

Public Abstract

First Name:Melonie

Middle Name:D.

Last Name:Bunn

Adviser's First Name:Robert

Adviser's Last Name:Watson

Co-Adviser's First Name:Cynthia

Co-Adviser's Last Name:MacGregor

Graduation Term:SP 2010

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:EdD

Title:Equity of Benefits and Gender Differences in Life Experiences of School Superintendents in Missouri

EQUITY OF BENEFITS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LIFE EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS IN MISSOURI

Melonie D. Bunn

Robert Watson, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Historically there has always been an inequality in the number of females who occupy positions in the public school districts nationwide. This inequity is evident in Missouri even in 2010. Missouri currently has 523 public school districts with only 110 or 21% of those positions being held by females.

The purpose of this study was to find the underlying reason or reasons why women are not equally represented in the superintendency ranks. The population for this study included 52 of the 110 female superintendents and 181 of the 413 male superintendents currently serving in the state of Missouri during the 2009-10 school year.

Data were gathered to determine answers to the following questions: whether females are equally represented in salary and total benefits packages in the superintendency in Missouri, what the differences are in life experiences for a male to become a superintendent as compared to that of a female, and what sacrifices each gender must go through in life in pursuit of this professional position.

The M.D.B. Survey of School Superintendents (Appendix C), which is a 15-question survey instrument, was downloaded onto Survey Monkey, a survey designing tool found on the World Wide Web. These surveys were then sent electronically to all superintendents in Missouri. Data analysis was completed using t-tests and chi-square analyses (χ^2) on the data obtained from both the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the survey participants.

The first research question in the study was answered by obtaining information pertaining to "who" the male and female superintendents are in Missouri. The answers to questions pertaining to the educational level, years of experience prior to becoming a superintendent, breadth of experience prior to becoming a superintendent, marital status prior to becoming a superintendent, divorce rate of superintendents while in the job, number of children at the beginning of the superintendency and the ages of children at the beginning of the superintendency were requested.

The second research question centered around "where" the superintendents are in Missouri. Information was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education pertaining to the number of K-8 school districts and K-12 school districts in Missouri and whether they were being run by male or female superintendents. Additional information for this research question was also requested by the electronic survey to obtain data representative of the career level each individual was at when they decided to pursue the superintendency.

The third research question investigated "what" the professional treatment of the superintendents in the State was during the 2009-10 school year. Information on their current salaries was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. There were two questions on the survey instrument that gathered information on the number of applications each superintendent submitted prior to obtaining

his or her first superintendency as well as the benefits that they currently received in their superintendency position.

The final conclusions pertaining to the differences in the superintendents in Missouri as compared by gender showed that females differ from their male colleagues in Missouri in the school district configuration that they are more widely represented in, in the ages of their children when they enter the superintendency and in their marital status while serving as superintendents.

The conclusions discovered pertaining to differences between K-8 superintendents as compared to K-12 superintendents which were discovered to be significant showed up in five of the twelve research categories investigated. Significant differences existed between the K-8 superintendents as compared to the K-12 superintendents in the following categories: educational level, years of experience in education prior to the superintendency, breadth of experience in education prior to the superintendency, salaries and benefits received.