

**A CASE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF FIVE FORMER
AND CURRENT URBAN NON-TRADITIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS**

A Dissertation

by

MARIA SEVERITA SANCHEZ

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2008

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson
Committee Members	Kathryn McKenzie
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	Patricia Larke
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ABSTRACT

A Case Study of the Experiences of Five Former and Current Urban
Non-Traditional Superintendents. (May 2008)

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A growing number of traditional school boards and city mayors are looking for the next generation of school superintendents to come prepared with a variety of professional backgrounds to provide instructional leadership for school districts. The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to examine and describe the experiences, of five urban non-traditional superintendents. Associated research methods, namely interviews with study participants and the identification of major themes emerging from the data, were employed. Six emergent themes were revealed, including change agent, accountability, political connection/clout, school reform, student achievement and excellent leadership. Profiles of the participants were offered to provide a context for the results of this study.

In relation to the major themes, these participants believed that their backgrounds in corporate worlds and other professions uniquely prepared them for the increased challenges of today's school superintendency. They all indicated that they assumed the helms in their respective school systems for altruistic reasons. However, once on the job, the participants noted that they suffered personally and professionally. They found themselves victims of little respect from the community, media and from their own

governing bodies. In terms of preparation for the job, the non-traditional superintendents practiced self-study through reading leadership and journal articles and by attending conferences. The participants also experienced different challenges in gaining certification for the superintendency due to disparate state regulations governing licensure.

Several recommendations resulted from the findings of this study. Since academic performance is the primary indicator of success or failure in education today, future researchers in this area might consider a quantitative analysis of student achievement in districts led by non-traditional superintendents compared to academic performance in those systems led by their traditional counterparts. In addition, it is suggested that these participants' views on superintendent preparation and certification and on governance issues may be considered by school districts, state and federal agencies and by universities as they develop future policy and programs. Other recommendations addressed the need to study female non-traditional superintendent governance and non-traditional leaders in smaller school districts as it relates to these issues.

DEDICATION

To

My patron saint,

La Virgen de San Juan del Valle



To my grandparents:

Esteban and Hortencia Fierro

They loved me, raised me and protected me as if I was their biological granddaughter.

They taught me to crawl, walk, run and never look back.

I love them and will miss them forever.

With eternal gratefulness to Mami Tencha and Papi Esteban
for modeling servant leadership.

Sivi

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Public education, which has been run by educators for many generations, has not succeeded. And so I think we need a different approach.

Joel Klein (2005)

Despite the multitude of challenges the national trend in urban school reform is fundamentally about high stakes and high standards. Large urban districts are experiencing a sense of urgency for attaining positive academic progress and for finding superintendents with organizational, public, and instructional leadership experiences. To these ends, they are in search of a silver bullet, a notorious leader with expertise outside the field of education such as corporate law, business, and/or the military (P. Houston, personal communication, June 22, 2007).

Urban communities are calling out for superintendents who are familiar with urban issues, able to manage resources wisely, improve student achievement, and provide the best qualified teachers for students (Hess, 2003a). Consequently, the most important decision for a school board is selecting a skilled superintendent of schools with the essential management and leadership skills to effectively take charge of matters dealing with finance, facilities, personnel, students, support services, instruction and

The style and format for this dissertation follow that of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

curriculum, and community relations (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). According to Hoyle, Björk, Collier, and Glass (2005), “to be successful in this demanding role, individuals must be selected on the basis of their intellect, energy, courage, and integrity; prepared in scholarly, standards-driven, and field-based programs; and mentored by professionals with a passion for education” (p. 221). Leadership qualities are critical when hiring a school superintendent, however school boards should also carefully assess the management skills of superintendent candidates (Glass, 2004). The men and women who hold these positions are very important to the success of American education. While it appears to be understood that school districts must select quality leaders, there are emerging concerns regarding the number of qualified applicants applying in large urban districts. The applicant pool of available candidates for the urban superintendency is limited. There are few individuals with the skills and experience to oversee a multimillion-dollar budget, manage a large bureaucracy, lead an unpredictable political environment, demonstrate respect for diverse group members who demand more representation and participation in decision making and serve as the chief educational leader for a large school system (Glass, 2004).

