey respondents in small rural districts. While a significant amount of teachers are new to the profession and the districts they work within, a vast majority of the survey respondents are fully certified professional educations. The survey population is qualified to have valid perceptions and opinions of the district superintendent and evaluate how they are influenced within the classroom.

Teacher Perception of the Superintendent in Fostering Instructional Capacity Variable

The Public School Teacher Questionnaire, School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000) and McEwan's (1998) items were used to determine teachers' perceptions of the superintendent in fostering instructional capacity (Appendix B). This variable consisted of 22, 7-point Likert-scale items where 1 = Strongly Disagree,

2 = Moderately Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Moderately Agree, and 7 = Strongly Agree (Appendix D-1). The higher ratings on the factors indicate stronger agreement with the statement.

Perceptions of the superintendent in fostering instructional capacity variable descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 10. The superintendent fostering instructional capacity items had a mean of 4.826. The variance of the combined items was .276. The combined range of the items was 1.997. The standard deviation of the items was 1.22 .

Figure 10- Perceptions of the Superintendent in Fostering Instructional Capacity Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Std Dev	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.826	3.695	5.692	1.997	1.22	.276	22

The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis.

The internal consistency of items used to measure perceptions of the superintendent fostering instructional capacity was calculated using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The reliability of the items used was highly correlated with a .956 (Figure 11).

Figure 11- Perceptions of the Superintendent in Fostering Instructional Capacity Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.956	.954	22

These findings demonstrate how the survey items which were used to measure teacher perception about the superintendent’s influence on instructional capacity are statically

reliable as a group. The alpha analysis results of .956 are well with the acceptable threshold to validate the use of the 22 questions as a group as a single variable to be the dependent variable for the study. The questions focused on how the interactions within the instructional unit are influenced. Therefore, the higher the mean the more influence is demonstrated. With a mean of 4.826, the results highlight how teachers moderately agree with factors specific to the superintendent's influence in classroom instructional capacity. Additionally, with a standard deviation of 1.22, there were consistent responses to the group of items among participants.

Teacher Perceptions of the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Variable

The quantitative survey also was used to determine teachers' perceptions of the superintendent's instructional leadership (Appendix B). The Public School Teacher Questionnaire, School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000) and McEwan's (1998) items were used to determine teachers' perceptions of the superintendent in fostering instructional capacity (Appendix D-2). This variable consisted of a 15 question, 7-point Likert-scale items where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Moderately Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Moderately Agree, and 7 = Strongly Agree. The higher ratings on the factors indicate stronger agreement with the statement.

Perceptions of the superintendent's instructional leadership variable descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 12. The superintendent's instructional leadership items had a mean of 4.788. The variance of the combined items was .504. The combined range of the items was 2.973. The items standard deviation was calculated at 1.35.

Figure 12- Perceptions of the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Std Dev	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.788	2.485	5.458	2.973	1.35	.504	15

The internal consistency of items used to measure perceptions of the superintendent's instructional leadership was calculated using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The reliability of the items used was highly correlated with a .956 (Figure 13).

Figure 13- Perceptions of the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.956	.957	15

The instructional leadership variable examines teachers' views of the superintendent as an instructional leader within their classroom. The fifteen questions when grouped as a single variable had an alpha analysis of .956 demonstrating that the reliability is strong thus supporting its use as a dependent variable. The variable mean of 4.78 supports how teachers do perceive their superintendent possessing significant qualities that demonstrate instructional leadership. Also, the standard deviation of the variable is 1.35 signifying that responses were consistent with little variation from the mean.

Teacher Professional Development and Instructional Practice Variable

The quantitative survey also was used to determine the influence of professional development on teachers' instructional practices. The Public School Teacher

Questionnaire, School District Questionnaire of the School Staffing Survey (1999-2000) and McEwan's (1998) items were used to determine the influence of professional development for teachers and the influence on instructional practice (Appendix D-3). This factor consisted of a 13, 7-point Likert-scale items where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Moderately Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Moderately Agree, and 7 = Strongly Agree. The higher ratings on the factors indicate stronger agreement with the statement.

Teacher professional development and instructional practice variable descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 14. The professional development and instructional practice items had a mean of 5.27. The variance of the combined items was .338. The combined range of the items was 1.71. The overall standard deviation of the items was 1.391.

Figure 14- Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development and Instructional Practice Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Std. Dev	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	5.270	4.099	5.812	1.713	1.391	.338	13

The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis.

The internal consistency of items used to measure perceptions of the superintendent's instructional leadership was calculated using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The reliability of the 13 items used was .850 (Figure 15).

Figure 15- Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development and Instructional Practice Item Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.85	.855	13

The interpretation of the professional development and instructional data supports the reliability of the variable. The alpha analysis at .85, while lower than the first two variables, is still above the general threshold of .70 (Keppel, 1991). Consequently, the items are used as a dependent variable in the study to examine teacher perception of the superintendent's influence on professional development and instructional practice. With an overall mean of 5.27 and a standard deviation of 1.39, the variable demonstrates strong agreement among teachers that superintendents in the study do use professional development and influence instructional practices within the classroom.

Teacher Perception of the Superintendent's Social Influence

The quantitative survey also used Dorn's (1984) Social Influence Model items to determine teachers' perceptions of the superintendent's social influence (Appendix B). This variable consisted of 12 word pairings on a 7-point scale where respondents were asked to identify where the district superintendent would fall (Appendix D-4). For example, Y1 asked respondents to rate the superintendent as "Agreeable" or "Disagreeable". In this item, 1 = Strongly Agreeable, 2 = Moderately Agreeable, 3 = Agreeable, 4 = Neither, 5 = Disagreeable, 6 = Moderately Disagreeable, and 7 = Strongly Disagreeable. Ratings for items varied based on the order of the word pairs.

The superintendent's social influence variable descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 16. The social influence has a mean of 4.919. The variance of the combined items was .431. The combined range of the items was 2.33. The overall standard deviation of the variable was 1.14.

Figure 16- Superintendents' Social Influence Variable Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Std Dev	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.919	3.206	5.543	2.337	1.14	.431	12

The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis.

The internal consistency of items used to measure perceptions of the superintendent's social influence was calculated using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The overall reliability of the 12 items was .900 (Table 17).

Figure 17- Superintendents' Social Influence Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.900	.901	12

The social influence items were used to gather data about teacher support for the superintendent's leadership capabilities. As a single variable, the twelve questions had a high alpha score of .90 verifying it as a reliable measure of the social influence of the superintendent. The superintendent's social influence variable also had a mean of 4.91 demonstrating how teachers perceive their superintendent as having moderate social influence. In other words, teachers responded that the superintendent was credible as a leader and supported the efforts consistent with strong instructional leadership. Also,

minimal variance among the combined responses was demonstrated at 1.14 illustrating how teachers were consistent among each factor included in the social influence variable.

Teacher Perception of the Superintendent's Expertness

The quantitative survey also used Dorn's (1984) Social Influence Model items to determine teachers' perceptions of the superintendent's expertness (Appendix B). This variable consisted of a 12 word pairings on a 7-point scale where respondents were asked to identify where the district superintendent would fall (Appendix D-5). For example, Y1 asked respondents to rate the superintendent as "Agreeable" or "Disagreeable". In this item, 1 = Strongly Agreeable, 2 = Moderately Agreeable, 3 = Agreeable, 4 = Neither, 5 = Disagreeable, 6 = Moderately Disagreeable, and 7 = Strongly Disagreeable. Ratings for items will vary based on the order of the word pairs.

Teachers' perceptions of the superintendent's expertness descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 18. The superintendent's expertness had a mean of 5.733. The variance of the combined items was .136. The combined range of the items was 1.037. The overall standard deviation of the variable was 0.96.

Figure 18- Teachers' perceptions of the Superintendent's Expertness Variable Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Std Dev	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	5.733	5.236	6.274	1.037	0.96	.136	12

The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis.

The internal consistency of the items used to measure teacher perceptions of the superintendent's expertness were calculated using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The overall reliability of the 12 items was .914 (Figure 19).

Figure 19- Teachers' perceptions of Superintendent's Expertness Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.914	.916	12

The superintendent expertness variable was created using 12 factors to measure teacher perception of the superintendent's knowledge, skill, and ability centered on instructional capacity. The variable had a high reliability score of .914 confirming the reliability of the 12 factors used. With a variable mean of 5.733, the data indicated that teachers perceived the superintendent as having strong expertise in instructional leadership and as being knowledgeable on issues influencing the instructional unit. The superintendent expertness variable had a very low standard deviation among the responses at .96 further supporting the position that teachers' perceive themselves as having a highly qualified district leader.

Teacher Perception of the Superintendent's Trustworthiness

The quantitative survey lastly used Dorn's (1984) Social Influence Model items to determine teachers' perceptions of the superintendent's trustworthiness (Appendix B). This variable consisted of a 12 word pairings on a 7-point scale where respondents were asked to identify where the district superintendent would fall (Appendix D-6). For example, Y1 asked respondents to rate the superintendent as "Agreeable" or

"Disagreeable". In this item, 1 = Strongly Agreeable, 2 = Moderately Agreeable, 3 = Agreeable, 4 = Neither, 5 = Disagreeable, 6 = Moderately Disagreeable, and 7 = Strongly Disagreeable. Ratings for items will vary based on the order of the word pairs.

Superintendents' trustworthiness variable descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 20. The superintendent's trustworthiness has a mean of 5.24. The variance of the combined items was .824. The combined range of the items was 3.44. The overall standard deviation of the variable was 1.042.

Figure 20- Superintendents' Trustworthiness Variable Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Std Dev	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	5.245	2.638	6.086	3.447	1.042	.824	12

The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis.

The internal consistency of the items used to measure teacher perceptions of the superintendent's trustworthiness were calculated using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The overall reliability of the 12 items was .856 (Figure 21).

Figure 21- Teachers' perceptions of Superintendent's Trustworthiness Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.856	.860	12

The last variable examined in the quantitative data analysis is teacher perception of the trustworthiness of the superintendent. Superintendent trustworthiness consisted of 12 items with an alpha score of .856 which made the group reliable as an independent

variable for analysis. Teachers were instructed to respond by evaluating how much they trusted the superintendent as an instructional leader. With a group mean of 5.24, teachers' responses demonstrated that the superintendent was someone they trusted to guide the vision and development of instructionally focused initiatives. Additionally, with a standard deviation of 1.04, teacher responses were consistent across all districts.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations

Correlation Analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the variables of superintendent and instructional leadership, instructional capacity, professional development and instructional practice, influence, expertness, and trust (Figure 22). The data analysis demonstrated an overall strong to moderately strong relationship among all six variables with the strongest occurring between superintendent and instructional leadership and classroom instructional capacity at .935 ($p < .01$).

Figure 22- Pearson Product Moment Correlations

	Supt. Inst. Ldshp.	Inst. Cap.	P.D. and Inst. Pract.	Supt. Inf.	Supt Expt.	Supt. Trust
Supt. Inst. Ldshp.	1	.935(**)	.640(**)	.680(**)	.695(**)	.677(**)
N=	312	310	301	308	307	308
Inst. Cap.	.935(**)	1	.661(**)	.671(**)	.665(**)	.667(**)
N=	310	310	300	306	305	306
P.D. and Inst. Pract.	.640(**)	.661(**)	1	.393(**)	.466(*)	.439(**)
N=	301	300	302	298	297	298
Supt Inf.	.680(**)	.671(**)	.393(**)	1	.656(**)	.766(**)
N=	308	306	298	310	308	308
Supt Expt.	.695(**)	.665(**)	.466(*)	.656(**)	1	.731(**)
N=	307	305	297	308	309	308
Supt. Trust.	.677(**)	.677(**)	.439(**)	.766(**)	.731(**)	1
N=	308	306	298	308	308	310

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Inspection of these zero-order correlation coefficients indicates moderate to high correlations among the six variables. The superintendent's "instructional leadership" variable had a strong to moderate zero-order correlational relationship with "instructional capacity" ($r = .935$, $p < .01$), "superintendent influence" ($r = .680$, $p < .01$), "superintendent expertness" ($r = .695$, $p < .01$), and "superintendent trustworthiness" ($r = .677$, $p < .01$). Superintendents' "instructional leadership" had the smallest correlational relationship with teacher "professional development and instructional practice" with ($r = .640$, $p < .01$).

The "instructional capacity" scale also had a strong to moderate zero-order correlational relationship with all five variables, including "instructional leadership" (r =

.935, p< .01), “professional development and instructional practice” (r = .661, p< .01), “superintendent influence” (r = .671, p< .01), “superintendent expertness” (r = .665, p< .01), and “superintendent trustworthiness” (r = .667, p< .01).

The “professional development and instructional practice” scale had a moderate zero-order correlational relationship with three variables including, “instructional leadership” (r= .640, p< .01), “instructional capacity” (r = .661, p< .01), “superintendent expertness” (r = .466, p< .05), and “superintendent trustworthiness” (r = .439, p< .01). The “professional development and instructional practice” scale demonstrated the weakest zero-order correlational relationships with variable “superintendent influence” (r = .393, p< .01).

The “superintendent influence” scale also had a moderate to strong zero-order correlational relationship with four variables and a weak correlational relationship with one variable. Moderate correlations were demonstrated between superintendent “instructional leadership” (r= .680, p< .01) and “instructional capacity” (r = .671, p< .01) “superintendent expertness (r = .656, p< .01), and the strongest with “superintendent trustworthiness” (r= .766, p< .01). Superintendent influence demonstrated the smallest relationship with “professional development and instructional practices” (r = .395, p< .01).

The “superintendent expertness” scale had a strong to moderate zero-order correlational relationship with all five variables, including “instructional leadership” (r = .695, p< .01), “instructional capacity” (r = .665, p< .01), “professional development and instructional practice” (r = .466, p< .05), “superintendent influence” (r = .656, p< .01), and “superintendent trustworthiness” (r = .731, p< .01).

The “superintendent trustworthiness” also had a moderate to strong zero-order correlational relationship with all five variables, including “instructional leadership” ($r = .677$, $p < .01$), “instructional capacity” ($r = .677$, $p < .01$) “professional development and instructional practice” ($r = .439$, $p < .01$), “superintendent influence” ($r = .766$, $p < .01$), and “superintendent expertness” ($r = .731$, $p < .01$).

Correlation analysis Summary: The first hypothesis tested to identify if there were any significant correlational relationships between teachers’ views of the superintendent on factors of their influence on instructional capacity, professional development and instructional practices, superintendent social capital, expertness, and trust. Because the factors of teacher perceptions of the district superintendent had moderate to significant zero-order correlational relationships with the factors of instructional leadership, instructional capacity, professional development, superintendent influence, expertness, and trustworthiness, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The correlation analysis clearly indicated that teacher data on perceptions of superintendent instructional leadership demonstrated moderate to strong relationships with all other variables. This is an interesting finding because superintendent instructional leadership traditionally has not been focused on at the classroom level. However, the results from the data analysis demonstrate how teachers convincingly highlight the importance of instructional leadership from the superintendent. Huberman and Crandall’s (1983) study found that while superintendents were provided the thrust and momentum for instructional reforms, the building principal was ultimately in charge of the implementation of change and initiatives focused at the classroom level. Cuban (1984)

also found that the most effective superintendents sought to improve instructional practices without mandating specific classroom practices.

The relationships between the findings indicated that teachers perceive that the superintendent does have influence at the classroom level, specifically on the instructional unit. This data supports a new focus of instructional leadership in that superintendents who are strong instructional leaders influence factors of instructional capacity. Additionally, teachers felt that the superintendent's leadership was also influenced by their perceived expertness and trust among the teaching staff. According to the study, superintendents are perceived to be powerful and important components in developing strong instructionally focused classrooms focused on improvement and achievement.

Instructional capacity also demonstrated statistical significance across all of the five remaining variables. Factors that evaluated instructional capacity had strong relationships with superintendent influence at .671. The data demonstrated that teacher responses validate the importance of the superintendent's influence on teachers, students, and classroom resources. The literature acknowledges how superintendents increase instructional capacity by focusing district efforts on teaching and learning (Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). Using instructional leadership as a framework for implementation, leaders generate and sustain conditions that support the development of policies and practices that improve instruction. Superintendents become experts in content, pedagogical, and curricular knowledge and use their expertise to influence classroom teachers.

Moderate correlational relationships also occurred among the variable of professional development/instructional practice and the variables of instructional leadership, instructional capacity, superintendent expertness, and trust. There was a weaker correlation between professional development and instructional practice. While the superintendents in the study exhibited factors consistent with instructional leadership and strong influence, the findings indicated that there was not a significant relationship with direct instruction in the classroom. However, teacher survey data supports other literature highlighting a strong superintendent having a "hands off" approach to specific classroom instructional practices and individual professional development (Humerman & Crandall, 1983; Cuban, 1984; Wimpelberg, 1987; and Peterson, 1984).

The data indicated that teachers felt that superintendent instructional leadership and instructional capacity have a significant influence on instruction and professional development. However, due to the district wide influence of the superintendent, perceptions of teachers reflect a lack of direct attribution to where instructional and professional development initiatives are coming. Peterson (1984) research highlights how superintendents in his study were more likely to have tighter constraints on administrative task of principals, and looser constraints on specific instructional practices and decision-making. Superintendent trust and expertise had a consistently strong correlational relationship across three tested variables but a smaller correlation with professional development and instructional practice. These findings align with the literature by demonstrating how teacher trust in the superintendent, especially through their expertise, can influence instructional practice (Leithwood, 1995).

Regression Analysis

The second hypothesis tested in this study examined the predictive linear relationship between the dependent variable- instructional capacity and the dependent variables- instructional leadership and professional development and instructional practice (Figure 23). The regression model for “instructional leadership” and “professional development and instructional practice” demonstrates an 87.7% variance in “instructional capacity”. The overall F was 877.415 was significant at $p < .000$; thus a significant predictive relationship was found. Furthermore, the results of individual significance tests for the two-predictor variables- “instructional leadership” ($t = 29.8$ at $p < .000$ and ß = .862) and “professional development and instructional practice” ($t = 3.800$ at $p < .000$ and ß = .111) demonstrate a significant predictable relationship between each predictor and the dependent variable “instructional capacity”. The results for hypothesis two are organized into a single chart with the results of the two independent variables (instructional leadership and professional development & instructional practice).

