

Public Abstract

First Name:Rick

Middle Name:Alan

Last Name:Stark

Adviser's First Name:Sandy

Adviser's Last Name:Hutchinson

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title:THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENT-SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONS AND THE POLITICAL FRAME OF ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The study of superintendent-school board relationships is a worthwhile endeavor from a practitioner's point of view and is important for the success of a school district. The conceptual framework consisted of features and ideas related to organizational leadership theory and the political view taken from the literature reviewed. The alliance building-negotiation tactics, power/influence within an organization, and superintendent turnover associated with the dissatisfaction theory were featured concepts in the chapters leading up to the research methods. Four focus group interviews with three to six board members from four school districts were conducted, as well as individual interviews with six current superintendents. The superintendents are current and former employees of the four represented districts. From the interview data, connections were made with most of the key conceptual features, and four themes were formulated: interpersonal relations, cultural awareness, communication skills, and expected management. Expected management generalizes from the areas of fiscal, personnel, and legal. There were some interesting points to consider in this study, but the development of interpersonal attributes are vital. Being aware and becoming part of the local community, as well as improving communication skills and knowledge of expectations and compliance issues related to management, is essential. Communication skills include listening and gathering of information. These are all considerations for graduate school programs preparing future school leaders. More studies are needed to further explore the superintendent-school board relationships in a variety of different ways to gather data that is of quality and quantity. This will continue to add to the existing literature and reinforce ideas associated with improved relations and long tenure as a school superintendent.