National concern over a possible educational leadership shortage has turned to include the superintendency (Cooper, Fusarelli & Carella, 2000). According to Glass (2004), a multifaceted convergence of demographic, economic, and political factors appear to be behind the present day shortage of high-quality urban leaders. Fewer people are going into the superintendency and those who do enter the field of educational leadership are increasingly starting late in their educational careers, serving for few years and accumulating less experience prior to retiring (Glass, Björk &

Brunner, 2000). According to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) (1999), some of the school superintendents started their educational careers as teachers during the Vietnam War era thereafter working their way up the traditional career pathway. Hence, eighty percent of the nation's superintendents are reaching retirement age and the present stress of compliance and accountability make the job less desirable.

A State of the American School Superintendency: A Mid-Decade Study, conducted by Thomas E. Glass and Louis A. Franceschini, uses data from 1,338 superintendents surveyed in 2006 (Pascopella, 2008). Usually these studies are conducted every 10 years; however, this midterm study was released earlier due to the rapid rate of change in the superintendency brought about by increasing state accountability standards and the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The report revealed that currently the average age of a superintendent is nearly 55 (Figure 1).

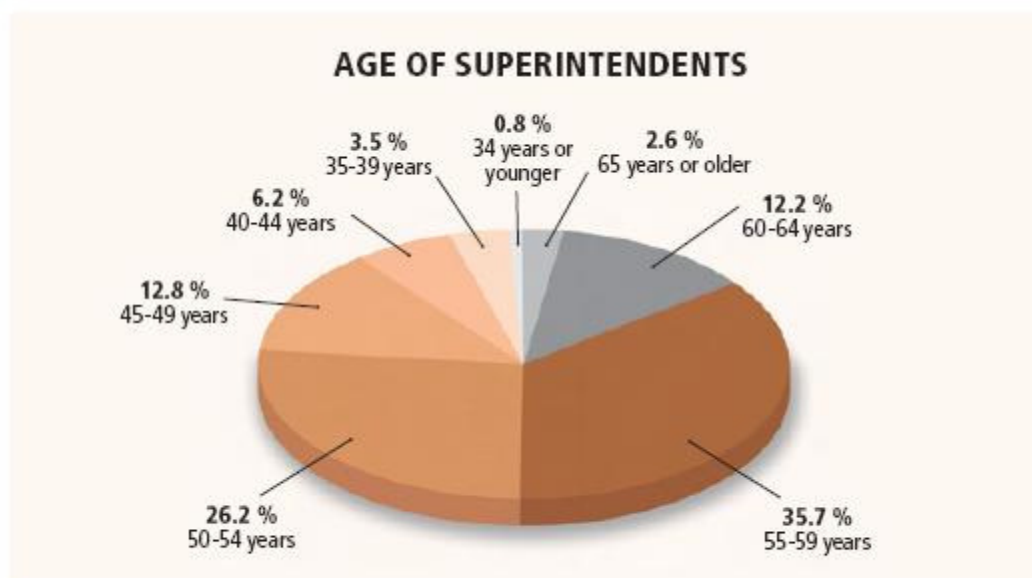


FIGURE 1. Age of superintendents.

Consequently, more people are needed to fill superintendent positions and fewer current chief executives are seasoned enough to mentor their novice colleagues. The school boards' and mayoral control districts' selections of non-traditional superintendents over traditional district leaders are sending out messages that there is a growing dissatisfaction with the usual practice of drawing these executives exclusively from a candidate pool of trained educators. The appointment of non-traditional superintendents clearly reflects this trend. Former Governor Roy Romer, Superintendent in Los Angeles Unified School District, William Weitzel, once a Professor of Business Administration in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Jim Nelson, lawyer-turned Texas Commissioner of Education and later superintendent, former federal prosecutor Alan D. Bersin in San Diego, California and the high-profile leader, Paul G. Vallas, in the Recovery School District of New Orleans all stand as examples of this new type of leader. Seattle, Washington, Jacksonville, Florida, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Denver, Colorado and Washington, D.C. have also selected superintendents from sectors outside the field of education.