Figure 23- Multiple Regression: Instructional Capacity Scale with Instructional Leadership and Professional Development and Instructional Practice

Dependent Variable: Instructional Capacity

Independent Variables	Multiple R	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error		
Instructional Leadership	.937	.878	.877	.420		
Professional Development and Instructional Practice						
Analysis of Variance	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig F	
Regression	2	310.07	155.036	877.415	.000	
Residual	311	43.114	.177			
Total	313	353.186				
Variables in Equation	B	Std. Error	ß	t	Sig T	VIF
(Constant)	.320	.166		1.925	.055	
Instructional Leadership	.769	.026	.862	29.834	.000	1.670
Professional Development and Instructional Practice	.155	.040	.111	3.854	.000	1.670

The regression analysis indicates a significant predictable relationship (R^2 = .877; F (2, 877) = .618, p =. 000) between the two independent variables and the dependent variable. The value for R^2—and its associated F-test—indicate that the combination of superintendent's instructional leadership and teacher's professional development and instructional practices had a significant predictive value on teachers' perceptions of the superintendent's role in fostering instructional capacity within the district. Furthermore, the results of individual significance tests for the two-predictor variables demonstrate a

significant predictable relationship between each predictor and the dependent variable (instructional capacity). In other words, these variables – individually or in combination – are significant in creating and maintaining an organizational environment that fosters the instructional capacity of teachers.

Because of the moderate relationship between the factors of instructional capacity with the factors of instructional leadership and professional development and instructional practice, variance inflation factors were calculated to assess the issue of multicollinearity. The mean for the variance inflation factors were all greater than 1.00; thus, some of the data provided by the two variables could be attributed to other factors within the model. However, because the individual variance inflation factors did not exceed the threshold of 10.00, the existence of substantial multicollinearity was not indicated (Bowerman & O'Connell, 1990).

Because a predictive linear relationship was found between the superintendent's instructional leadership and professional development & instructional practices (Independent Variables) and instructional capacity (Dependent Variable), null hypothesis two was rejected. The regression analysis supports the significance of superintendent influence on classroom instructional capacity. Specifically, through instructional leadership, superintendents influence instructional capacity. Through hard work, determination, positive disposition, approachability, teamwork, and the development of a culture of improvement, superintendents influence instructional achievement (Southworth, 2002). Professional development also demonstrated a linear relationship with instructional capacity. Superintendents use instructional capacity to increase teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions about teaching and learning (Massell, 1998).

Professional development focuses on the skills and knowledge teachers use to teach, but it also pushes teachers to become involved in continuous professional learning and growth. Professional development also is used by superintendents to promote the development of professional learning communities.

Quantitative Summary

From the quantitative data findings it is evident that superintendents have a significant and powerful influence on classroom instructional capacity. Superintendents who are perceived as strong instructional leaders are not only considered experts in cultivating a capacity for improvement, but also are trusted by generating and sustaining conditions that support both students and teachers within the classroom. The quantitative findings align with current research stating that strong superintendents must have extensive curricular knowledge and must acquire instructional resources to support a focus on classroom achievement.

One surprising finding highlighted in the analysis is the perception that superintendents have a limited influence on the daily interaction between teachers, students, and materials in the classroom. In other words, while the superintendent used professional development to change teachers' views about teaching and learning, the findings are not as strong with influencing instructional practice. The review of literature on instructional capacity and instructional leadership propose that effective superintendents should have a significant influence on teacher practices in the classroom. However, teacher responses in this study do not fully explain how superintendents can be strong influences as instructional leaders focused on developing instructional capacity but

not be perceived as changing classroom teaching practices evident in both correlation and regression analyses.

The quantitative data findings and existing literature clearly demonstrate the vital role the superintendents have on creating a high quality teaching and learning environment. However, the picture remains unclear as to specifically how teachers believe instructional capacity is cultivated. The limitations of the quantitative data are evident when finding specific processes and practices superintendents use to influence instructional capacity. Additionally, further investigations are needed to examine the inconsistencies of why teachers agree that superintendents in the study are strong instructional leaders who influence instructional capacity, but their influence is perceived not to filter down to daily classroom instructional practice.

Because of the mixed methodology design, quantitative data focused on examining teacher perceptions on the extent to which superintendents influence instructional capacity in addition to begin exploring the factors necessary for meaningful instructional improvement. Further data gathered from teachers was necessary to fully understand the complexity of superintendents influencing instructional capacity. Focus group data collected from teachers was necessary to discover specifically how the superintendent influences instructional capacity and to examine why the quantitative data did not demonstrate a strong correlation between instructional capacity and professional development and instructional practices.

Qualitative Presentation of Findings

Introduction

Qualitative data were collected investigating the role of the superintendent in fostering instructional capacity. The research question guiding the qualitative data collection and analysis focused on how and to what degree the superintendent develops and maintains instructional capacity in the school district/classroom (Appendix A). Semi-structured focus group interviews of only classroom teachers consistent with qualitative data collection techniques were used to collect and analyze data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Krueger & Casey, 2000).

To guide the qualitative data collection and analysis, the following qualitative research question will be examined:

1. How and to what degree does the role of the superintendent develop and maintain instructional capacity in the school district/classroom?

Methodology

Participants were selected for the focus group through district-wide announcements from the superintendent's office. While focus group data collection is aligned with contemporary methods, because the participants were ultimately selected through the superintendent, there are limitations to the findings. A detailed summary describing the purpose of the study was provided in a letter to each superintendent and the following participant criteria was shared. The focus group must include:

1. a balance of male and female classroom teachers;
2. participants with various levels of teaching experience;

3. at least one representative from each grade band (i.e. elementary, middle, jr. high, and high school).

To ensure that participation in the focus group was voluntary, each focus group member was given the opportunity not to participate before each session started. Participants were instructed that all responses would not be shared with either the principal or the superintendent. Lastly, to encourage participation, the importance of the study was explained to focus group members and food and drinks were provided.

Teacher interview data were be collected by seven focus groups within each participating district consisting of 5 to 11 participants each (Figure 24).

Figure 24- Focus Group Participants

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7
High School	4	3	2	4	1	1	2
Middle School	4	2	2	3	2	2	2
Elementary School	3	3	2	5	2	4	1
Total	11	8	6	11	5	7	5

Qualitative interviews and focus group data were analyzed using a two-part domain analysis (Spradley, 1979). Perceptions of the superintendent and personal experience of teachers and principals were gathered to assist in the development of codes and themes for data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). All interviews were transcribed, examined, and compared across district responses. The preliminary data were entered into Nudist 5.0 software to help organize interview data and assist with data analysis. Interviews

were also subjected to a member check, and multiple researchers assisted in the data analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Procedures

The qualitative data analysis focused on identifying how and what superintendents do that influence instructional capacity. Because of the mixed method design, both the qualitative and quantitative must be consistent to methodological triangulation methods (Denzin, 1978). To accomplish this, the qualitative data analysis focused on gathering additional data to further explain and offer additional insights into the quantitative data findings (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, by using a dominant (quantitative) and non-dominant (qualitative) methodology for data collection, presentation and analysis, internal validity of the entire study is strengthened (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The qualitative data were coded using constructs, or domains, initially examined in the quantitative data (Superintendent and Instructional Capacity, Superintendent's Instructional Leadership, and Professional Development and Instructional Practice). Using Spradley's (1979) domain analysis, the three domains were used as overarching cover terms that provide a framework to organize and analyze themes which were generated from qualitative data coding. The advantage of using domain analysis in this study was the ability to merge the qualitative data with domains examined in the quantitative data. Specifically, the themes generated from the qualitative data analysis were able to be compared to quantitative data by using the same domain to analyze data across methodologies (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Focus group data were first analyzed to identify common themes. The initial coding assisted in the development of themes that examined the influence of the superintendent on instructional capacity at the school and classroom level. A total of 35 themes were generated from themes within the focus group data (Figure 25).

Figure 25- Focus Group Data Free Themes

Professional Development	High Expectations	Generate Inner Expectations	Modeling professional practice	Agents of Change	Trust	Evaluation
Listener	Data Driven Decision Maker	Transparency	Student Involvement	Committees	Experts within Districts	Visibility
Pulse on School	After School Involvement	Legacy within district	Professional Growth	Opportunities For Teachers	Experts outside Districts	Pride
Beyond the Status Quo	Teacher Leadership	Risk Taker	Rewards Success	Sacrifice	Foresight	Curriculum
Professionalism	Student Achievement	Classroom Resources	Technology	Personnel Staffing	Accountability	Budget

Next, the themes were analyzed to identify semantic relationships between themselves and the cover terms, or domains. The purpose of examining semantic relationships between the themes and the three cover terms, was to use collected focus group data to identify common relationships between sites. The analysis of semantic relationships ultimately allowed the generated themes to be organized and analyzed in a method that examined the same phenomenon as the quantitative data, thus allowing for triangulation of the two types of data between the two methodologies (Spradley, 1980). Relationships between the domain and themes generated from the coded focus group data were analyzed using one of five types of semantic relationships (Figure 26).

Figure 26- Domain Analysis Types

Attribution	X is an attribute of Y	*Function*	X is used for Y
Rationale	X is a reason for doing Y	*Means-end*	X is a way to do Y
Cause-effect	X is a result of Y; X is a cause of Y		

Semantic relationships between the coded themes and predetermined domains were similar in the quantitative data. This allowed both the types of data to be compared using mixed methodology (Figure 27). For example, when examining the superintendent and instructional capacity, or the first domain, multiple themes were grouped then examined for the semantic relationship. The coded themes often reflected attributes of the superintendent and how they influence instructional capacity. In addition, a limited number of relationships provided a rationale for the superintendent pursuing a course of action that influenced instructional capacity.

Figure 27- Domain Analysis Matrix

Supt. & I. C.	Vision & Leadership	Organizational Structures & Management	Collective Commitment	Access to Knowledge	Resource Management
Semantic Relationship	*Rational for Purpose*	*Means-end*	*Function*	*Means-end*	*Function*

Supt. & I. L.	Functional	Programmatic	Interpersonal	Contextual	
Semantic Relationship	*Functions*	*Means-end*	*Rationale for doing*	*Cause-effect*	

Supt. P. D. & Practice	Curriculum Development	Teacher Training	High Expectations		
Semantic Relationship	*Means-end*	*Means-end*	*Attribute*		

Superintendent's role in Fostering Instructional Capacity

The qualitative data focusing on the superintendent's ability to foster instructional capacity had five cover terms utilized in Spradley's (1984) domain analysis. The terms focused on dimensions of capacity that the superintendent could use to influence classroom achievement. They include: the superintendent's vision and leadership, organizational structures and management, teacher collective commitment, access and use of professional knowledge, and resource allocation and management. To focus the data analysis, cover terms provided a framework to identify the relationship between the coded focus group data and the dimensions of instructional capacity.

Vision and Leadership

The superintendent's vision and leadership focused on the attributes of instructional capacity. Focus group members stated how they believed that they had a clear and articulated vision and mission focused not only on academic excellence, but also on a district wide push towards a student-centered focus. Focus group members in three districts specifically talked about the superintendent's vision. They responded with:

> A third grade teacher in district 3 stated: "I have worked in other districts and not everyone had a focus on academics. Academics obviously take a back seat in the last place I worked. Academic achievement is everything that we strive for…that is very clear to everyone that we will focus on academic success and that is a very clear vision for everybody."
>
> A middle school teacher mentioned in district 1: "The superintendent is the one who has directed the focus on student academics. The focus on curriculum was totally coming out of his office in an effort to incorporate new objectives into our classroom. Now, I know that is filtered down from the state to their office, but in this district this new push is coming from the superintendent."
>
> In district 7, a high school stated: "Our superintendent's vision has been for our school to be one of the top ten schools in the state, and that has influenced

> academics in a significant way geared to student success. We are provided a lot of focused training and professional development for each and every teacher. I believe teachers take that knowledge back to their classrooms. And we keep that focus because of superintendent's leadership."

Teachers felt that the superintendent shared a clear vision on academics and student achievement across all grade levels. Two districts cited that the superintendent created a sense of purpose for teachers not only to focus on academics in the classroom, but also to sustain the effort throughout the year. Clear benchmarks and goals for success were shared with teachers, and focus group participants clearly recognized the significant influences external pressures placed on district practices focused on student achievement.

> A fifth grade teachers in district 4 mentioned: "I think that has a lot to do with the fact that we are small rural district. It is like that in the community where we are expected to succeed. The focus is on academics and the kids….not the other things such as athletics that are going on around the district. This is a big change from the past."

> A response for an eight grade teacher in district 5 stated: "I think the superintendent has been willing to stick his/her neck out knowing that [he/she] has made a difference in a positive way. I think [he/she] has sacrificed themselves in many ways for the benefit and overall improvement of the district, especially the students."

Many focus group participants continually cited how the superintendent's vision trickled down from the district office, to the faculty, then ultimately to the student. The vision focused on high academic achievement with some districts focusing on academics more than others, but all agree that the push was spearheaded by the superintendent's office. When examining the semantic relationship of the superintendent's vision, a rationale for purpose is created. One district superintendent was characterized as rationalizing the district push to become student centered, even with the opposition of the local community, and demonstrated a vision to an unwavering commitment to student

success and achievement. Superintendents as instructional leaders provide a clear vision, and the focus group data aligns with the current literature. Teachers supported the superintendent's vision because they believed it was correctly focused on classroom and curriculum improvement.

Organizational Structures and Management

Organizational structures and management practices of the superintendent were also identified by focus group participants as critical factors that influence instructional capacity. The specific findings highlighted benchmarks for teacher evaluation of progress and creations of instructional experts. These two components were tied together by the semantic relationship as a "means-end". In other words, teacher evaluations and the inclusion of instructional experts became a way to improve instruction and student achievement.

Teacher evaluations were a critical component that superintendents used to reinforce their expectations for success through traditional management practices. Many focus group participants citied how their superintendent would often come into their room to ensure students were being challenged and to keep a pulse on what was happening daily in the classroom. Two teachers mentioned specifically how the superintendent evaluated what was occurring in class.

> A second grade teacher in district 6 commented: "The superintendent would walk in and view what was happening for a minute at a time. [He/she] would document what you were doing on a scale from 1 to 6 from being actively engaged to not engaged at all."
>
> In district 1, a middle school science instructor highlighted: "[evaluations] are snapshots and so all of us are pretty comfortable with what we are doing in the

> classroom and I think that's has influenced my teaching in a positive way towards reaching the superintendents expectations of me as a classroom teacher."

The use of evaluations also supported instructional capacity of the classroom by allowing teachers to become more engaged with students and the learning process. An example of this influence is demonstrated in a dialogue between two elementary school teachers is district 2:

> Teacher 1- "I'd like [constant evaluations] because this fits in with my philosophy, especially in the elementary school which is very hands on type of teaching. It creates the need for us to be hands on for kids and hands on as learners for a lot of them. But the evaluation encouraged the teacher to be up and around with the kids."
>
> Teacher 2- "I agree, the evaluations make me ensure my students are actively engaged. It makes it interesting and fun for teaching and learning. I think it has enhanced our teaching because we are making sure that the students are working in groups or getting down in the "nitty gritty" using a lot of resources to make sure they are learning."

Superintendents in these districts were clearly instructional leaders who used their vision for achievement to evaluate daily classroom activities. This increased instructional capacity by setting clear expectations and acclimating teachers to new ideas of teaching and learning. Evaluations allowed the superintendent to have daily interactions with teachers, students, and classroom activities. Teachers expressed how these quick evaluations let them know they were trusted and the superintendent was not removed from the classroom. This gave the faculty the confidence to try new activities and challenge students through teaching and learning. Additionally, the evaluations served as a tool to challenge the way teachers were interacting within the instructional unit. Knowing the superintendent was watching, sustained the push for instructionally sound practices and a student centered focus.

The second dimension of organizational structures and management that influenced classroom instructional capacity was the use of personnel restructuring. Focus group members often spoke about how the superintendent began creating and using instructional coaches, teacher leaders, MAP coordinators, and reading coordinators to facilitate improvement in classroom instruction. Responses highlighted how the addition of new levels within the organization, created by the superintendent, had significantly influenced teaching and learning in the classroom. Excerpts that express the influence of the superintendent's use of organizational structures include:

> In district 7, a middle school social studies teacher specifically said: "We've added curriculum coordinators as a paid position. They help us go over the data, talk to the teachers and align our curriculum…that is something that he/she stressed to improve. The superintendent used the instructional coaches to be the driving force behind getting our standards and our curriculum aligned to the state standards."
>
> A fourth grade teacher in district 3 stated: "I just recently found out that we just received a Reading First grant. That will not only dramatically impact me as the new reading coach, but also the students in the classroom and the teachers. The superintendent was critical to that effort and very supportive to me as the program director."
>
> A high school mathematics teacher in district 6 mentioned: "It is the MAP coordinator that really focuses us on the new content and the necessary techniques to teach. The superintendent allows us to do what we need to do and lets us work together to get better in the classroom."
>
> Lastly, an elementary teacher in district five believed this: "Presently we do have PEER coaches that help all the teachers in the classroom. The program is designed to give extra help on how and what to teach. The program, I know, started with the superintendent."

Focus group participants believed that organizational structures and management techniques from the superintendent had a significant influence on instructional capacity. The superintendent was often characterized by teachers as making decisions that

provided mechanisms for classroom improvement. Though comprehensive evaluation policies focused on instruction and student achievement and creating new positions within the school district, superintendents focused on providing new levels of instructional support to classroom teachers. Teachers' responses cited a significant for improving classroom performance. Superintendents in these districts linked structural changes to specific programs and polices designed to focus on classroom instructional capacity. This is supported in the literature by superintendents targeting specific areas related to instruction in an effort to not spread resources too thinly across district wide initiatives.

The introduction of a new level within the district specifically focused on instruction and created a unique contradiction between instructional leadership and instructional capacity. While the use of personnel specifically focused on instructional, professional, and assessment improvement targeted important components within the instructional unit, it also removed the superintendent from working with teachers on issues of teaching. It could also diminish the comprehensive perspective many of the superintendents have of the classroom and the teachers within them.

Collective Teacher Commitment

Another influence the superintendent had on instructional capacity developed from the focus group data analysis, was a collective commitment for student achievement that provided teachers with the opportunity to reflect and improve on instruction and professional practice. Teachers cited how the collective commitment was developed through three primary ways: rewards for success, the ability to take instructional risks,

and superintendent legacy. These components exemplified how the superintendent influenced instructional capacity through the semantic relationship of function. Rewards, risk taking, and organizational legacy became functions which were used for the development of a collective commitment towards improvement focused on student achievement.

Rewards for teacher success demonstrated a significant influence on how teachers seek opportunities for the superintendent to acknowledge their work.

> A kindergarten teacher in district 2 believed: "…the superintendent is very good about giving praise, and the superintendent we had prior was the complete opposite. Teachers here feel that they are getting the credit for the success in the district. Our superintendent is kind of like a good coach. When the team does great they are wonderful, and when the team does bad we all work together to fix the problem."
>
> One teacher in district 4 said it this way: "The superintendent recognizes our accomplishments. He/she also encourages you to continue learning and growing because we all will benefit from our success. Our superintendent acknowledges hard work in private ways and in public also….[the superintendent] lets us know that we are appreciated and valued."

When tied with the enhanced teacher evaluations, rewards for accomplishments became a driving force to focus teacher practice within the classroom. Superintendents in the study provided a clear benchmark for success, necessary tools to reach the new benchmarks, measurement policies and practices to evaluate progress, and rewards for increased student learning. Overall, this produced a high level of commitment among teachers to support the superintendent. A high school music teacher in district 7 best reflected this by stating:

> "…with [the superintendent] you know the ultimate goal and what is going to make this district better. We know what is going to best benefit the kids. Whether you agree with or not, you know what his/her intensions are. The goal that is set is

> honesty and what is best for the kids….that is the bottom line, and we can't ask for more than that."

The use of rewards to make teachers and students feel appreciated was an important tool for teachers to improve on classroom instruction and learning. Focus group participants from all districts highlighted how the superintendent rewarded their individual efforts to build a sense of purpose among the staff that targeted instructional capacity. Focus group members expressed awareness of a greater purpose of aligning accolades with student achievement, not professional entitlement. In the end, a critical step in building commitment among the staff was anchored in doing what was best for students.

The ability to take risks was also stated by teachers to have a significant influence on their commitment. Superintendents allowed and encouraged teachers to take risks on classroom instruction. They pushed for new ideas in teaching and learning while controlling fear of disappointment, lack of confidence, and support for nontraditional teaching methods. The following are excerpts demonstrating this nurturing environment:

> In district 3, a middle school industrial arts teacher said: "We are allowed to find creative ways to work with all students. There is no discrimination between the top student and the bottom student. They are all worked with equally. I know the superintendent supports us to explore new ideas to work with each of them."

> A high school literature teacher in district 1 mentioned: "I think the faculty would question a lot more what we were doing here if the superintendent continually questioned what was happen in our classes. He/she does not make us question ourselves, so I know the superintendent is confident in what I am doing in the classroom. I know he/she may not necessarily agree with every method I do, but it is good to know that I am supported anyway."

> A middle school science teacher in district 5 stated: "You are not scared to plan something that may be very chaotic because the activity is aligned with the standards, and you know learning is taking place. That is what the superintendent pushes us to do now. The big thing is that the superintendent had made it where

> you're not worried about doing something a little experimental that you don't know will work until you try it."

Additionally, one focus group participant in district 6 specifically mentioned that because the superintendent allowed them to take risks in their classroom pedagogy, it ultimately changed the relationship with the students.

> "Well, that's the first thing I thought of. I think I feel like just because I know that the superintendent is very supportive, more hands on, more active learning, I'm not afraid to do something that might be a little loud and a little messy. I'm more at ease with those kinds of activities, and that affects my relationship with my students."

The unconditional support from the superintendent for teachers to try innovative pedagogy was critical in creating a collective commitment to increase instructional capacity. The focus group data demonstrated that teachers felt strong support from the district superintendent that influenced not only what they taught in the classroom, but also how the content was delivered and evaluated. While this finding supported superintendents as instructional leaders, it also supported the powerful influence they have on the relationship between student and teacher.

Data analysis also focused on the collective commitment among the faculty which influenced instructional capacity though the development of an organizational climate fostered by the superintendent. The findings focused on the superintendent's use of high expectations, individualized relationship building, and longevity within the district and local community to having a significant influence on instructional capacity. Responses drew attention to the interaction between how the superintendent used elevated expectations and a focus on relationship building over time as a way to influence the

classroom and students specifically. Focus group data that best demonstrated this interaction was from three teachers:

> A first grade elementary teacher in district 1 mentioned: "I think that the students see the strong working relationship that we have with our boss. We model a healthy working relationship with the superintendent which I don't think kids see that much nowadays. Because we have a positive relationship with the superintendent, it trickles down into our classroom."
>
> In district 4, a middle school the counselor believes: "When you talk to people in the community or within the schools, it is not that the school district wants to do this…it is the superintendent who wants to do this to improve the schools. Everyone knows where the decision is coming from and the superintendent is credited with facilitating decisions for student success."
>
> A new elementary teacher to district 5 stated: "I have only been in the district a few years, but the reputation of the superintendent is very positive. He/she has very high expectations for all of us, and that filters down from teachers to all our kids. The superintendent has high expectations in academics, and it is filtered directly into our classrooms."

Overall, building a collective commitment to improve instructional capacity was a very important tool for superintendents to use influence instructional capacity. By building a commitment among teachers to improve classroom instruction, superintendents empowered teachers to go beyond traditional methods of teaching. Teachers truly believed that the superintendent who built strong personal relationships ultimately trusted what they were doing in the classroom, and teachers believed they would be rewarded for innovation and excellence. The strong, individualized relationship between the superintendent and the classroom teacher not only increased professionalism, pedagogy, and student achievement, but also fundamentally changed relationships between the faculty and students. In the end, building a collective commitment is a very powerful, yet straightforward way that the superintendent influences instructional capacity.

Access to Knowledge

The superintendents in this study demonstrated strong instructional and transformational leadership qualities. Focus group data highlighted the need for superintendents to development a commitment to excellence in addition to refining district structures and management to influence instructional capacity. The superintendent also nurtured instructional capacity by ensuring that teachers had access to new knowledge to improve instructional practice. Participants stated how study groups and the creation of professional learning communities provided opportunities for new knowledge development which significantly influenced classroom teaching and learning. The relationship between teacher knowledge and instructional capacity included a means-end semantic relationship when the superintendent used access to knowledge as a way to change what teachers were doing in the classroom. Focus group data analysis demonstrated how superintendents used teacher knowledge as a critical way to influence instructional capacity. Teachers spoke about how their knowledge was changed exemplified by the following:

> A middle school literacy teacher in district 7 said: "We conducted a study group through grants which was about how poverty affects reading disorders. I think that our study group made us more open minded and help us to plan more appropriately for our students. The superintendent talks to us about how kids learn, and I really feel like that has helped in the classroom. I think that by having study groups the superintendent is making us all better teachers."
>
> A high school algebra teacher in district 4 concluded: "We have been doing study groups for a couple of years and have had some very good workshops on literacy and reading. We use these opportunities to share ideas and successful practices between teachers that have been very valuable to me in the classroom."

An elementary teacher went as far to mention that the opportunity to go to a conference out of state had a dramatic influence on her knowledge and practice as a teacher.

> "The chance to go to a university conference gave me an experience from different people, ideas, and places. I brought those experiences and new ideas back into my classroom and I knew how important they were. The superintendent told me it was important to go and now I believe him/her."

Superintendents from participating districts often used teacher knowledge to increase instructional capacity. Focus group data demonstrated how teacher knowledge was changed primarily through the use of study groups and professional conferences. The use of knowledge development created the necessary foundation for teachers to have the motivation, ability, and understanding to develop a new vision focused on student achievement and professional growth. Superintendents used a variety of venues to provide opportunities for professional development such as local, state, and national conferences. Superintendents also used book studies and teacher collaboration for knowledge development. Most importantly, superintendents not only used local educational experts, but also gave their staff the opportunity to meet outside experts to cultivate knowledge from outside the district.

Resource Management

The last cover term examined in the focus group data was the utilization of district resources as critical factors that allowed superintendents to influence instructional capacity. Focus group participants cited how resources focused on two primary areas outside the classroom: funding and time. The relationships between these two areas of

resources highlighted a function of each part that influenced instructional capacity. In other words, money and time became a primary function of the superintendent that increased the development of instructional capacity. .

Time was cited as an important factor that influenced teachers' abilities to focus on instructional issues. Superintendents were characterized as not only verbally supporting instructional issues, but also providing additional critical resources and support to enhance instructional practice. In addition, while requiring more from teachers to focus on classroom practice, superintendents used time more efficiently as to not overburden faculty with non-instructional related issues, even going as far as to protect it. Superintendents streamlined outdated policies and procedures to keep teachers from being outside the classroom while allocating more resources to instructionally focused tasks.

> A 2nd grade teacher in district 3 mentioned: "I would say that the superintendent now protects instructional time. He/she does not want us out of the classroom if possible. The district provided a lot of PDC time to work on the curriculum in addition to extensive training on student learning. I definitely think that the teachers have more on their plate than they did a few years ago, but I don't think that takes us out of the classroom."

Two high school teachers in district 6 believed that the superintendent has done an excellent job at keep teachers focused on improving instruction. They specifically stated that while the district asked more from teachers, it impacted them minimally due to the superintendent using existing district mechanisms to build upon, not developing completely new practices and procedures. Specifically they mentioned:

> Teacher 1- "I think the superintendent does a good job in saying this is something important, and we are not going to just add it to your plate. It is more tweaking what we already have to accommodate to what we need to do…"

> Teacher 2- “The superintendent sees how it is going to work in what we already are doing. If we find out that it is not going to work, the superintendent does not scrap everything that we have done up to that point. He/she builds on what we already have existing so it is not so overwhelming.”

One focus group participant in district 2 even cited how the superintendent allowed the faculty to decide how to structure the instructional time at the elementary school. After going to a professional conference and talking with other teachers, the idea of how to better align instructional time to be much more efficient and supportive to teachers and students was introduced. The elementary teacher said:

> “One of the things that we incorporated into our elementary building is a four hour block method of instruction. With more time in content daily, the block allowed us to teach concepts in much more detail than before. The superintendent thought it was a great idea, and we were able to get our entire elementary building on a block schedule. We started seeing such great improvement in student work especially writing. After we did the research, we brought it to the attention of the administration, and it was well received. The block was strictly something the teachers wanted, and the superintendent very willingly listened to us.”

The focus group data supported the superintendent using time to enhance and increase instructional capacity. Teachers specifically cited how the superintendent became a part of the improvement process by ensuring instructionally related practices and polices were the centerpiece for district change initiatives. To protect instructional time, superintendents removed cumbersome and time consuming tasks not related to teachers. In addition, the introduction of new district initiatives consistently aligned with established practices and expectations in an attempt not to overburden both students and teachers. Instructional capacity was also influenced through the superintendent modifying instructional time based on research. By switching to a block schedule, time was

dramatically increased during instructional time significantly altering the relationship between the teacher, student, and curriculum.

Superintendents in these districts were perceived as not overwhelming teachers with extra responsibilities and continuing to providing a high quality learning environment for teaching and learning. Teachers highlighted that they valued resources which included release time to read and conduct research, fulfilling district level responsibilities, and reflecting on classroom curriculum and pedagogy. District leaders were described as allocating significant resources into the daily schedule that allowed teachers to work collaboratively and participate in professional development. The superintendents in the study recognized that teachers have a limited amount of resources to devote to reform and improvement efforts. Therefore changes in polices and organizational structures were necessary.

Funding for instructionally related resources was also presented by focus group participants as a key factor for the superintendent influencing instructional capacity. Responses ranged from direct spending for classroom materials and equipment, to writing grants for strategic programs for student achievement. Teachers expressed a heightened awareness of resource allocation and influence of the superintendent on their classrooms.

> A high school teacher in district 1 stated: “The superintendent has also provided funds to help carry out what we do. We have textbook funds that we have used to replace the old books we used because he knew we need to align more with the state standards. The superintendent also gave us workshops to train the faculty for the new curriculum.”
>
> In district 4, a middle school media specialist said: “The superintendent came to us and said that we need to let him/her know if there is anything that we want because we have grant money for technology, books, and anything else we need for the classroom. We were going to spend it, and the superintendent needed our input. We were able to get new DVD players in the classroom to bring them up to date and many other different resources for our classroom.”

> A middle school mathematics teacher in district 3 mentioned: "The superintendent is very supportive financially of the teachers and things that we want to do. The superintendent has given us a lot of room to schedule field-trips and bring in guest presenters for the students that require money. Even in the hard times, the superintendent has always given us most of everything that we wanted."

Overall, the focus group data highlights the important influence the superintendent has on influencing instructional capacity in the classroom. O'Day, et al. (1985) discusses how superintendents must not only recognize, but also utilize the entire organization to increase instructional capacity. By focusing on their vision and leadership, the development of a collective commitment, utilization of organizational structures, development of the knowledge of faculty, and providing adequate resources, the superintendent has a significant influence within the classroom.

Massell (1998) proposes that instructional capacity is influenced through the property of people, technology, and institutional processes that effectively promote teaching and learning. From this perspective, teacher perceptions of the superintendent's role in fostering instructional capacity were evident. The traditional assumptions of how the superintendent influenced classroom instruction were through resource allocation. Often, district leaders allocate time, money and manpower incorrectly or to areas not directly related to teaching and learning (Splillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). Teachers often identified the superintendent as a resource manager who efficiently allocated district resources, especially concerning time and money. While the previous findings examined the role of the superintendent on instructional capacity, the second section of data findings examined the instructional leadership of the superintendent.

Superintendent's Instructional Leadership

Using Thompson's (1990) research on superintendents as instructional leaders, the focus group data analysis focused on the four core areas in which superintendents have influence as instructional leaders: functional, programmatic, interpersonal, and contextual. These four areas were used to examine how the superintendent as an instructional leader influences instructional capacity at the classroom level. Specifically, the core areas created four domains which allowed the data to be analyzed using Spradley's (1979) Domain Analysis with the quantitative data, especially the core areas of instructional leadership, allowed the analysis to tease out relationships between instructional leadership and themes generated from the focus group data. This line of analysis is important to further understand how the instructional capacity is influenced through the instructional leadership of the superintendent.

Functional

Coded focus group responses first examined the functional domain of the superintendent's instructional leadership. The function of instructional leadership describes the way the superintendent addresses the organizational process and techniques to foster instructional improvement. The focus group data were coded in three primary ways: district communication practices, the use of principals, and organizational awareness. The relationship between the functional domain and the three themes represented specific functions exhibited by the superintendent. Superintendents used transparent communication, individual building principals, and a heightened

organizational awareness simultaneously to influence instructional capacity within the classroom.

Communication was very important across the sites as a way to coordinate expertise, disseminate critical information, link teachers across grades and subjects, and focus classroom instruction. Teachers often viewed the superintendent as the driving force to increase teacher participation and make district decisions and practices more transparent. Specifically teachers mentioned:

> A 3rd grade elementary teacher in district 4 said: "The superintendent meets with every building and individual teacher after each board meeting each month. The next day he/she makes the rounds with the teachers with important questions to get our opinions about what is best for the district. Rather than a memo, our superintendent seeks our input and takes it back to the board…even with the most important decisions."
>
> A high school chemistry teacher in district 4 mentioned: "The superintendent gives us the chance to be with other people in the district. Because if you are at the elementary school and not talking with other teachers, we don't always know what is going on in the other grades. It has become a very important time for many teachers. The superintendent has brought our district together because we are consolidated, but we really communicate better now."

Teachers expressed how the superintendent used open and transparent communication to create new avenues for teachers to work together to support the vision and mission of the district. Talking directly with teachers, superintendents opened discussion among all parts of the district and the community. Superintendents were generally viewed as approachable and sympathetic to teacher concerns. These functions of the superintendent were used to bolster organizational processes and techniques in order to increase instructional capacity. Not only did the superintendent use communication among all levels in the district to influence the classroom, but principals also were a critical participant that created these high functioning schools.

The use of building principals as functions to realize the superintendent's vision was also a significant factor. Focus group participants recognized the influence the superintendents have upon the building principals. Specifically, they mentioned how superintendents facilitate instructional strategies, curriculum development, and modeling a productive relationship focused on excellence through building principals. Building principals became stewards of the superintendent's push for student achievement and teacher development. Examples from the focus group data include:

> In district 1, a middle school choral teacher stated: "The superintendent directs the focus of the principals and that in turn impacts my classroom. I believe that the superintendent is directing the principals to provide the support for the teachers at this building and throughout the district. What is more important is that the superintendent also has given the principals the freedom to provide their own direction to best meet the needs of teachers and students."
>
> A kindergarten teacher in district 5 highlighted: "I know that whatever the superintendent is telling the building principals to do is going to influence what kinds of strategies I use for student improvement."
>
> A fourth grade teacher in district 6 believes: "The philosophy of the superintendent and is filtering down through the principals. It is good to know that we are all on the same page when it comes to what and how I teach in the classroom. That really has changed what I do in the classroom."