Urban school superintendents hold one of the most important and challenging posts in America's educational system. The 66 largest urban public school districts serve approximately 7.4 million of this country's 48.3 million K-12 students (15%), and some 30% of the nation's students of color, low socio-economic level income pupils, and English language learners. With such large numbers of students, including the nation's most susceptible children, urban superintendents are clearly expected to face and resolve numerous challenges with a sense of urgency. As a result, urban school boards are extremely worried about the impact these factors will have on their schools

and districts. In an effort to attract quality superintendent candidates for this critical position, urban school boards have stepped “outside of the box” and have begun to explore the leadership in the private and public sector (Fuller, Campbell, Celio, Harvey, Immerwahr & Winger, 2003). In this era of accountability and No Child Left Behind (2001) mandates, school districts are expected to make visible and rapid improvements in student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

A new type of educational administrators, professionals with knowledge outside the field of education, is being tapped to lead many of the nations largest and, for the most part, challenging school systems (National School Board Association Superintendent Survey, 2002). In the middle 1990’s, during the era of educational reform, non-traditional superintendents began to appear in the educational arena (Cuban, 2001). While most school boards are hiring traditional superintendents, urban school districts are becoming less concerned about hiring within the educational circles and non-traditional superintendents are increasing in numbers and visibility in the educational realm (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). The movement to run schools like businesses is one of the reasons for this trend. Another reason is school district mayoral control, which is largely exercised in a quest for gains in accountability and efficiency (Kirst & Bulkley, 2000; Wong, 1999). Mayoral control occurs when a city mayor assumes authority for a school district lying within the city limits. Mayors increasingly seek control of the school districts where children fail to read and calculate math at basic levels. The mayor assumes one or a combination of several powers, including

appointing part or the whole school board, selecting the superintendent and/or becoming the primary decision-maker in a school district by converting the board of trustees into an advisory board (Council of Great City Schools, 2003). Mayors in New York, New York and Chicago, Illinois have gained control of the massive public school systems and have put educational reforms into place (Bloomberg, 2003).

Many urban school districts are amongst the larger employers enabling school boards to search for professionals who have successfully served as chief executive officers. The logic behind this development is that if the school district is only achieving minimal academic improvement under the leadership of a traditional superintendent, perhaps it is time to employ someone with a different set of leadership skills (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). Ultimately, the most important reason for school boards hiring non-traditional candidates is connected with finances. In today's economy, one of the most valued leadership qualities is fiscal responsibility, which involves the ability to effectively balance and manage budgets (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). Consequently, some large urban districts seek out chief executive officers of large corporations with successful track records in management, aging infrastructure and management accountability (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). Some urban school boards are of the opinion that there are plenty of personnel with instructional expertise who can assist the non-traditional superintendent with the educational role of the position. Typically non-traditional superintendents will delegate the responsibility of improving instructional methods and student achievement to the trained educators who often assume second in command positions. However, this trend begs a fundamental question. Is there ample research to support these hiring decisions?

Literature reviews consisting of manual, Internet and dissertation searches, revealed that there was a significant need for additional study in this area. Even when search descriptors and indicators were altered, the scarcity remained evident. Inquiry into the non-traditional superintendency may have an impact on the direction of training and leadership programs for aspiring superintendents. Findings from this study may also better inform district school boards, which might be grappling with these hiring decisions. In sum, there is a great need for additional research studies on non-traditional superintendents due to limited professional literature (Petersen & Fusarelli, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this interpretive study was to examine and describe the experiences of urban non-traditional superintendents. This interpretive study will also contribute to the relatively limited literature base related to non-traditional superintendents and possibly assist in redefining superintendency training and preparation programs. Like much of interpretive work, this study expects to contribute to the body of knowledge, help people understand the nature of a problem and to generate solutions to human and societal problems (Patton, 1990). Ultimately, it will serve as the basis for future studies that will also add to the knowledge base surrounding the role of the non-traditional superintendent. This is paramount to public education in particular because American politicians and the general public want to see dramatic improvement in public schools and are willing to challenge the traditional role of the superintendent in order to meet this end. In response to the outcry of the public, some school boards have opted to hire non-educators to be chief executive officers who in turn

hire an educator to lead the educational program, usually assigned the title of Chief Academic Officer. If anything, it is becoming the exception in the larger urban cities to hire a career educator to lead a school district. By adding to the ranks of non-traditional superintendents new leadership structures are being developed to support educational reform and to ensure that efforts are being made to reinvent educational leadership.