It is evident how superintendents use both direct and indirect avenues for communication to bolster instructional policies and practices. Teachers not only see the building principal as a critical liaison between them and the superintendent but also as a source for instructional leaders at the building level. Principals were a bridge between the superintendent's vision for instructional capacity and a resource for how to implement specific strategies in the classroom. While superintendents were not always available to teaching staff, principals became a trusted person with whom to discuss ideas, to address concerns, and to pose questions involving classroom instructional curriculum and

practices. Teachers felt that while they could not have daily access to the superintendent, the building principal would share discussions with the superintendent, engaging in continual dialogue focused on classroom improvement.

Lastly, from the data analysis focusing on the functional domain of the superintendent's instructional leadership was the emergence of heightened organizational awareness. Teachers often expressed how even though the superintendent was not directly in their classroom daily, they demonstrated a very detailed awareness of what was happening at each level. Focus group participants specifically mentioned:

> A high school English teacher in district 2 said: "I think that because the superintendent's office is in our building, the superintendent is aware of the daily activity that occurs in the classrooms. He/she is has an awareness of what is going on and what the teacher's are doing with the kids each day."
>
> In district 3, a 5th grade teacher highlighted: "The superintendent is going to support us in the classroom because he/she knows what we are doing in our classrooms everyday. Academically, the superintendent supports the ideas that we have and anything that we want to try, even though he/she is not there. I think that is because he/she wants to be involved and aware of everything going on in the building."
>
> An elementary teacher in district 4 mentioned: "The superintendent always seems to know what is going on. He/she has a way with listening and knowing what is going on at all times and gets involved when necessary or it gets tough. You know he/she remembers each student by their names and often times, if we are having situation or a meeting about a student, always follows up with how they are doing and if there is anything that he can do to help."

The superintendent demonstrated a heightened awareness of what was occurring in the classroom. Teachers expressed how this function of the superintendent's role made them feel supported as well as trusted in the classroom. This heightened awareness on achievement was also focused on student issues. Superintendents were characterized as providing individualized support for students' needs, thus influencing the relationship

between student and teacher success. The superintendent became a visible presence in the building which helped in the monitoring of instructionally related activities thus managing, reinforcing, and evaluating progress of instruction and curriculum.

Superintendents used open and transparent communication among all levels of the district to shape and promote the district's vision for student success. Outcomes included increased teacher participation and decision-making, confidence in classroom practice, and support for change initiatives. All of which increased moral and trust between the classroom and district administration.

Building principals became vital allies for both teachers and the superintendent. Building principals became essential links between the superintendent and faculty to support the instructional development in the classroom. While teachers felt that the principal demonstrated strong instructional leadership, focus group participants were quick to identify the role of the superintendent. Superintendents were viewed as influencing the content, direction, and evaluation of curriculum improvement while placing the principal in command of daily operations necessary for maintaining a high quality learning environment.

The overall findings of the superintendent as the instructional leader, when examining the functional domain, illustrated that teachers felt that the way the district operates is significantly influenced by the superintendent. Using organizational processes, guided by building principals and transferred across the district by open and direct communication lines, teachers are significantly influenced by instructional leadership.

Programmatic

The programmatic domain for the superintendent's instructional leadership reflected the core focus for educational programs. The focus group data generated three areas that influenced classroom teachers: a focus on classroom resources, teacher leadership, and curriculum decision making. The domain analysis for the programmatic influence linked classroom resources, teacher leadership, and curriculum decision reflected as a means-end, or a way the superintendent uses instructional leadership qualities to influence instructional capacity.

Classroom resources often focused on materials for classroom instruction including books, electronic media, classroom libraries, and instructional materials related to specific state required assessed concepts.

> A 2nd grade elementary school teacher in district 7 cited: "I know the superintendent provides materials for our classroom. *He/she* does her best in a very tough budget year to find money for whatever it is we need. Whether it is textbooks, new technology, or professional training…I mean *he/she* really focuses on anything that we want to get for us. We are always told- if it is going to improve our student achievement then let's get it. That attitude is not just words with *him/her*, the superintendent does what needs to be done to provide us with the materials that we need."
>
> In district 6, a middle school mathematics teacher said: "Well, one of the things that we are focusing on is bringing up our MAP math scores. There are some things that I have tried in my classroom focused on math that I have had support from the superintendent that has helped my teaching and the students like new materials and some books that are focused on math enrichment activities."

The teacher focus group responses reflected how the superintendents used classroom resources to influence instruction in the classroom. While it was important to gather and allocate necessary materials to enhance learning, the superintendent also extended resources through additional training for teachers showing how to effectively incorporate

new resources in the classroom. Focus group participants continually mentioned that while the books, new curriculums, videos, and DVD's were important to improve teaching and learning, the most influential resource was the opportunity to provide training needed to use new resources designed to challenge and raise student achievement. Teachers expressed genuine appreciation for the sacrifices superintendents made, through time and effort, to seek out new instructional resources even during tight budgets. Superintendents used instructional leadership to provide a vision and to coordinate resources to execute policies, practices, and procedures that help buildings achieve academic goals for students, to encourage professional development among teachers, to motivate staff, and to stay informed of the happenings within the individual classroom. Teacher opinions provided critical examples that superintendent influences how and what teachers did in the classroom. Superintendents that are instructional leaders have new ideas that provide new avenues for instructional improvements (CPSER, 2003).

The opportunity for teacher leadership was also identified as a significant factor the superintendent uses to influences instruction. Teacher leadership was categorized as a programmatic issue because the teachers expressed how having the opportunity to lead influenced what they did in the classroom. Teachers specifically mentioned how they were able to participate in the decision making focused on curriculum and instruction which inspired them to continually improve educational programs. Teachers felt that the most significant opportunities for teacher leadership included modifying existing district curriculum, examining and selecting new classroom textbooks, and developing new courses to fill voids in class offerings.

> In district 3, a high school chemistry teacher stated: "I wanted to start an upper level bio-technology course, and the superintendent definitely supported me with

> that. I told him/her that it was very important for our students to learn about this stuff and his/her response was centered on what is important for the students."
>
> An elementary school teacher in district 4 said: "Two years ago we were able to write a new curriculum. Teachers looked at what we taught? before and what the new requirements were going to be and presented it to the superintendent. We weren't told this is what you are going to do….we were able to do it for ourselves. The superintendent just allowed us to jump in feet first, and that really changed what we did in our classrooms."
>
> In district 1, an elementary school teacher highlighted: "We were able to look at textbooks and see the new requirements from the superintendent and pick which curriculums were the best to help our students. As long as the money was there, we were able to pick the best ones that would teach our students. It was not the superintendent telling us what to get. The superintendent allowed us to be leaders in our own classroom."

Focus group participants were given the opportunity to use the superintendent's vision as a foundation for improvement while also being given the chance to be make specific, strategic choices focused on students' needs. Teachers were used to guide the development of necessary components for student success. Through text book selection, program development, and shared decision-making authority, teachers felt that the superintendent did influence instructional capacity through instructional leadership. Focus group participants cited how not only they were important leaders for classroom instructional improvement, but also in other district wide issues. In district 7, one teacher cited how the district has a committee that gives the opportunity for teachers to formally assist in decision making at the district level. He/she mentioned:

> "I think the T.A.C. committee (Teachers and Administrators Committee) and the superintendent make each other better leaders. In the leadership committee, we have been a part of the decision making for the entire district. It really is shared leadership."

Analyzing the instructional leadership of the superintendent through the programmatic domain produced three areas of emphasis. While typical views of the superintendent as an instructional leader were mentioned, teachers spoke about how the superintendent went much further than just getting resources for the classroom. The superintendent also provided important training and supplementary materials that were critical to fostering high quality teaching and learning environments. Superintendents went beyond simply gathering resources, but took additional measures to ensure that teachers were part of the decision making process in district programs. Specifically, focus group participants not only felt that they were very involved with the curriculum decision making, but they were also given the opportunity to gain an increased view of the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Superintendents made sure that teachers were provided opportunities for leadership. This not only focused teacher efforts on instructionally related issues, but also allowed teachers to better understand the superintendent's vision for district instructional improvement. Shared leadership, especially concerning areas of instruction, created a sense of ownership and elevated inner expectations and across peers. Superintendents, in essence, were blending transformational leadership with a focus on instruction. Strong leaders push for increased professional leadership and collaboration manifested through high expectations for school and classroom performance (Kirby, Paradise & King, 1992).

Interpersonal

The interpersonal domain of instructional leadership is characterized by the importance of interpersonal connections between the superintendent and classroom teachers. Superintendents as instructional leaders develop a strong relationship with

faculty by satisfying personal and professional goals all in an effort to support the district's mission focused on academic achievement (Thompson, 1990). By focusing on the development of individualized relationships between district administration and classroom teachers, superintendents as instructional leaders can significantly influence classroom instructional capacity.

Three primary themes focused on the interpersonal domain used by participating superintendents: consistent visibility in classroom, high quality and individualized professional relationships, and a reputation as a good listener highlighted by approachability. For the domain analysis, the three themes were determined to have a semantic relationship characterized as a rationalization, or explanation, for what teachers perceive to develop these critical relationships. In other words, establishing strong relationships became a motivation used by the superintendent to foster teacher professional growth and increased academic achievement.

Visibility in the classroom was a common factor that developed strong relationships between the superintendent and classroom teachers. However, visibility in the classroom went beyond just walking through the building and occasional interaction with faculty. Teachers often spoke about how the superintendent became personally involved with students and teachers though various classroom activities. Teachers described how the strong relationship with the superintendent motivated and inspired them to work with the superintendent at a much deeper level. Focus group participants specifically mentioned:

> A middle school social studies teacher in district 4 stated: "It is great to see the superintendent in the building because I want him to know what we are doing in class. The superintendent does this on a very regular basis. He/she will just walk down the hall and when you speak to him, the superintendent always knows what is going on. To be honest, my students really like it. They think it is neat because he is the boss and when he/she takes time see what they are doing, they feel

> special. He/she also makes me feel good to know the superintendent will stop and see what I'm doing in my class and is genuinely interested."
>
> In district 6, a high school business teacher said: "There are not very many districts that the superintendent is at that front door or outside, every single day, greeting the students. The superintendent knows every student's name and when he/she comes into our building, he/she still knows all the kids' names and speaks to them and makes a point to go in the classrooms, not just into the principal's office. The superintendent is in all the classrooms when he/she is in the building….walking, visiting, checking, and talking to the kids, parents, and teachers."
>
> In district 3, an elementary teacher mentioned: "I have never had a superintendent be near this involved. The superintendents, before I started here, had priorities focused on taking care of the school business and were more in the background. The principals were my instructional leaders. But not here; the superintendent works very closely with me and the students. It is such a change from the past."

While these were general examples of the superintendent having strong relationships with students and faculty, one business teacher and a kindergarten teacher in district 5 cited very specific examples of how the superintendent goes beyond just being involved, but becomes a part of the students learning experience.

> High school business teacher: "Part of my business class at the high school I was talking about interviewing for a job. During that time he/she would always come over and schedule an interview with each of my students to help them practice for the real world. They really got a kick out of it, and it did help them get a very authentic learning experience."
>
> Elementary school teacher: "The superintendent offers awards to teachers who participate in a walk-a-thon. Whatever teacher raises the most money, he/she offers to teach their classroom for a day. The last five years it has always been our kindergarten teacher. So he/she is down there very early in the morning making lesson plans and had quite the day with the littlest students. They talk about it for years after that."

Focus group participants highlighted how superintendents enhanced their relationship profoundly. Specifically, the interaction and visibility of superintendents among teachers influenced the types and degrees of interpersonal relationships. Relationships broke

traditional lines of interaction within the organization, and the superintendent was viewed as being a critical part of the daily experience of students and teachers. Focus group members recognized how superintendents, while being the only district level administrator, made a large commitment to daily interaction with students and staff. Combined, teachers expressed a significant level of respect and admiration for the superintendent's effort in classroom involvement.

Another way superintendents were identified to develop an interpersonal relationship was the strong bond generated from compassion, respect, and a commitment to students. Focus group respondents often discussed how their superintendent focused on classroom teachers personally to develop strong bonds. The outcome of this relationship transcended into their performance as classroom teachers, thus influencing instruction. Teachers mentioned:

> An elementary teacher in district 4: "Especially in a small school like this, the superintendent is truly part of our school. In a big district like St. Louis or Kansas City the superintendent may be housed in a totally different building, but in this district our superintendents is right down the hallway. Whatever their focus is, it's no secret you're going to hear, see it, and say it on a regular basis."
>
> A middle school algebra teacher in district 2 stated: "The superintendent is always the one to make announcements especially when things are emotionally troubling to kids….like the 9/11 attack. The superintendent was in the schools and in the classrooms everyday for a month talking to kids and teachers making sure that we continued to push forward. I think that speaks a lot. He/she is very concerned with the student and teacher emotional well being first."
>
> A first year teacher in district 7 said: "The superintendent always sends me a card in my mailbox. He/she always knows when I had a bad day. To get a note saying that you did a great job today or he/she is very pleased with what you have done this year…it just picks me up after a long, drawn out year. As a first year teacher, getting a letter from the superintendent on a bad day is just a complete remedy for the first year blues."

Closely tied to the superintendent's visibility was their approachability. Focus group respondents often viewed their superintendent as a good listener and someone they could talk to and someone who listened. This proved to be a powerful component of the superintendent's instructional leadership. It empowered teachers not only to become part of a process for instructional improvement, but also reinforced teachers' perceptions of the superintendent as an individual who would truly listen and respond to teacher concerns. Focus group participants specifically said:

> A high school physics teacher in district 5 mentioned: "The superintendent has a great listening ear. He/she really hears what you have to say, and no matter who it is talking to him/her, the superintendent will really listen and consider suggestions and criticism to help improve what we are doing in the classroom. The superintendent absolutely considers and often acts upon what we say."
>
> In district 7, a middle school industrial arts teacher highlighted: "The superintendent does actually listen and bases many of the big decisions on the teachers' input. The superintendent always gets a wide variety of people to help brainstorm on the issue and then makes a decision."
>
> A 3rd grade elementary school teacher in district 4 believes: "I have worked in places where superintendents seemed very scary to approach them to ask what is going on or talk to them about some concerns that you have. In this district, I frequently call up our superintendent and share ideas on how to improve not only my classroom, but the building as well. The superintendent never makes me feel guilty about that and has always been very open to talking to any teacher, even students."

Teachers expressed the development of a strong tie to superintendents through their ability to share professional and personal challenges and opportunities. The interpersonal relationship also was important in allowing teachers to understand the superintendent's decision making process. Focus group participants often cited how they were able to support the superintendent's decisions by having an open conversation; they trusted their concerns would be taken into consideration. By drawing upon multiple voices within the

district, superintendents not only made teachers feel influential in instructional and curricular issues but they also developed reputations as leaders who can be approached. Focus group participants expressed how a relationship with superintendents did influence how they perceived the superintendent as an instructional leader.

Visibility, accessibility, and personal relationship development combined to have a significant influence on classroom teachers and instruction. Going beyond the traditional interactions of administration and faculty, a new level of mutual respect and personal well-being characterized a heightened level of interpersonal relationships. These relationships fostered a sense of trust and well-being between teachers and superintendents. Superintendents as instructional leaders empowered teachers utilizing individualized relationships to not only meet teachers' needs, but also to motivate and inspire faculty to grow professionally and to support instructional improvement. Interpersonal relationships allowed superintendents to gather data concerning classroom practices and policies by discussing ideas, concerns, and questions from both students and teachers. Lastly, feedback loops were established that established dynamic communication paths allowing superintendents to gain candid perspectives from multiple sources which assisted in instructional and curricular decision-making. In the end, teacher perception of the superintendent's instructional leadership focused on relationship development did have a dramatic influence on classroom instructional capacity.

Contextual

The last domain which analyzed the superintendent's instructional leadership was the context of the district. Context of instructional leadership refers to ideas and forces within

and outside the school district that shape instructional delivery and content. Two primary themes were generated for the context of instructional leadership: state influence and the development of a culture of trust. Coded teacher responses quickly identified the influence the two themes had on the instructional leadership of the superintendent. The domain analysis for the context of instructional leadership highlighted a semantic relationship of cause/effect. State influence and a culture of trust combined to both impede and strengthen the superintendent's instructional leadership. In other words, the themes became a powerful way to examine the challenges and opportunities superintendents faced as leaders, especially concerning instruction.

The state performance requirements clearly influence teacher opinions on instruction. Regarding content, delivery, and evaluation, the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) exam was identified as a primary guiding force behind the superintendent's instructional leadership. Superintendents' actions were viewed by teachers to focus on gathering and sharing informing of new requirements from the state and to assist the district in aligning and guiding daily practice. Teacher responses expressed how the superintendent used student assessment data to guide instructional resources and to provide information to teachers to help guide classroom activities. Focus group participants were quoted as saying:

> A 1st grade elementary school teacher from district 3 stated: "What the superintendent is focused on and striving for, and what we have been trained for, is to build our MAP scores. The thing that has helped me the most is when the superintendent started helping us with the training, and we looked at our scores. We quickly discovered there were areas we needed to improve. This made me so much more aware that it wasn't just the superintendent's job or my job, or fourth grade's job, or third grade's job. I also have responsibility and I honestly had not understood that before. I really started taking on a big responsibility to focus on the big picture for my students. It is my job to start in 1st grade and to start building what they will eventually do in testing."

> In district 2, a high school English teacher said: "I see the superintendent challenging us to certainly perform at the best of our abilities on the state tests. I think the superintendent has expressed a very strong desire to improve reading scores and MAP scores. I also think he/she also really encouraged us to look at the use of technology and the internet and using that as a tool to give the students more opportunity to prepare for the MAP test."
>
> A 7th grade middle school communication arts teacher mentioned: "The MAP training, which has been the focus of our professional development, has changed the way I teach and do our assessments in the classroom. The MAP training was directly supported and advocated by the superintendent to help us get better assessment scores. It has increasingly become a part of the way we do things here. The training that we have is designed to be brought directly back into the classroom so we can prepare our students. The superintendent has really focused on MAP which has really changed the way we do things here."

The influence from the state assessment requirements demonstrates a significant influence on instruction within each district participating in the study. Teachers felt that while superintendents were changing and improving their instruction and professional development, the source of the shift on instructional focus was from the state manifested assessments. Superintendents were perceived by teachers to be instructional leaders who are responding to a changing political and governmental influence. State assessments were viewed as the impetus for change in the district. Superintendents were categorized as focusing on classroom instructional capacity to prepare both students and teachers for rigorous state performance requirements. Superintendents were viewed as implementing a vision that included comprehensive building-wide and classroom changes facilitated through professional development. In the end, focus group responses strongly demonstrated the superintendent's influence in the classroom using qualities of instructional leadership. While the catalyst for change was being pushed into districts

from the state requirements, the superintendent as the instructional leader managed the process to best meet the needs of all the district's stakeholders.

In addition to the influence of the state, teachers across all seven sites expressed a strong emphasis on a trusting perception of superintendents. Trust for the superintendents created an organizational climate where teachers felt empowered as classroom professionals. Superintendents as instructional leaders used trust as a way to gain teacher confidence to support instructional improvement. Also, teachers cited how trust allowed them to make risk-taking instructional decisions in their class. Over time, the culture of trust in the district created a symbiotic relationship where teachers were able to improve classroom instruction, while the superintendent framed the change using new expectations from the state. Specifically, teachers mentioned the following:

> In district 4, a middle school social studies teacher mentioned: "I like that we are trusted. I feel completely trusted to do the job. The superintendent told me once that I was hired for my professionalism and teaching. Right then he told me that I am trusted."
>
> An elementary school teacher in district 2 said: "The superintendent gives us the freedom to do our jobs, and I think that implies to me that there's a lot of trust here. He's not here everyday breathing down my neck about what we are doing in class. For example, we had an academic schedule that worked for us for about 20 years before and now we went to a new schedule that we have now. We talked to the teachers and kept the superintendent informed about the change. I think it takes a lot of trust, whenever teachers had the support of the superintendent to change something that had worked for 20 years to what we have now and are finding success with it."
>
> In district 1, a high school teacher commented: "I think it is the trust that has impressed me the most. I mean, the superintendents displayed that she has trust in us to do the right things in our class to help out students. The superintendent has given us the means to do a good job. If we try something different and challenging in our courses and it bombs, he/she trusts that we will correct it to get it right."

Teachers across the seven sites expressed the importance of gaining the trust of superintendents. Focus group respondents focused on how superintendents perceived and treated faculty as education professionals and created trust within the classroom and in district-wide instructional initiatives. Also teachers mentioned how being viewed as experts in teaching and learning by superintendents instilled trust in faculty towards the superintendent which made instructional change easier. Participants discussed the importance of trust in experimental teaching, peer feedback, and organizational change. The superintendents' trust towards teachers and reciprocated back from teachers became a vital part of instructional leadership to influence classroom instructional capacity.

Focus group data highlighted the importance of the superintendent perceiving teachers as professionals and, in turn, how that perception fostered trust of the superintendent by a significant majority of the teaching staff. Through working with the superintendent and understanding their expectations, teachers felt as if they could use innovative classroom practices without being sanctioned in evaluations. Teachers mentioned how the superintendent visited classrooms often and had numerous opportunities to authentically evaluate their instruction.

The instructional leadership of the superintendent and the subsequent influence on classroom instructional capacity was evident in the data analysis. Examined in the functional, programmatic, interpersonal, and contextual domains, instructional leadership are personal and professional practices (Thompson, 1990). Superintendents used the functional components of the district to communicate the vision and mission focused on instruction. Through clear and focused communication, teachers and superintendents created dialogues focused on instructional development and improvement.

Superintendents were very aware of the challenges and opportunities experienced by teachers that assisted in the development of professional development programs guided by instructional improvement. Principals were critical participants in the change process and instructional improvement.

In the programmatic domain, classroom resources and teacher leadership not only influenced classroom instruction, but also curriculum scope and sequence. The superintendent's instructional leadership also focused on developing strong interpersonal relationships to increase the teacher's ability to focus on instructional practices and policies. Providing opportunities for teacher leadership to solve instructionally related issues became a source of inspiration for change in the classroom.

Lastly, the context in which instructional leadership takes place demonstrated a significant influence on the superintendent. The influence of state and federal requirements impacts both content and training for teachers. However, through the development of a culture of trust among all levels of the district, the superintendent does have a dramatic influence within the classroom.

Professional Development and Instructional Practice

The last portion of the focus group data analysis examined the superintendent's influence on instructional capacity through teacher professional development and instructional practice. Cohen and Ball (1999) believed the superintendent influenced instruction through the intellectual and personal resources of teachers. Specifically, instructional capacity can be developed though the superintendent's influence on a teacher's ability to comprehend, interpret, and respond to materials and students within

the instructional unit. To examine these components, three themes related to teacher resources were generated from focus group data. Curriculum development, teacher training, and personal expectations all affected the teacher's ability to interact with students and materials within the classroom. In other words, by specifically focusing on teachers within the instructional unit, superintendents significantly influenced instructional capacity.

The three themes became the domains in which to identify the semantic relationship to professional development and instructional practice. The domain analysis generated a means-end relationship between two of the three factors and the cover term of professional development and instructional practice. Through the development of enhanced curriculum, high-quality teacher training, and heightened institutional expectations, practices and attributes of the superintendent were shown to have a dramatic influence on instructional capacity.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development was commonly cited as a way for the superintendent to influence instructional practice. Teacher participation in curricular decision making became evident as a way for teachers to improve the classroom environment. Responses highlighted how working with the superintendent on curriculum committees and the development of curriculum guides changed their focused on teaching, created a sense of empowerment, and aligned the curriculum across grade levels. Highlights of how teachers improved in their classroom practice, influenced by curriculum development professional knowledge and practice include:

> A high school chemistry teacher in district 5 highlighted: "Through working on the curriculum committee, I felt like I have become a better teacher because we have not only been rewritten curriculum, which in turn will improve teaching strategies across the district. I'm a better teacher because there are some things I did not know about what was being taught in the other grade levels. I've become a better teacher, and the district's curriculum is better because I participated."
>
> In district 7, an elementary school teacher mentioned: "Basically, we had to do the curriculum guide because we are not one of those districts that hire people to outline what we teach and create curriculum guides. It is a huge thing here, and every year it is always a challenging event. But by doing it, we know what we are going to teach. It is empowering to know that the teachers have such an important role in what we are going to expect of our students."
>
> A middle school Communication Arts teacher in district 2 said: "We worked on the curriculum with a goal to align with the state objectives from DESE. The superintendent has shared a tremendous amount of information so we can align our teaching to state standards. It has dramatically impacted my classroom. My assessments of student progress are totally different than what I used just a few years ago. The superintendent has advocated and supported us to use the state standards. I now use them primarily as a tool to assess student learning, but also I evaluate my teaching to see if it has met the objectives."

Curriculum development facilitated through the efforts of the superintendent, allowed teachers to generate deeper understandings of the opportunities and challenges from the district level. Through these new understandings, teachers expressed how the process dramatically influenced what they taught and how they instructed. Through the superintendent's leadership, the teacher's knowledge of instruction and learning was influenced. Instructional capacity was influenced through curriculum development by creating re-orienting faculty with a new focus on teaching and learning. Teachers who participated in curriculum development became more aware of state performance objectives. Improving the curriculum also increased willingness of teachers to experiment with different teaching and assessment strategies. Overall, curriculum development pushed teachers to become curriculum experts that helped their professional practice. It

also created the means which allowed participants to have an important voice in the instructional development and improvement both in the classroom and in the district.

Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development was cited as having a profound influence on instructional capacity. Focus group participants from each site highlighted how the district superintendent used professional development to encourage teachers to develop instructional practices using current research and best practices. Professional development also was used to share expertise across faculty. The utilization of study groups and book studies were given as examples of the superintendent creating a learning community with the district.

> A 9th grade biology teacher in district 3 mentioned: "The superintendent keeps having workshop after workshop on how to incorporate new teaching ideas and techniques into the classroom like Differentiated Instruction. People are finding some ideas really helpful, and some of us have really latched on to the materials. The superintendent really wants us to work with, especially those who are knowledgeable with the topics, other teachers to give them the understanding and skills necessary to incorporate some of this stuff and to show them how much better their classes will be."
>
> In district 6, a middle school communication Arts teacher stated: "The superintendent is providing summer academies, which we have never had before and is quite helpful in the classroom. We have the university professional development center near us who send instructors here to give presentations during the summer academy. I really like doing the workshops. I like learning new things, and there is a little bit of everything that I need to be a better teacher."
>
> In district 1, an elementary teacher mentioned: "The superintendent has influenced what our in-services are. I mean he/she has been very up front about the direction that he/she wants us to go and he/she has used professional development to make sure that we have the training and knowledge to take it back to our classroom. What we have learned at our in-services has made it into my classroom. If this works with other teachers then I need to do this in the classroom. In a direct and indirect way, the superintendent has had a tremendous impact on what we do with professional development."

> A 6th grade teacher in district 7 stated: "There are seminars that come up and across the superintendent's desk and often times you end up with a pamphlet in your mailbox that says you need to attend this. You know that if the superintendent has taken the time to look at it, it is usually something that is worthy of doing. You know that he/she is not going to waste your time if it has no value. There many times that I do take a closer look at the workshops that are recommend."

Teacher professional development became a critical component of the superintendent strategy for instructional development. Through teacher training and opportunities for professional growth, classroom instructional capacity was positively shaped by engaging teachers in knowledge building activities. Teacher focus group data identified how knowledge, beliefs, and practices with regards to teaching and instruction were influenced through the superintendent's active involvement with professional growth activities.

Professional development focusing on instructional improvement went beyond typical expectations for curriculum improvement and motivated teachers to become willing participants in the change process. Superintendents created avenues for teachers to continually learn through professional learning communities. In turn, the professional learning communities expanded teacher's understanding of effective pedagogy, student learning, and current evaluation techniques. Most importantly, superintendents used experts and available resources to enhance and entice teachers within and outside of the district.

The perception of the superintendent having the ability to broaden teachers' understandings and practices of teaching and learning was critical to increasing instructional capacity. Through the development of a professional learning community,

teachers in the focus groups refined pedagogy and expanded personal philosophies grounded in diverse research and best practices. The superintendent has a significant role in changing the opinions and beliefs of teachers by providing opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and professional development. Developing collective commitment among teachers has a significant influence on instructional capacity both at the organizational and classroom level. (O'day, Goertz & Floden, 1995).

High expectations

The last significant theme developed from the focus group data was the superintendent's elevated expectations of teachers as professional educators and life-long learners. Themes focused on how faculty viewed the superintendent as a role model to provide a new level of professional expectation and to serve as a source of accountability and motivation for teachers to positively influence classroom performance. The generated themes highlighted a semantic relationship that focused on different types of superintendent character attributes which influenced professional development and instructional practice. Superintendents were characterized as having high expectations among all district stakeholders focused on a student centeredness and personal growth.

Focus group participants specifically mentioned:

> A 3rd grade elementary school teacher in district 2 said: "The superintendent showed us how to change and put in extra time that most people would not do themselves. That's why I think everybody knows that the superintendent's ultimate goal is that we, I mean the whole district, must always get better. He/she pushed us and models how teachers can be the best that they can be, students to be the best that they can be…all because the superintendent has very, very high expectations for us."
>
> In district 7, a high school speech and debate teacher mentioned: "The thing that has pushed me the most is that I have higher expectations of myself because

> he/she made me what to do better each year. You do expect more of yourself in our district because the superintendent believes it is important for every student."
>
> A middle school science teacher in district 6 said specifically: "The superintendent is always striving for new knowledge and for the best workshops for teachers. The whole time while he/she is working on a graduate education. We see him/her doing it and serving as the district leader; he/she is such a good model. You are never finished learning when you work in high expectations."

Superintendents in the participating districts demonstrated a significant influence on the teacher professional development and instructional practices. Through direct access to teacher training, workshops, and professional development activities, the superintendents influenced knowledge, beliefs, and practices of teachers that changed instruction. Focus group data revealed the outcome of heightened expectations when teachers are treated as educational experts. Teachers specifically highlighted how superintendents modeled a deep commitment not only to student learning, but also to professional learning of each teacher. By providing high quality and relevant opportunities for learning, superintendents set a standard for teacher instructional practice while giving them the tools and mechanisms for new knowledge to be implemented into the classroom. High expectations also developed teachers' self confidence in supporting a new vision for classroom success. Teachers often cited how the superintendent's high expectations of faculty cascaded down to classroom expectations for students. Through observing the superintendent's actions and interactions with students, staff, and parents, focus group participants indicated that the superintendent modeled a deep commitment to instructional improvement. Superintendents in this study acted as instructional leaders by motivating staff, creating a clear vision of school success, and providing the necessary resources.

Teachers described the superintendent as instructionally focused when modeling high expectations, being committed to the mission of the district, and continually improving teaching practices and organizational polices using research and district data. The perception of the superintendent as balancing involvement in the classroom but not being intrusively involved in the daily activities of faculty and students was important to study participants. Often, superintendents were described as modeling skills, techniques, and philosophies that fostered student achievement in the classroom.

Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative data analysis

Both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis identified and demonstrated how teachers perceived superintendents as having a significant influence on classroom instructional dynamics, more specifically instructional capacity. The superintendents' influence on instructional capacity when analyzed with Cohen and Ball's (1998) definition of the instructional unit offers important and timely findings. Both the qualitative and quantitative research questions were designed to highlight specific behaviors, beliefs, and actions by superintendent to impact teachers, students, and materials within the classroom.

The quantitative data analysis demonstrated superintendents' ability to influence instructional capacity through instructional and transformational leadership dynamics, but the qualitative data provided specific ways superintendents are effectively influencing instructional capacity through teachers' ideas and professional practices in the classroom. Understanding the superintendents' influence on the interaction between teachers, students, and instructional materials in the classroom, new understandings of how and

what superintendents do to assist develop and maintain instructional capacity are generated.

The quantitative data had a significant relationship between instructional capacity and instructional leadership with Pearson Product Moment Correlations .935 ($p < .01$) and .64 (p, .01) between instructional capacity and professional development and instructional practices. Also in the quantitative regression analysis, instructional leadership and professional development & professional practice had a significant predictable relationship with instructional capacity ($R^2 = .877$). Overall, quantitative survey data collected from all seven sites demonstrated that teachers did perceive superintendents used instructional and transformational leadership practices to have a strong vision and mission for improving instruction and student learning.

The qualitative data described specifically how superintendents used instructional and transformational leadership practices to influence classroom instructional capacity. When analyzed with Spradley's (1980) domain analysis, qualitative data generated numerous themes that provided insight on the outcomes of implementing instructional and transformational leadership strategies to impact instructional capacity.

The qualitative data generated many ways the superintendents influence instructional capacity. Teachers perceive the superintendents' vision and leadership to be the foundation that focused district initiatives and classroom expectations to improve dynamic relationships within the instructional unit. Organizational structures and management techniques of superintendents' focus education programs to support high quality instruction and teacher development. Also, superintendents' ability to impact

teacher perceptions with meaningful professional relationships focused on instructional improvement influenced instructional capacity in the classroom.

Data triangulation also consists of an examination of teacher perceptions on instructional capacity focused towards professional development and instructional practice. Curriculum development, teacher training, and heightened expectations combined to dramatically influence teachers knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching and learning that directly influenced what and how they taught in the classroom. District professional development was a vital mechanism for influencing teacher practice that guided district change initiatives. The influence of instructional leadership identified specific practices that superintendents used to improve instructional capacity. Superintendents consistently had a very high awareness of what happening within individual classroom and buildings. Commutating directly with teachers and using building principals to gather and disseminate information became an important tool for influencing instructional capacity.

Superintendents focused exclusively on instructional programs to aim district resources on classroom materials and curriculum. Allowing teachers to lead change initiatives to better meet the needs of teachers and students not only raised awareness among teachers, but also increased participation among teachers to support instructional improvement.

Superintendents also had a strong presence in the classroom and throughout the district. Being in the building not only increase awareness of daily classroom practices, but also allowed for the development of strong individualized relationships between the superintendent and faculty. Strong relationship with teachers continually strengthened the

superintendent reputation as a good listener and who is approachable. These were cited as critical practices of instructionally focused superintendents that caused teachers to become strong advocates for district and building changes to improve classroom performance.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

Superintendents' influence on instructional improvement at the classroom level is evident. Understanding the influence of superintendents is vital to improve district and classroom performance to better prepare students for ever changing demands in modern education. Public expectations of the superintendents' position have changed dramatically since its inception in the early twentieth century, changing overtime from business and human resource management during the efficiency movement, to the educational statesperson motivated by social and economic responsibility in the 1950's. Now the superintendents' roll has again changed to satisfy present pressure focused on performance and accountability with No Child Left Behind (2002). Both internal and external pressures have created the need for superintendents to become more than ever focused on the individual classroom- especially areas of curriculum and instruction.

To focus more on classroom instructional issues, the superintendents' role has evolved into an instructional leader. Instructionally focused superintendents recognize their ability to support teachers and students at the classroom level in addition to using their expertise to challenge organizational policies and practices focused in instructional improvement. In order to influence student achievement district wide and within the individual classroom, superintendents are focusing on elements encompassed within the framework of instructional capacity.

Instructional capacity, the relationship between the teacher, student and the materials, provides a framework to investigate the superintendents' influence on the interaction between the instructional unit (Cohen & Ball, 1999). This study examined the influence superintendents have on instructional capacity through the perceptions of participants on the frontline of instructional improvement- classroom teachers.