The former and/or current non-traditional superintendents that served as participants in the research were selected from the 100 largest urban school districts in the United States. In total, the districts represent less than 1% of the 17,140 public school districts in the United States. However, these districts represent leadership for 7.4 million children who further translate to 30% of children of color, and those who are economically challenged in this country (Broad & Fordham, 2003).

Research Questions

Fuller (2003) stated:

Our questions generate our individuality. Through our responses to them, we define ourselves, we become someone in particular. Long before we're even aware of them, they shape our every move. A question generates a quest and a quest crystallizes our identity, transforming us into someone one who, regardless of how others see us, we experience as a somebody. (p. 42)

The purpose of this study was to examine and engage leaders in a discourse addressing perceptions of non-traditional school superintendents. The following questions guided this study.

1. What are the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to:

- a. characteristics of effective leadership.
 - b. their preparation for the superintendency.
 - c. their being hired in their respective districts.
 - d. successful experiences and challenges during their tenure as urban school leaders.
2. How do five urban non-traditional superintendents compare and contrast their responsibilities as school leaders with previous leadership roles?
 3. What are the recommendations for superintendent preparation and support?

Significance of the Study

It is a time for a new generation of leadership, to cope with new problems and new opportunities. For there is a new world to be won.

John F. Kennedy, July 4, 1960 (Adler, 1997)

The uniqueness of this interpretive study was that it dealt with the development and diffusion of non-traditional superintendents in the urban public education sector. These leaders have assumed the helms of large urban school districts located in New York, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, San Diego, California, Oklahoma, Oklahoma and Seattle, Washington. Non-traditional superintendents, for purposes of this interpretive study, are those who do not follow the same career path as their traditional peers. The most common career path followed by superintendents (48.5%) is from teacher to assistant principal or principal to central office administration to superintendent (Björk, Keedy & Gurley, 2003). The majority of America's public school superintendents are men who have gone through the traditional career path, which

typically includes experience as classroom teacher, school principal and central office administrator (Figure 2).

CAREER PATH TO THE SUPERINTENDENCY BY GENDER (Numbers are rounded off and might not add up to 100 percent exactly.)		
	Females	Males
Associate/Deputy Superintendent	10.9 %	7.3 %
Assistant Superintendent	39.6 %	26.1 %
Director	14 %	4.8 %
Principal	23.5 %	52.5 %
Other	11.9 %	9.3 %

FIGURE 2. Career path to the superintendency by gender.

Non-traditional superintendents come from diverse sectors outside the field of public education, such as from the government, military, business, non-profit organizations and the legal profession. Just as President Kennedy saw the need for a new generation of leaders to address the challenges of his time, school districts across the country are looking for superintendents with the ability to successfully meet increasing standards as reflected in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the pervasive presence of the state accountability systems. Thus, school boards and mayoral controlled districts are beginning to appoint non-traditional superintendents to address these critical issues.

This interpretive journey led to the interview of five urban non-traditional superintendents presently underrepresented in the literature. This study is significant in that it provides noteworthy information regarding non-traditional superintendents, namely their experiences and views and perceptions of educational administration. A greater understanding of the management tasks and functions required of practicing

school superintendents is presented. The study offers a portrait or profile for educators, the public, school board members and school districts, which are considering the selection of non-traditional superintendents.

Methodology

The methodology for this research was interpretive.¹ The uniqueness of the participants was significant to the study. The five non-traditional superintendents were selected using purposeful sampling to meet the following characteristics:

1. The selected leaders' expertise was to come from outside the field of education and participants lacked experience in the field of education (Mathews, 2001).
2. The participants must lead or have led an urban school district in the United States of America.
3. The participants must have served as urban non-traditional superintendents for a period of two years or more in the same school district.
4. The participants must have served as urban non-traditional superintendents of a school district of over 20,000 students.
5. The participants must have served in public school districts located in cities described as urban with a population of over 100,000.