Overview of Study

Because of the mixed methodology, the findings for the quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to identify how superintendent influence instructional capacity. In this chapter, the first section highlights key aspects of each of the three theoretical frameworks used in this study. Significant interpretations, both qualitative and quantitative data, are presented. The findings summary triangulated both forms of data to develop a comprehensive understanding of the superintendent's influence on classroom instructional capacity.

The two hypotheses were tested in the quantitative section of this study. The first hypothesis tested to evaluate correlations among the factors of superintendents' instructional leadership, instructional capacity, and teacher professional development and instructional practices, superintendents' social influences, expertness, and trustworthiness. To evaluate the relationships, a Pearson product moment correlations were calculated to examine teachers' view of superintendents as instructional leaders and the subsequent influence on instructional capacity. The second hypothesis tests the predictive linear relationships among the factors of superintendents' instructional

leadership, instructional capacity, and teacher professional development and instructional practices using a regression analysis.

The second data analysis consisted of focus group interviews consistent with qualitative data collection techniques were used to investigate teacher perceptions of the superintendent's influence and maintenance of instructional capacity (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2003). Seven focus groups with five to eleven teachers participate in the qualitative data collection. The purpose of the qualitative data provides additional insight to the research question focused on how and to what degree does the superintendent develop and maintain instructional capacity in the classroom. Using the quantitative data as a framework for analysis, three areas were explored in the qualitative analysis: the superintendent's role in fostering instructional capacity, the superintendent's instructional leadership, and the impact on teacher professional development and instructional practice.

Discussion of Findings

Superintendents in this study exhibited characteristics of both instructional and transformational leadership to influence instructional capacity at the classroom level. This study focused on districts that faced significant financial and demographic challenges yet still demonstrated high performance on state achievement test to identify to what extent and how superintendents influenced the success within the classroom. To accomplish this, three primary frameworks were used to guide the data collection and analysis. Instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and instructional capacity combined to create a compelling lens to examine the role of superintendents on student

achievement at the classroom level. While there have been numerous studies focusing on effective leadership of superintendents, there has been little examine of the superintendents influence on classroom instructional capacity (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Massell, 1998). The purpose of this study is to further explore the role of superintendents to identify critical behaviors, practices, and polices that enhance student learning in the classroom.

The outline of this chapter will highlight the studies finding on how transformational and instructional leadership of the superintendent were important avenues to influence instructional capacity. Findings will also explore new ideas on leadership and how student achievement can be maximized when superintendents focus on the development and maintenance of classroom instructional capacity. Lastly, implications of the finding on superintendents' preparation, practice, and future research are presented.

Transformational Leadership Framework

Transformational leadership focuses on affecting human potential to stimulate increased levels of performance and commitment throughout the organization (Burns, 1978). Superintendents who are transformational leaders focus on influencing teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices to enhance instruction and learning in the classroom. Transformational superintendents seek to influence teachers with a clear vision anchored in academics and professional growth. To accomplish this, superintendents extensively use professional development and the development of learning communities in the district to challenge and expand teachers' knowledge and practice (Kirby, Paradise, and King, 1992).

Transformational leadership of superintendents develops teachers by focusing on the nature of their work inside the classroom and giving them opportunities for professional growth that challenge and support instruction. Additionally, transformational leadership of superintendents also works to broaden the perspective of teachers to the challenges and opportunities facing the entire district. Blending individualized teacher needs and wants to focus on instructional changes is a critical component of transformational leadership. By focusing on the transformational leadership of the superintendents, unique and interesting findings highlighting the influence instructional capacity are generated.

Superintendents were clearly transformational leaders within the participating districts. Teachers were guided by a clear vision for success focused on instructional development district-wide and within the classroom. Superintendents worked to develop a collective commitment among the staff to gather support necessary instructional changes. In addition, superintendents developed deep individualized relationships with teachers which, in turn, motivated teachers to work with superintendents on classroom instructional issues.

Instructional Leadership Framework

Instructional leadership also provides useful lens for examining the superintendents' influence on classroom instructional capacity. Instructional leadership describes leadership behaviors designed to directly affect classroom instruction (Leithwood, 1994). Superintendents who are instructional leaders work to develop cooperation and collaboration between all levels with in the district focused on issues of instruction and curriculum. The instructional leadership of superintendents focuses on the functions of

the district. Time, money, classroom materials, and staffing are all coordinated by superintendents to support classroom instructional practices and student learning activities. Not only is a comprehensive vision for instructional excellence developed and shared throughout the district, superintendents as instructional leaders provide the resources necessary for the vision to be realized (Thompson, 1990).

Superintendents, who are instructional leaders, have deep and intimate awareness of building and classroom activities. Instructional leaders monitor academic progress of both faculty and students to evaluate existing practices to better meet the needs of all district stakeholders (Hall, 1980). Superintendents create, coordinate, and focus support services, developmental activities, and resources to coordinate educational programs.

Superintendents as instructional leaders are visible in the building and in the classroom identifying best practices and sharing current research on teaching and learning. This deep classroom awareness exhibited by instructional leaders goes beyond single- insolated visits, but can be characterized by continuous visits where superintendents talk with students and teachers about learning activities and curriculum. Superintendents as instructional leaders value the significance of human relationships as a powerful tool to achieve the districts vision for instructional improvement. Instructional leaders push teachers to use personal and professional goals to advance the achievement of institutional improvement.

Superintendents as instructional leaders are keenly aware of the context in which the district operates. Internal and external influences are recognized by superintendents and used to adapt instruction within the classroom. Ethical, cultural, political, and economic

realities are used to shape district initiatives while advancing new requirements required by federal, state, and local governments.

Instructional Capacity Framework

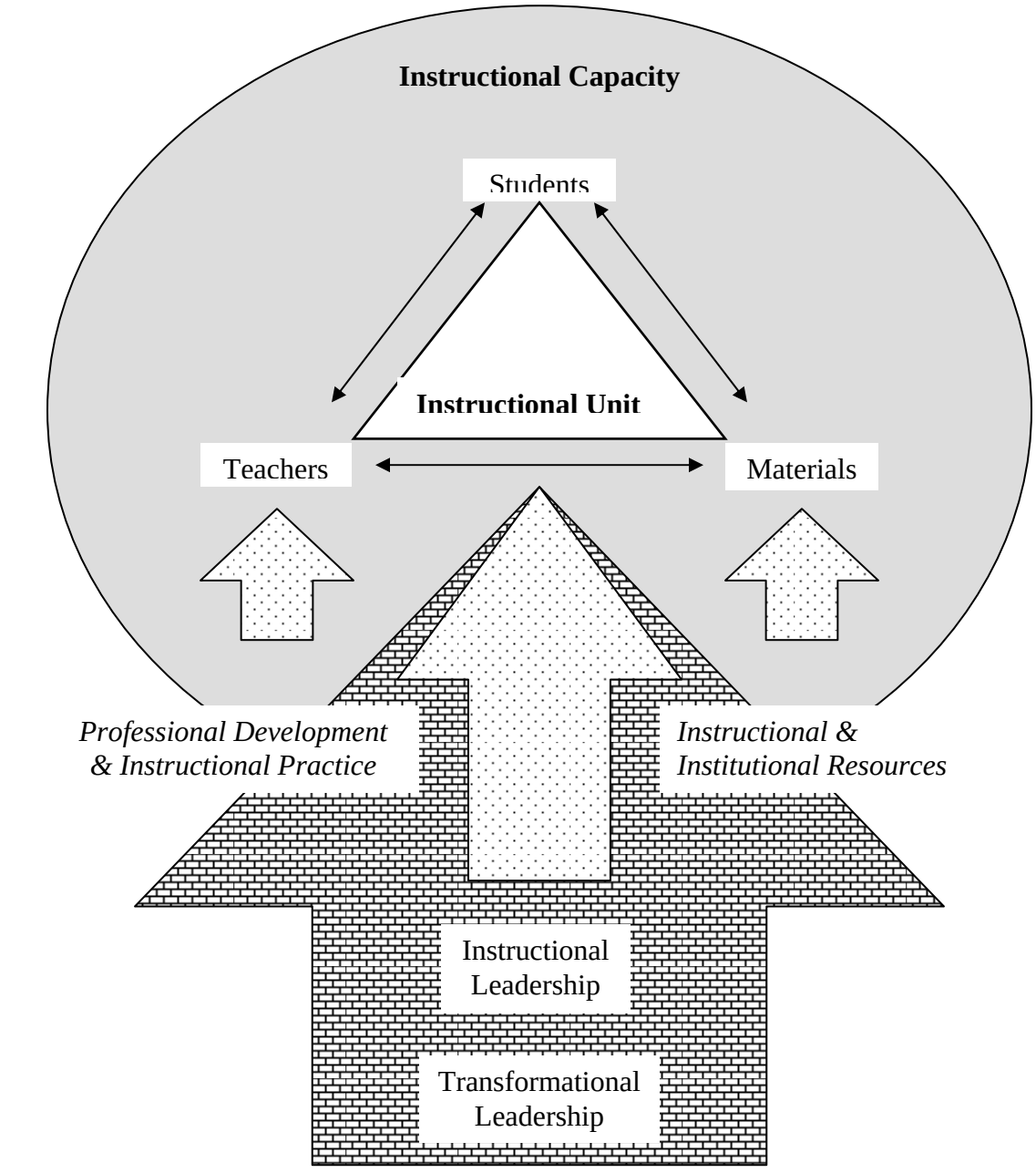
By focusing on instructional capacity, superintendents who are characterized as instructional and transformational leaders seek to increase the success of both students and teacher within the classroom (O'day, et al., 1995). Instructional capacity is the interaction between teachers and students around educational materials in the classroom and is influenced by the capacity to produce worthwhile and substantial learning (Cohen and Ball, 1999). While all three elements included in instructional capacity are important (teachers, students, and classroom materials), no single element can be influenced without affecting the remaining parts.

Superintendents can significantly influence instructional capacity through teachers. Instructionally committed superintendents seek to shape how teachers apprehend, interpret, and respond to students and materials. In other words, superintendents challenge and expand teachers' knowledge, understanding of content, and student learning to shape instruction and evaluation in the classroom (Spillane & Thompson, 1997). Because of the dynamic relationship contained in the instructional unit, superintendents have a significant influence on the classroom teacher and instructional materials, but limited influence directly towards students. Therefore, superintendents must rely on the strength of teacher and material elements to have significant influence on students' learning.

A Framework on Superintendent Influence on Instructional Capacity

To conceptualize how and to what extent superintendents influence instructional capacity, a framework of findings was created (Figure 28). Reflecting on the tenets of instructional and transformational leadership, superintendents used these leadership styles to influence both teachers and materials within the instructional unit. Data collected through mixed methodology demonstrated that superintendents' influence instructional capacity, primary though professional development and instructional practices of teachers. Also superintendents influenced instructional capacity by gathering, aligning, and allocating instructional and institutional resources that significantly improved classroom achievement. The results of superintendents focusing on instructional capacity demonstrated higher achievement among teachers and students focused continual classroom improvement.

Figure 28- Framework on Superintendent Influence on Classroom Instructional Capacity



Instructional & Transformational Leadership influence on Instructional Capacity

A combination of both instructional and transformational leadership of superintendents in the study had a significant influence on instructional capacity. Both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews highlighted how teachers perceive superintendents to use tenets of instructional and transformational leadership. Superintendents increase classroom performance through improving teacher knowledge and practices while refining and supplementing institutional and instructional resources focused on student achievement.

Superintendents' instructional leadership practices provided teacher motivation for a single purpose focused on student achievement and district improvement (Zepeda, 2003). The superintendents' vision guided teacher practice by facilitating improvement and instruction as a way to create partnerships between the administration and classrooms (Lashway, 2002). The instructional leadership of superintendents provided a strong vehicle to develop and implement a comprehensive vision on student centeredness and instruction. This is supported through the literature where superintendents with a strong vision influenced instructional capacity by developing strong avenues for teachers to strengthen classroom practice through professional growth (Blase & Blase, 1998; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992).

Formal and informal evaluations also provided incentives to reinforce a superintendents' push for instructionally focused leadership (Oday, Goertz, & Floden, 1995). Superintendents in the study change district culture to focus on reflection and improvement centered on student achievement. Petersen (1999) specifically cites that evaluation is an effective management technique that can be used to facilitate successful

instructional development. Superintendents under new expectations on improvement blend both management and organizational leadership competencies into a strong instructional influence within the classroom (Gumpton, 2003).

Superintendents had a clear presence in the classroom which forged a strong relationship between teachers and district administration. Strong superintendents who are instructionally focused develop a deep knowledge and intimacy with the classroom teachers (Wimpelberg, 1987). Superintendents need to have intensive interactions on instructional pedagogy and an overall personal involvement at the classroom level to motivate teachers to open their classrooms. Strong characterizations of approachability and being a good listener describe superintendents as instructional leaders (Southworth, 2002). Teachers in the study viewed superintendents were critical participants to create a culture of collaboration and success. Professional dialogue, personal reflection, and shared expertise must influence relationships characterized by genuine concerns for openness and improvement to increase student success.

In the end, superintendents using instructional leadership provide new understandings of how district leaders influence classroom instructional capacity. A blend of motivation, rationalization, and instilling teacher knowledge for instructional improvement provides the superintendent with a wide variety of mechanisms to increase teaching and learning. A balance of providing a clear and direct vision on academic excellence motivates teachers to support instructional development. The means to influence instructional capacity through organizational and resources management focuses on strong communication among and between all levels of the district. Lastly, a collective commitment among the teachers, grounded in trust and strong personal relationships,

push for professional growth and development. Clearly, this study indicates that a strong instructional leadership by superintendents does influence instructional capacity to professionally challenge teachers focused on continual instructional improvement.

Superintendents in the study are also characterized as transformational leaders to influence classroom instructional capacity. Sergiovanni (1995) describes transformational leadership as a process district leaders use the strengths of the organization and people within it to stimulate success as leadership by building. Superintendents in this study used a combination of transformational leadership espoused by Bass and Avolio (1994). Strong personal influence on teachers, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration were used to foster an environment focused on instructional excellence.

Organizational structures and management are needed to implement the superintendents' vision to influence the classroom through the development of strong communication between district administration and classroom teachers. Developing a strong communication channel between building principals, classroom teachers, and superintendents provide an avenue for not only vision implementation, but also bottom-up teacher leadership (Purkey & Smith, 1985). Instructional capacity must be increased through open communication to highlight instructional strengths and weaknesses. Superintendents' transformational leadership creates opportunities for teachers to seek other district expertise on instructional issues. Superintendents' management practices created a clear scope and sequence for curriculum and instruction and provided an opportunity for teachers to critically examine factors that influence teaching and learning (Massell, 1998). Allowing teachers and superintendents to focus resources on productive

policies, practices, and professional development, instructional capacity can be influenced.

Superintendents used transformational leadership to developing a collective commitment among teachers to create a culture of trust (Geihsel, Sleegers, and van de Berg, 1999). A strong instructionally focused voice in the development of policies that affect teaching and learning conditions develops strong social trust with in the district (Leithwood, 1995). Superintendents who are trustworthy, especially around area of improvement and decision-making can dramatically influence instructional capacity. Superintendents need to share educational expertise while empowering teachers to make classroom decisions grounded on sound and proven practices. Superintendents must use this relationship to empower teachers to incorporate new strategies for instruction. Trust was manifested through developing strong relationship between superintendents and teachers (Southworth, 2002). Superintendents must overtime develop a strong social influence with teachers as an educational leader.

Another important element where superintendents influence instructional capacity is challenging teachers to become continuous learners (Massel, 1998). Superintendents, through transformational leadership, increase teacher knowledge by creating learning communities with buildings. Participating in study groups and book studies encourage teachers to develop instructional practices by using classroom data and educational research. Superintendents need to provide teachers with current research and information that focus instruction. Specifically, initiatives for improvement must provide new information for classroom practice and changed the teachers' view of teaching. Not only

did superintendents in the study dramatically influence specific teaching knowledge, but also use collected data to encourage teachers to change classroom instruction.

Overall, superintendents as instructional and transformational leader provide a powerful influence on classroom instructional capacity. Superintendents can elevate the commitment of teachers through increasing their belief in professional excellence to create a strong commitment to the instructional vision for improvement. Transformational leadership allows superintendents to influence the relationship between teachers and classroom materials, but also directly increases and improves teachers' instructional knowledge and practice. Cohen & Ball (1999) believe through challenging teacher knowledge and practice, instructional capacity can be dramatically increased. Superintendents who use instructional and transformational leadership to influence instructional capacity can have a significant and lasting influence on teachers and materials critical for success in the classroom.

Professional Development and Instructional Practice

Professional development and instructional practice are critical parts that strengthen classroom instructional capacity (Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). Superintendents must recognize the importance of professional development and instructional practice to significantly influenced teachers' ability to produce worthwhile and substantial learning for themselves and students. Instructional capacity, when examined with professional development and instructional practice, demonstrated a significant positive relationship. Using instructional and transformational leadership, superintendents need to exclusively focus on professional development to influence instructional capacity through

instructional development and training, development of professional knowledge, and opportunities for teacher leadership. Additionally, effective superintendents need to frame professional development on external influences to respond to new educational expectations from federal and state education departments. Leithwood (1994) believes that responding to the greater context of educational restructuring and improvement is vital for district success. An analysis of both types of data in this study provides an opportunity to see how the superintendents' vision and leadership can influence both the knowledge and practice of classroom teachers to develop professionally.

Teacher development must be the focus of any instructional improvement (Hoy & Hoy 2003; Blase & Blase, 1998). Teacher development can be enriched by superintendents making faculty members seek additional opportunities for professional growth. Curriculum development, through shared decision-making, is an important part of teacher development that empowers teachers to become better practitioners. The superintendents' influence on curriculum development not only develop teachers' knowledge and pedagogy, but also created a sense of common beliefs and values on the school's central mission. Curriculum development provides a way for superintendents to align classroom instruction to state standards while allowing teachers to make curricular decisions. In the end, curriculum development is an important tool to focus and expand teachers' skills, knowledge, and beliefs.