¹ To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms have been used in this interpretive study. The names of the non-traditional superintendents and the urban school districts that serve as the setting are fictitious, but the characters are real. The names of the public officials are real, such as American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Executive Director Paul Houston and elected officials.

Data from interviews were reviewed, coded, interpreted, thematized, and units of meaning were assigned. The use of triangulation was employed to strengthen the overall findings and conclusions from the data and the design of the study.

Theoretical Frameworks

Through the review of the literature, the researcher has discerned distinct theoretical frameworks to be used in examining the collective case studies of five non-traditional superintendents. Emerging theories relate to this study, including Contingency Theory of Leadership Effectiveness and Distributed leadership.

Fred Edward Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership is one in which the group's performance level and the leader's effectiveness are contingent upon the leader's motivation level and the degree to which the leader controls and influences the situation (Northouse, 2003). The theory predicts that the effectiveness of the leader will depend on both the characteristics of the leader and the favorableness of the situation. Fiedler asserts there are only leaders who perform well in certain situations, but not in every single circumstance. Second, almost anyone can be a leader by carefully selecting those situations that match his or her leadership style. Finally, a leader can meet the demands of the organization by designing job responsibilities to fit the manager (Fiedler, 1964). In this study, government bodies selected non-traditional leaders because the districts they governed had special challenges, which they believed could only be addressed by a person with a unique set of leadership skills or a non-traditional superintendent.

Distributed leadership is a form of collective leadership in which members of the organization develop expertise by working collaboratively. Accordingly, the central

principle of formal leaders is to create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities. In short, distributed leadership is maximizing the human capacity within the organization (Harris, 2002). Lashway (2003) asserted that distributed leadership provides a more democratic leadership focus for school districts, which in turn develops districts as learning organizations. Distributed leadership empowers everyone to make his or her job more efficient, meaningful, and effective. The districts in this study sought to hire individuals who could effectively empower others to address monumental challenges.

The urban superintendency is in the midst of numerous challenges, such as high stakes testing, increased financial accountability and growing social issues. No Child Left Behind (2001) furthers the complicated politics of federal control and an overall general perception of incompetence in the field of educational administration. What compels school districts to enlist the help of non-traditional superintendents? Contingency and Distributed leadership theories were employed as a framework for this study. They are appropriate theoretical frameworks for describing and explaining the local politics of public schools, school board member trounce, and superintendent turnover.

In this case, urban school districts that are often faced with overwhelming challenges, such as those faced in the State of New York, when Harold Levy was appointed in 2000, drove the exploration of contingency and distributed leadership tenets of this study. School boards, like the one in New York State have sought to import non-traditional leaders in order to prevent an organizational collapse. There has also been a recognition that one person cannot address an urban superintendency alone. Deliberate

collective efforts have proven successful in making positive changes. As Anne Bryant, Executive Director of the National School Boards Association, and Paul Houston, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators, have asserted, "Strong school board/superintendent leadership, governance, and teamwork are the foundation for raising the achievement of every child in America" (p. 1 as cited by Goodman, & Zimmerman, 2001). Urban school districts hiring non-traditional superintendents for these purposes are thus reflecting the principles of Contingency and Distributed Leadership theories.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will provide standardized clarity to the titles and terminologies utilized throughout this document.

Case Study: This refers to a method of investigating a particular topic that portrays the various perspectives of people that are involved in the subject under study and display enough evidence to support the major findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Career Path: The career patterns that have been taken in order to attain the superintendency position. A traditional career path for superintendency includes principalships, central office positions and other superintendencies (Tallerico, 2000).

Experience: "Qualitative inquiry deals with human lived experience. It is the *life-world* as it is lived, felt, undergone, made sense of, and accomplished by human beings that is the object of study" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 84).

Mayoral Takeover: A policy reform in which the city mayor is given the power to appoint the school district board members (Wong, 1999).

Non-Traditional Superintendent: A school district chief whose expertise comes from outside the field of education and lacks professional experience in the field of education (Mathews, 2001).