Superintendents must not only developed curriculum but also provided training for teachers to ensure instructional improvement. Mullin and Keedy (1998) believe that superintendents that have undergone successful instructional change initiatives close the gap between knowledge and practice. Superintendents must use professional

development to train teachers on curriculum content and improve instructional pedagogy. Clearly professional development and training can significantly influence a teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and how to teach content to students. Cohen & Bass (1999) believe professional development can significantly influence superintendents' instructional capacity. The development of professional knowledge can significantly influence the interaction between classroom instructional materials and students. Findings indicate teachers' opportunities for leadership can provide a powerful motivation to improve professional knowledge and practice.

Through curriculum and instructional material decision making, teachers gain a better understanding of instructional expectations and the necessary resources to influence instructional capacity facilitated through the instructional vision of superintendents. Focused leadership opportunities also enabled the development of professional learning communities where teachers focus on instruction to better meet the needs of all students.

Lastly, a significant factor that influenced the superintendents' ability to influence teacher teaching and learning occurs through external pressures from the local community and state accountability measures. Superintendents must balance community expectations and established methods for teaching and learning while balancing district-wide curriculum, resources, and teacher professional development to align with required state learning objectives. State accountability standards and the subsequent introduction of district level instructional specialist accounts for much of the new instructional focus of the district in two significant ways. First, state curriculum standards are very influential on classroom instruction. While specific implementation policies and practices are coming from superintendents, recognitions of external influence must be used as a

guide. Secondly, districts are creating new positions within the organization solely focused on instruction and teaching. Superintendents are dramatically influencing instructional capacity these newly created positions manifested as M.A.P coordinators, instructional coaches, and peer mentors. Ultimately, the introduction of new personnel can significantly influence on teacher professional development and professional practice.

Overall, the quantitative data and qualitative data supported existing research examining instructional capacity and teacher professional development and instruction. Superintendent must focus on professional development and instructional practices to significantly influence instructional capacity. Cohen & Ball, 1999; Massel, 1998; and O'Day, Goertz & Floden, 1995 all highlight the importance of focusing on professional development to increase instructional capacity. The findings in this study were strengthened by prior research, but the additional influence of state accountability requirements, curriculum development, a culture of trust, and the addition of instructionally focused personnel demonstrated a new, yet significant focus of superintendents' influence.

Superintendent Influence on Instructional and Institutional Resources

While superintendents used transformational leadership to develop and foster a strong instructional vision for the district, instructional leadership allowed district resources to focus directly on instructionally related policies and practices. District resources, both institutional and instructional, are critical factors to assist superintendents in the development of classroom instructional capacity. Bolman and Deal (1997) believe that

effective leaders not only create the necessary climate for change, but also provide the tools and resources to successfully carry out organizational change. Superintendents who successfully focus on both creating the vision for instructional improvement and work diligently to ensure resources are available can dramatically influence instructional capacity. While Spillane & Thompson (1997) cite that focusing on resources is one of the most important elements of instructional capacity, superintendents must not use resource management as a primary mechanism for instructional development. However, instructional and institutional resources did provide a clear relationship between teachers and students as it frames and provides the opportunity for both to be engaged in the processes of learning. Through the allocation of time, funding, personnel, and instructional technology and materials, instructional capacity is significantly influence through superintendents.

Findings from the study clearly demonstrated how superintendents' influence instructional capacity by effectively using instructional time to provide a strong learning environment. Lashaway (2002) and Smith & Andrews (1989) support how instructional leadership requires the effective use of organizational time. Superintendents must Findings highlighted that superintendents supported district-wide efforts to generate more instructional time by streamlining polices so not to burden teachers with overly administrative tasks. This not only increases opportunities to teach students, but improves the quality of instruction by allowing teachers to focus energies on experimental teaching, curriculum development, and collaboration between grades and departments. Closely aligned with instructional time to improve classroom capacity, superintendents also used district funding as a way to influence relationships within the instructional unit.

Superintendents focusing on funding for educational resources are well documented as improving instruction in the classroom (CPSER, 2003; Gress, 2002; Massell, 1998; Peterson, 1984; Thompson, 1990; and Wimpelberg, 1987). Funding can develop strong and engaging curriculums that challenges both students and teachers, but also provides new instructionally focused training. These combine to target important areas that are directly related to teaching and learning (Massell, 1998). Superintendents seeking to influence instructional capacity see funds as the most significant way to improve instructional materials. A significant finding in the data was the ability of superintendents' to use funding that influence two elements of the instructional unit simultaneously- teachers and materials. Teachers' perception highlights how funding is effective for curriculum and instructional development. The findings demonstrated how teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices where changed using professional development. Strategically allocating funding is a powerful tool to influence what and how teachers teach within the classroom.

Closely associated to funding is a superintendents' focus on improving classroom instructional materials. High quality instructional materials are a critical element that dramatically improves student achievement. Cohen and Ball (1999) cite that a student's engagement in the learning process is directly link to the content in which it is presented and the instructional materials used. Classroom materials allow a superintendents' vision on instructional improvement to become tangible. Effective superintendents purchase materials to update curriculum to align to state standards while providing opportunities for students to be motivated with an interactive and engaging learning environment.

Overall, superintendents who used instructional and transformational leadership qualities can have a dramatic influence on the relationships within the instructional unit. Instructional and institutional resources create a necessary link to take instructional goals into the learning environment. Darling-Hammond (1996) writes how important this step is to leadership because it bridges management practices with instructional outcomes. Superintendents have a strong tool to influence instructional capacity through organizational resources. Through the coordination of instructional and organizational resources such as time, money, curriculum, and people, superintendents dramatically improve the learning environment for each student.

Framework Conclusions

By examining instructional capacity as the interaction between students, teachers, and instructional materials, superintendents can truly focus on the purpose of the teaching profession- student learning. The quantitative data statically demonstrated that superintendents do have an influence on classroom instructional capacity while the qualitative data examined specific mechanisms used to increase student performance. The findings clearly demonstrate that successful superintendents dramatically influence capacity primary by focusing on teachers' knowledge and practices and instructional resources.

Superintendents had a significant influence on the instructional unit, especially on teachers. Superintendents who provide a strong vision of instruction and student centeredness create an organizational climate that focuses district resources on student achievement. Superintendents' vision pushes teachers to develop a collective

commitment to district success and creates a strong incentive to continually improve classroom performance. Superintendents must also align organizational practices and polices through evaluations and incorporating instructionally focused staff. Superintendents and instructional coaches seek to challenge teachers' ways of thinking about instruction and learning through the development of a strong learning community where expertise can be shared across the district.

Teachers' intellectual and personal resources are shaped by the superintendent. Instructional capacity is enhanced by how superintendents use their expertise as the instructional leader to model professional expectations and classroom practice. As teachers and superintendents work together through collaborative decision-making, teachers developed strong relationships that transcended traditional teacher/administrator relationships. Through these strong relationships, a culture of trust is created that dramatically influenced instructional capacity. Trust between all district levels, push teachers to support district policies and curriculum and instructional reforms for school improvement. Overall, the superintendent has a significant amount of influence on teachers' intellectual and personal resources for classroom instruction. While providing opportunities for knowledge growth, classroom instructional materials are also critical components of instructional capacity.

Superintendents' acquisition and allocation of classroom instructional resources also influence instructional capacity. Superintendents must allocate a tremendous amount of time and energy working with teachers to identify instructional needs and then find the necessary funding to make sure teachers have all necessary materials to implement instructional objectives.

Through the involvement of teachers in the curriculum selection and purchasing, instructional materials ensure teachers use proven teaching methods and research based practices focused on student achievement. Classroom materials also provide a process for superintendents to ensure state learning objectives are being taught in each classroom. In the end, superintendents have a significant influence on instructional capacity facilitated through instructional materials. Superintendents who focus on instructional capacity through instructional materials respond to external influences in an effort to instructionally improve and align with state standards. Materials that enhance classroom instruction are a preferred way to align district functions and processes on student learning and success. Instructional materials empower teachers to select appropriate curriculum and technology that bolstered commitment and a focus on state requirements.

Surprisingly, superintendents demonstrated little direct influence on students' interaction with teachers and classroom materials within the instructional unit. Students are primarily influenced indirectly through the superintendents' instructional vision. However, in the push for student centeredness, superintendents' influence can demonstrate a profound effect on the students' relationship with classroom teachers. Superintendents need to model a strong commitment to excellence that filters down to classroom teachers then to students. Strong superintendents push for teacher/pupil relationships focused on academic excellence and to provide a unique learning opportunity for each student.

Ultimately, the superintendent does demonstrate a strong influence on the daily lives of classroom teachers and indirectly students. Superintendents must use organizational practices, policies, and culture to implement a vision focused on continual improvement

and student centeredness. Teacher professional development is critical to generate new knowledge which is then translated into effective teaching strategies that challenge students to not only simply participate, but engage. Classroom instructional materials must focus teaching and evaluation to align curriculum to required state learning objectives and provide new avenues for classroom interactions. Strong superintendents seeking to influence classroom instructional capacity must use teacher participation with curriculum development to push best practices into the classroom while utilizing current and proven practices in modern pedagogy. When combined, the three parts to the instructional unit becomes a powerful laboratory for district success that can be influenced by the superintendent. Instructional capacity is an important and useful way to focus district improvement and evaluation. In the end, the superintendent does demonstrate the ability to produce worthwhile and substantial learning through influencing the interaction between the teacher, student, and classroom materials.

Implications for Research

This study sought to examine the role of the superintendent's influence and maintenance of classroom instructional capacity. The study's findings indicate that there are a significant amount of influence that the superintendents has on the interaction between the teacher, students, and materials that create the instructional unit. Because of the mixed method design, findings represent an extensive, but limited examination of the superintendents' influence on instructional capacity.

To further investigate this phenomenon, addition districts could be included to examine how superintendents influence instructional capacity in larger districts. Also,

district with multiple superintendents could provide insight that could increase the generalizability of findings. District in other states could also be investigated to provide data other areas of the country.

Future research could also investigate further relationships between teacher perceptions of superintendent on professional development and instructional practice. Separating professional development and instructional practice into separate variables could investigate deeper, unique, and subtle differences between how teachers access, interpreted, and evaluate professional development experiences to how the translate acquired knowledge within classroom practice and student evaluation. Future research could also examine the role of the newly acquired instructional leaders and their influence on instructional capacity. This line of research could investigate the role of the superintendent in comparison with instructional coaches to evaluate the influence each of these members of the district on classroom instructional capacity.

Another significant area that would provide valuable information is specifically collecting data from the student experience. Given that the findings in the study are solely teacher perspectives, by focusing on the students' perspective could be a critical piece of information that could help superintendents better understand the challenges and opportunities to better meet their educational needs.

Lastly, the key findings from this study help provide a better picture of how superintendents truly influence student and teacher learning. As stewards of the vision and mission of public education, superintendents need timely information that helps them influence instruction and learning. Highlighted in the literature, a limited amount of research exists that specifically examine the superintendents' role in classroom success.

While this study represents only a small caveat in the superintendent literature, the opportunities for further investigations into the superintendent and instructional capacity are promising.

Implications for Practice

With the rapid infusion of the federal No Child Left Behind law and the increasing climate of school accountability, the role of superintendents in district success in more important that ever. Superintendents are facing an ever increasing environment of rewards and sanctions focused on student achievement and creating a new environment of changing policies and practices policies. The results of this exploratory study have a direct impact on how superintendents can impact instruction through professional practice.

The findings from this study can help superintendents with comprehensive school improvement by focusing district resources on instructional development though the lens of instructional capacity. By focusing on instructional capacity, improvements in teacher training, curriculum development, and organizational management can be aligned to influence student achievement via instructional capacity. Conclusions from this study highlight how superintendents use both transformational and instructional leadership to frame organizational improvement focused on teachers, students, and instructional materials. In the end, this study exemplifies not only the importance, but how superintendents must focus on instructional capacity to dramatically influence the daily lives and operations of educational stakeholders.

Lastly, the research findings in this study help provide new perspectives how to prepare superintendents. As superintendents are required to become instructional experts, increased understandings of how they are able to influence instructional practices within the classroom could become a necessary component of professional training. By focusing on instructional capacity, superintendents can be given a new set of tools to equip them for the many new challenges they face.

Conclusion

What makes the findings of this investigation so important is that they provide further empirical evidence to question the conventional wisdom regarding the role of the district superintendent in leading schools. Emerging from the data were several critical themes demonstrating consistencies among these instructionally focused superintendents and their academically successful districts. These themes included strengthening professional practice for teachers, staff and students. All of the district leaders in this investigation articulated an instructionally focused mission and high expectations of teachers and staff. Superintendents were also noted for their management of resources and how efficient allocation of these resources, especially the scarce resource of time, permitted teachers to participate in professional development, work collaboratively and improve their knowledge, skills and teaching. Coupled with the notion of teacher professional learning, superintendents were viewed by teachers in these districts as enhancing their understanding and classroom practices. By offering opportunities for dialogue, collaboration and professional development, teachers were engaged in professional learning and growth. Through this interaction, teachers developed new instructional

strategies directed at school improvement and classroom practice. Finally, teachers felt trusted and treated as professionals by the superintendents in these districts. A culture of trust permitted teachers to feel independent and comfortable in implementing their newly acquired skills and practices in their classrooms. It is through this dynamic relationship that highlights the influence of superintendent's role as it gradually shifts from a comprehensive manager to an instructional leader focused on the individual classroom.

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Appendix A

Qualitative Interview Protocol

Qualitative Data Collection
Interview Questions for Focus Group Participants

These questions were used to guide the direction of focus group sessions to identify superintendent influence on classroom instructional capacity.

1. What are the vision and/or goals for school improvement, set forth by your superintendent, and how do you believe they impact your classroom/building?

2. How has the superintendent changed your understandings and beliefs about teaching? How do you put this new knowledge into practice?

3. How has the superintendent's influence on your classroom worked to improve the classroom experiences for students? What about their families?

4. Do you believe that the superintendent has fostered the development of a professional learning community in your school? To what extent do you have opportunities for professional interaction?

5. How involved are the teachers in the decision-making process with regards to instructional materials, curriculum, and district policy?

6. How does the superintendent make his/her presence known in your school?

7. How do you believe the superintendent influences your relationship with your students in your classroom?

8. How do you believe the superintendent influences the instructional materials used to teach, interact, and engage students in your classroom?

9. To what degree do you believe the superintendent supports and/or hinders what you are doing in your classroom?

10. How would you evaluate the superintendent's ability to take his/her vision and creating the necessary environment to be demonstrated in the classroom?

Appendix B
Quantitative Data Collection Survey

Instructions:

On the following pages, you will be asked to respond to questions to the best of your knowledge. The first section are demographic questions. Section two asks questions related to professional development of teachers in your district. The third section includes climate questions within your school and at the district level, while the last section asks about your perceptions of the superintendent.

Please note that you will be making relative judgements when responding to the scales. There are no right or wrong answers. The value and success of this study depends on your willingness to provide honest assessments. Respond according to your observations and experiences rather than what you may think are the more "favorable" responses.

Your responses will be held in the **strictest of confidence**. To ensure your anonymity, responses will be numerically coded and names will not appear anywhere on the response form. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. George Petersen, Associate Professor, University of Missouri-Columbia (573) 882-2540 or email peterseng@missouri.edu. Any questions or concerns of human subject participation in this study should be directed to the University of Missouri- Columbia *Institutional Review Board* (IRB) office located in 483 McReynolds Hall, University of Missouri-Columbia at (573) 882-9585 or emailed at reznicekm@missouri.edu.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this investigation.

Section I: Demographics

A. How do you classify your main assignment at THIS school, that is, the activity at which you spent most of your time in the past 12 months?

1. __ Assistant principal
2. __ Department Chair/Lead Teacher
3. __ Regular full-time teacher
4. __ Regular part-time teacher
5. __ Long-term substitute
6. __ Teacher aide/paraprofessional
7. __ Other professional staff (e.g., counselor, curriculum coordinator, social worker)

B. How many years have you worked as a FULL-TIME elementary or secondary teacher?

___ year(s)

C. How many years have you been at this school in your present position?

___ year(s)

D. What is your highest degree attained?

1.__ HS/GED 2. __ Associate 3. __ BA/BS 4. __ MA/MS 5. __ Ed.S. 6. __ Doctoral

E. What was your major field of study for your most recent degree?

_____

F. What grade level did you teach this past year?

1.___ Elementary 2.___ Middle/Jr. High 3.___ Secondary 4.___ Alternative

5. ___ Other *Please explain*_____

Section II: Professional Development

G. Which of these activities related to teaching have you participated in within the past 12 months (Check all that apply):

1.__ SCHOOL DISTRICT sponsored workshops or in-service programs
2.__ SCHOOL sponsored workshops or in-service programs
3.__ University extension or adult education courses
4.__ College courses in your subject field
5.__ Professional growth activities sponsored by professional associations
6.__ Committee to integrate academic skills into the vocational curriculum
7.__ Committee on selecting textbooks or materials
8.__ Study Groups
8.__ Other curriculum committee *Please explain*:_____
9.__ None of the above

H. For the professional development in which you participated in the last 12 months, did you receive the following types of support (Check all that apply):

1.__ Release time from teaching
2.__ Scheduled time in the contract year for professional development
3.__ Stipend for professional development activities outside regular work hours.
4.__ Full or partial reimbursement of college tuition
5.__ Reimbursement for conference or workshop fees
6.__ Reimbursement for travel and/or daily expenses
7.__ Other *Please explain*_____

I. Please check the space that best represents your opinion about the impact of the professional development programs in which you have participated in the past 12 months.