Change Agency: The exploration and implementation of new models to improve how schools work and conduct business (D.P. Schulte, personal communication, March 16, 2008).

Assumptions

Assumptions represent elements of the research process. Gay and Airasian (2000) state that an assumption is “any important fact presumed to be true but not actually verified” (p. 108). In order to frame the context for this study, several assumptions were made by the researcher. Patton (1990) stated that assumptions strengthen most qualitative studies.

Three assumptions noted by Patton (1990) that are relevant to this study follow:

1. The assumptions of the importance of understanding people and programs in context (p. 119).
2. The assumption by the researcher to a commitment to study naturally occurring phenomena without introducing external controls or manipulation (p. 119).
3. The assumption that understanding emerges most meaningfully from an inductive analysis of open-ended, detailed, descriptive, and quotational data gathered through direct contact with the program and its participants (p. 119).

The author proposed two additional assumptions that were pertinent to this research:

1. The non-traditional superintendent has completed a career in another field and was not using/did not use the educational position as career step to another position.
2. The qualitative research method of data collection and analysis will interpret the perceptions of participants, to better understand their experiences and to have increased knowledge of the views and perceptions on educational administration of non-traditional superintendents.

Limitations

For the purpose of this study, a limitation is a part of the study which the researcher has no control over and may have a negative impact on the research study (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

As such, data collected in the naturalistic setting of the field has to take the weight of various interpretations. The value of this study is dependent on the detailed description, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered. Nonetheless, this researcher's presence had an impact on the people who were interviewed and observed. This author attempted to counteract this factor by interacting in an inconspicuous and non-threatening manner which acknowledging the importance of the researcher in interpretive study.

Several limitations may influence this study:

1. The reliability of the data is based on the assumption that the participants responded in a truthful and accurate manner.

2. In qualitative research, the researcher is a limitation as she will serve as an instrument in the data collection process and her frame of reference may influence the ultimate interpretation conveyed (Yin, 1989). The researcher is a significant part of the study being conducted, and as an individual, becomes a part of every interaction. It is important for a researcher to consider his/her own background in relation to the issues under consideration in the study (Crowl, 1996).

The researcher does not claim that all urban non-traditional superintendents will have identical experiences as highlighted by the participants in this study. As such, it is not the intent of the researcher to imply any generalization beyond the cases at hand. Any assumption made over this interpretive study is left entirely to the discretion of the reader. To counteract any bias, triangulation was utilized during the data collection.

It is this author's expectation that urban school boards, mayoral controlled districts and other researchers will uncover ways in which the information acquired in this study can be applied to hiring decisions and be used to enhance urban school leadership.

Delimitations

"Delimitations address how the study will be narrowed" (Creswell, 1994, p. 110) and are study limitations that are within the control of the researcher (Mauch & Birch 1998, p. 105). Delimitations include the research methodology, which is qualitative, and the sample size.

1. The study was limited to five urban non-traditional superintendents who had remained in the same public school district for two years or more.
2. This study did not attempt to determine whether non-traditional superintendents were superior to superintendents with a traditional educational background.

Instead, the results of this study reflect only the experiences of the urban non-traditional superintendents who participated in this endeavor and may not be generalized beyond that population.

Summary of the Chapter

School boards and mayoral controlled districts around the country are presently hiring a new type of school superintendent, including military generals, federal prosecutors, health care executives, investment bankers and former corporate executives. The assumption is that their leadership skills are transferable between the private and public sectors and between the military and the public schools. It is perceived by some urban school board members that non-traditional superintendents bring a new perspective to school management (D.P. Schulte, personal communication, March 15, 2008).

This introduction brings the researcher to the original question. “Is there an adequate amount of research to support this trend?” A review of the literature on the subject will address this basic query.

Organization of Chapters

The dissertation is divided into five major chapters.

Chapter I includes the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, theoretical frameworks, operational definitions, assumptions, possible limitations and delimitations and significance of the study.

Chapter II addresses related issues of this study by reviewing the existing literature as well as the conceptual framework grounding the study.

Chapter III includes the description of the research methodology and procedures. It also delineates the various strategies used to collect and analyze data.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study and the analysis.