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
1. Provided information new to me	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. Changed my views on teaching	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Caused me to change my practices	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. Caused me to seek further information	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. Were generally a waste of my time	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

J. With regards to the in-service professional development (PD) activities for TEACHERS in the disrict, please check the space that best represents who has responsibility for (Check all that apply):

	Teacher	Principal	Super-intendent	Outside Provider	P.D. Committee	Shared Equally
1. Deciding the content	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. Designing & planning activities	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Conducting the activities	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. Participating in P. D. activities	___	___	___	___	___	___

Section III: School Climate

K. Please check how much influence do you think you have, in your classroom at this school, over each of the following areas of your planning and teaching?

	No influence						Very influential
1. Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Selecting teaching techinques/methods	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. Instructional time	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

L. Please check the space that best represents your agreeement or disagrement with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1. Teachers in this school are evaluated fairly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. The principal lets staff members know what is expected of them	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. The school administration's behavior towards the staff is supportive and encouraging	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. Teachers participate in making most of the important educational decisions in this school	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. Necessary materials (e.g., text-books, copy machine) are available as needed by the staff	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. The *principal* talks with me frequently about my instructional practices	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. The *superintendent* talks with me frequently about my instructional practices	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. The *principal* knows what kind of school he/she wants and has communicated it to the staff	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. The *superintendent* knows what kind of school he/she wants and has communicated it to the staff	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
13. There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. Goals and priorities for the school are clear	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. The personal vision articulated by the superintendent is the improvement of instruction, and the teaching and learning of children	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. The superintendent is a significant factor in determining what types of instructional programs are introduced and/or implemented by this district	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
18. The superintendent influences the instructional programs at the building level	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. The superintendent has influence on my role as a teacher in the classroom	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. The superintendent has influence on my interactions with students in the classroom	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
21. The superintendent has influence on the curriculum I use in the classroom	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
22. The superintendent has influence on how I evaluate students in the classroom	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
23. The superintendent has influence on the type of staff development I participate in	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
24. The superintendent encourages shared decision-making by the teachers and staff	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
25. The superintendent has a positive influence on the instructional leadership of the principal	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

Section IV: District Climate/Instructional leadership

S. Using the scale "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree", please check how would you rate each statement?

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1. The superintendent has a strong instructional focus for the district	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. The superintendent encourages teachers to use classroom data as a tool for professional learning	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. The superintendent encourages teachers to collect classroom level data for instructional improvement	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. The superintendent seeks community input on curriculum and instructional issues	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. The superintendent has a comprehensive vision for community outreach	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

T. Using the scale "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree", please check each statement[1].

THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT...

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1. involves teachers in developing and implementing school instructional goals and objectives	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. incorporates the designated state and/or system curriculum in the development of instructional programs	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. ensures that school and classroom activities are consistent with school instructional goals	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. has influence on the types of evaluations to measure the progress of instructional goals and objectives	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. works with teachers to improve the instructional program in their classrooms consistent with student needs	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. bases instructional program development on sound research and practice	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

[1] Questions adapted from Elaine K. McEwan's- *Seven steps to effective instructional leadership*. (1998). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT...

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
7. applies appropriate expectations for student achievement that are directly communicated to students, teachers, and parents	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. establishes clear rules and expectations for the use of time allocated to instruction	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. establishes, supports, and implements activities that communicate to students the value and meaning of learning	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. develops and utilizes communication channels with parents for the purpose of setting school objectives	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. encourages teachers to set personal and professional goals related for the purpose to the improvement of school instruction	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. makes regular building and classroom observations	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
13. schedules, plans, participates, and facilitates regular meetings with school personnel to address instructional issues	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. provides opportunities for and training in collaboration, shared decision making, coaching, mentoring, curriculum development, and making presentations	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. provides motivation and resources for faculty members to engage in professional growth activities	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. serves as an advocate for students and communicates with them regarding aspects of their school life	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. encourages open communication among staff members and maintains respect for differences of opinion	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
18. demonstrates concern and openness in the consideration of student, teacher, and/or parent problems (and participates in the resolution of such problems where appropriate)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. systematically responds to student, staff, and parent concerns	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. acknowledges appropriately the earned achievements of others	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

U. I collect information on my students and my teaching primarily through (Check all that apply):

1. __ Journaling
2. __ Reflective reports
3. __ Oral inquiries for reflection and questioning
4. __ Action research studies
5. __ I don't collect any data
6. __ Other: _____

V. Classroom level data on my students and my teaching is encouraged to be collected by (Check all that apply):

1. __ Peers
2. __ Principal
3. __ Superintendent
4. __ Other _____

W. I use my collected classroom data to (Check all that apply):

1. __ Improve classroom practice
2. __ Reflect on my teaching for improvement
3. __ Requirement for my Professional Development Plan (PDP)
4. __ To increase student achievement
5. __ Other _____

X. Does this district use performance reports to:

	Yes	**No**
1. evaluate the progress of students in your district or schools	___	___
2. determine the next year's instructional focus	___	___
3. realign the curriculum, e.g., with assessment and other indicator criteria	___	___
4. inform parents and the community of the district's and/or school's progress	___	___
5. prompt school-level initiatives for improvements	___	___

Y. Listed below are several scales which contain word pairs at either end of the scale and seven spaces between pairs. Please rate your superintendent on the following scale[2].

1.	Agreeable	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Disagreeable
2.	Unalert	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Alert
3.	Analytic	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Diffuse
4.	Unappreciative	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Appreciative
5.	Attractive	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Unattractive
6.	Casual	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Formal

(Con't) Listed below are several scales which contain word pairs at either end of the scale and seven spaces between pairs. Please rate your superintendent on the following scale[2].

7.	Cheerful	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Depressed
8.	Vague	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Clear
9.	Distant	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Close
10.	Compatible	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Incompatible
11.	Unsure	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Confident
12.	Suspicious	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Believable
13.	Undependable	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Dependable
14.	Indifferent	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Enthusiastic
15.	Inexperienced	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Experienced
16.	Inexpert	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Expert
17.	Unfriendly	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Friendly
18.	Honest	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Dishonest
19.	Informed	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Ignorant
20.	Insightful	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Insightless
21.	Stupid	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Intelligent
22.	Unlikable	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Likeable
23.	Logical	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Illogical
24.	Open	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Closed
25.	Prepared	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Unprepared
26.	Unreliable	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Reliable
27.	Disrespectful	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Respectful
28.	Irresponsible	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Responsible
29.	Selfless	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Selfish
30.	Sincere	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Insincere
31.	Skillful	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Unskillful
32.	Sociable	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Unsociable
33.	Deceitful	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Straightforward
34.	Trustworthy	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Untrustworthy
35.	Genuine	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Phony
36.	Warm	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___	6___	7___	Cold

Thank you again for your cooperation and participation.

[2] Scale adapted from Fred J. Dorn's- *Counseling as applied social psychology: An introduction to the social influence model.* (1984) Springfield, IL: Thomas

CODE BOX NO:_____ &_____

Appendix C
Methodological Triangulation Framework

Appendix C- Methodological Triangulation Framework

Quantitative Data Finding		**Qualitative Data Findings**				**Research Question**
Supt. & I. C.		Vision & Leadership	Organizational Structures & Management	Collective Commitment	Access to Knowledge	Qual Quant 1 Quant 2
Semantic Relationship		*Rational for Purpose*	*Means-end*	*Function*	*Means-end*	
Survey Items		L21, T2, T3, T15	L4, L19, L22, L24, T19	L3, T1, T14, T16, T18	L14, L23, S2, S3, T5, T6	
			Resource Management	Trustworthiness		
			Function	Expertness		
			L6	Social Influence		
Supt. & I. L.		Programmatic	Functional	Interpersonal		Qual Quant 1
Semantic Relationship		*Means-end*	*Functions*	*Rationale for doing*		
Survey Items		L12, L16, L17, S1, S4, T8	L25, S5, T4, T12	L9, L18, T11, T13, T20		
P. D. and Inst. Practice		Curriculum Development	Teacher training	High Expectations	Context	Qual Quant 2
Semantic Relationship		*Means-end*	*Means-end*	*Attribute*	*Cause-effect*	
Survey Items		I4, K4, L10, L13	I1, I2, I3	L1, L11, L12, L15	N/A	

Appendix D
Superintendent's Instructional Capacity
Teacher Questionnaire Subscales

Appendix D-1 - Teacher's Perceptions of the Superintendent's Role in Fostering Instructional Capacity

Check the space that best represents your opinion about in the past 12 months.	**Mean**	***SD***
L3. The school administration's behavior toward staff is supportive and encouraging.	5.63	1.55
L4. Teachers participate in making most of the important educational decisions in this school.	4.95	1.54
L6. The necessary technologies for instruction are available as needed by the staff.	5.69	1.29
L14. I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with the other teachers.	5.51	1.36
L19. The superintendent has influence on my role as a teacher in the classroom.	4.27	1.88
L20. The superintendent has influence on my interactions with students in the classroom.	3.80	1.87
L21. The superintendent has influence on the curriculum that I use in the classroom.	4.35	1.82
L22. The superintendent has influence on how I evaluate students in the classroom.	3.68	1.87
L23. The superintendent has influence on the type of staff development I participate in.	4.83	1.69
L24. The superintendent encourages shared decision-making by the teachers and staff.	4.71	1.81
S2. The superintendent encourages teachers to use classroom data as a tool for Professional learning.	4.90	1.76
S3. The superintendent encourages teachers to collect classroom level data for instructional improvement.	4.71	1.82
T1. The superintendent involves teachers in developing and implementing school instructional goals.	5.14	1.59
T2. The superintendent incorporates the designated state and/or system curriculum in the development of instructional programs.	5.52	1.38
T3. The superintendent ensures that school and classroom activities are consistent with school instructional goals.	5.03	1.61
T5. The superintendent works with teachers to improve the instructional program in their classrooms consistent with student needs.	4.21	1.89
T6. The superintendent bases instructional program development on sound research and practice.	4.91	1.65
T14. The superintendent provides opportunities for and training in collaboration, shared decision-making, coaching, mentoring, curriculum development and making presentations.	4.79	1.77
T15. The superintendent provides motivation and resources for faculty members to engage in professional growth activities.	4.95	1.69
T16. The superintendent serves as an advocate for students and communicates with them regarding aspects of their school life.	4.50	1.83
T18. The superintendent demonstrates concern and openness in the consideration of student, teacher and or parent problems (and participates in the resolution of such problems where appropriate).	4.85	1.78
T19. The superintendent systematically responds to student, staff and parental concerns.	5.00	1.69

Appendix D-2 - Teacher's Perceptions of the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership

Check the space that best represents your opinion about the superintendent in the past 12 months.	**Mean**	**SD**
L9. The superintendent talks with me frequently about my instructional practices.	2.48	1.66
L12. The superintendent knows what kind of school (s)he wants and has communicated it to the school staff.	5.14	1.75
L16. The personal vision articulated by the superintendent is the improvement of Instruction and the teaching and learning of children.	5.46	1.59
L17. The superintendent is a significant factor in determining what types of instructional programs that are introduced and implemented by this district.	4.87	1.80
L18. The superintendent influences the instructional programs at the building level.	4.52	1.83
L25. The superintendent has a positive influence on the instructional leadership of the principal.	5.01	1.72
S1. The superintendent has a strong instructional vision.	5.29	1.70
S4. The superintendent seeks community input on curriculum and instructional issues.	4.69	1.74
S5. The superintendent has a comprehensive vision for community outreach.	4.96	1.68
T4. The superintendent has influence on the types of evaluations used to measure the progress of instructional goals and objectives.	5.05	1.55
T8. The superintendent has established clear rules and expectations for the use of time allocated to instruction.	4.98	1.68
T11. The superintendent encourages teachers to set personal and professional goals related for the purposes of improving school instruction.	5.06	1.61
T12. The superintendent makes regular building and classroom observations.	4.21	2.07
T13. The superintendent schedules and participates regular meetings with school personnel to address instructional issues.	4.69	1.91
T20. Acknowledges appropriately the earned achievements of others	5.25	1.63

Appendix D-3 - Teacher's Professional Development and Instructional Practices

Check the space that best represents your opinion about the impact of the professional development programs in which you have participated in the past 12 months.	**Mean**	**SD**
I1. Provided information new to me	5.24	1.38
I2. Changed my view of teaching	4.10	1.46
I3. Caused me to change my practices	4.72	1.32
I4. Changed me to seek further information	4.82	1.43
K4. Degree of teacher influence over instructional time	5.72	1.51
L1. Teachers in this school are evaluated fairly	5.80	1.46
L2. The principal lets staff members know what is expected of them	5.77	1.38
L8. The principal talks frequently about my instructional practices	4.43	1.68
L10. Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.	5.60	1.26
L11. The principal knows what kind of school (s)he wants and has communicated it to the staff.	5.67	1.39
L12. The superintendent knows what kind of school (s)he wants and has Communicated it to the staff.	5.15	1.77
L13. There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members.	5.68	1.28
L15. Goals and priorities for the school are clear.	5.81	1.21

Appendix D-4 - Teacher's Perception of the Superintendents' Social Influence

Listed below are several scales which contain work pairs at either end of the scale and seven spaces between pairs. Please rate your superintendent on the following scale.	**Mean**	**SD**
Y1. Agreeable/Disagreeable	5.03	1.83
Y4. Unappreciative/Appreciative	5.51	1.48
Y5. Attractive/Unattractive	4.70	1.72
Y6. Casual/Formal	3.23	1.73
Y7. Cheerful/Depressed	5.00	1.65
Y9. Distant/Close	4.32	1.71
Y10. Compatible/Incompatible	4.78	1.68
Y14. Indifferent/Enthusiastic	5.33	1.54
Y17. Unfriendly/Friendly	5.53	1.54
Y22. Unlikable/Likeable	5.53	1.58
Y32. Sociable/Unsociable	5.12	1.80
Y36. Warm/Cold	4.76	1.81

Appendix D-5 - Teacher's Perception of the Superintendents' Expertness

Listed below are several scales which contain work pairs at either end of the scale and seven spaces between pairs. Please rate your superintendent on the following scale.	**Mean**	**SD**
Y2. Unalert/Alert	5.92	1.30
Y3. Analytic/Diffuse	5.24	1.66
Y8. Vague/Clear	5.28	1.54
Y11. Unsure/Confident	6.14	1.37
Y15. Inexperienced/Experienced	6.24	1.15
Y16. Inexpert/Expert	5.89	1.24
Y19. Informed/Ignorant	5.72	1.68
Y20. Insightful/Insightless	5.39	1.67
Y21. Stupid/Intelligent	6.27	.929
Y23. Logical/Illogical	5.40	1.71
Y25. Prepared/Unprepared	5.73	1.64
Y31. Skillful/Unskillful	5.54	1.62

Appendix D-6 - Teacher's Perception of the Superintendents' Trustworthiness

Listed below are several scales which contain work pairs at either end of the scale and seven spaces between pairs. Please rate your superintendent on the following scale.	**Mean**	**SD**
Y12. Suspicious/Believable	5.48	1.59
Y13. Undependable/Dependable	5.85	1.19
Y18. Honest/Dishonest	5.25	1.88
Y24. Open/Closed	4.93	1.80
Y26. Unreliable/Reliable	5.87	1.24
Y27. Disrespectful/Respectful	5.92	1.30
Y28. Irresponsible/Responsible	6.08	1.18
Y29. Selfless/Selfish	4.98	1.71
Y30. Sincere/Insincere	5.19	1.75
Y33. Deceitful/Straightforward	5.60	1.59
Y34. Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	5.18	1.84
Y35. Genuine/Phony	2.65	1.60

Appendix E
Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

Study Title:

A Study of the District Superintendent in the Development and Maintenance of a School District's Instructional Capacity

University of Missouri-Columbia
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

You are invited to participate in a study of the district superintendent in the development and maintenance of a school district's instructional capacity. Using yours and another school district in Missouri, we hope to learn what superintendents do to make classrooms successful.

Upon the decision to participate, I (Chad W. Sayre, Graduate Student) will ask teachers to complete an instrument that examine perceptions of the district superintendent in his/her influence in developing and maintaining the instructional capacity within the school district. The time to complete the instrument should range from 12 to 15 minutes. Additionally, teachers will be asked to respond to a series of questions in a semi-structured, tape recorded focus group interviews that will allow for a further investigation into the role of the district superintendent in instructional capacity development. Focus group sessions will be held before and/or after the normal school day and will be scheduled for 30 to 40 minutes.

The promise of strict confidentiality is assured in both the collection and reporting of results. Findings from this study will be presented in such a way that no individual or school district will be identifiable. We would ask that the survey questions as well as your responses not be communicated with other members of the school staff and or administration. While the risk is minimal, the information a subject contributes to this study is subject to subpoena. **Be assured that any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential.** By signing this document, you give us permission to publish our aggregated findings in juried professional journals.

Your personal decision whether or not to participate will in no way jeopardize your future relations with the University of Missouri-Columbia. Also, your participation in the study will not jeopardize your current or future employment in the school district. Any participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If any person decides later to withdraw from the study, they may also withdraw any information that has been provided to us.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. George J. Petersen at (573) 882-2540. If you have any concerns of human subject participation in this study, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office located in 483 McReynolds Hall, University of Missouri-Columbia at (573) 882-9585.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

_____ _____

Date Time Subject's Signature

_____

Investigator's Signature

(Chad W. Sayre, Graduate Student)

VITA

Chad William Sayre was born on September 21st, 1974 in Elgin, Illinois. After attending elementary, middle, and high school in Monett, Missouri, he attended William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. He received a Bachelor of Science in elementary education with a focus on early-childhood education in 1996. After graduating, he worked as a classroom teacher in the Park Hill School District for three years. During the same time, he graduated with a Master of Arts in educational administration from the University of Missouri- Kansas City. In 2000, Chad began to work on his doctoral of Philosophy degree in educational leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri- Columbia. While completing doctoral work, he was a graduate research assistant for both the Consortium for Educational Policy Analysis and the University Council for Educational Administration. Chad completed a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in May 2007.