Chapter V includes implications of the data and recommendations, concluding remarks, reflections, recommendations for future research and the lessons learned as a result of the research process.

The references and appendices follow Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

When I lost a big account in the business world, it would bother me. But it wasn't like I was messing with someone's life. Education is different. We're talking about preparing children for their lives. If we mess up, that child is not going to get that chance back.

Paula Dawning, Non-traditional Superintendent as cited in LaFee (2004)

The emergence of the non-traditional superintendent does not exist in isolation from historical, political, societal and philosophical factors. On the contrary, these forces directly influenced the trend towards hiring chief executives from other fields. Therefore, a review of the literature will be presented to place this study into an informed context. To this end, the historical underpinnings of the superintendency will be addressed along with the evolutionary track the position has taken from the nation's formation to the 21st Century. Waves of reform have also prompted school boards to look "outside the box" for individuals who can effectively lead in a high-stakes environment. This information will be offered in the *Origins and Evolution of the Superintendency* section of this report.

In order to more fully understand the phenomenon of the non-traditional superintendent, one must also consider other issues that have impacted this development. The strengths and weaknesses of traditional preparation programs and the implementation of new approaches to preparing this unique cadre of leaders have played a key role in this emergence. Additionally, state certification requirements have worked to either encourage or limit the appointment of these non-traditional administrators.

Therefore, special attention will be given to these factors under the heading of *The Preparation and Certification of Superintendents*.

The final section of this review is entitled, *Non-Traditional Superintendents: Reasons for and Examples of Appointment*. This part of the report offers a deeper discussion of factors that have stimulated the growth of this type of school executive. Specific examples of non-traditional appointments are included. Studies from the fields of educational leadership, public administration, and political science will be explored. In addition, other sources will be cited within this review.

Origins and Evolution of the Superintendency

Early Origins: The Business Perspective

The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.

Aristotle, n.d.

History is “an unending dialogue between the past and present” (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995, p. 3), and a clear understanding of the narration of the superintendency facilitates the awareness of the present. Currently, the term superintendent of schools has come to mean the chief executive officer of a school district. However, the basis for the term superintendent is uncertain. One explanation is that it grew out of the terminology of the times (Campbell, Fleming, Newell & Bennion, 1987). The term comes from the Latin word *super* meaning “over” and *intendo* meaning “direct” (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995, p. 6). Historical data of the inception of the superintendency must be pieced together from incomplete records dating as far back as to the end of the eighteenth century (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995). In addition, Cuban

(1988) offers two other possibilities. One theory is that the term could have evolved from the industrial revolution. Cuban (1988) observed that the 19th-century mill managers were called superintendents. The appreciation the American people felt for the economic benefits that factories generated might have established the expectations for schools “to produce children who were obedient, punctual, and hard-working” (Cuban, 1988, p. 111).

Early Origins: The Church History View

A second possibility originates from church history. As early as 1560 in Europe, “superintendent” referred to the official in charge of a group of parishes within the Lutheran Church (Cuban, 1988, p. 111). Formal education in America began with the colonists and enactment of the Massachusetts Law of 1642. In order for the schools to operate properly, individual committees were established with members being volunteers from the local community. The committees were charged with the education of the children (Danzberger, 1992), selection of school sites, facilities, financial issues, hiring teachers and supervising classroom instruction (Jackson, 1995; Norton, Webb, Dlugosh & Sybouts, 1996). Moreover, these groups were expected to develop and enforce school policy (Norton et al., 1996). As the number of schools increased, with growing and diverse populations, committee responsibilities intensified and members realized that the education process had become increasingly demanding. Some committees appointed a visitor or inspector to oversee the schools (National Education Association [NEA], 1933) and temporary committees became permanent (Dykes, 1965). For instance, Delaware appointed a county employee to supervise the schools and

carryout the directives of the committee (NEA, 1933). In other areas, clerks were hired to support the committees and undertake the day-to-day non-instructional operations (Norton et al., 1996). According to Reller (1935), the duties consisted of clerical, statistical, reporting, business, and fiscal responsibilities and school visitations. Unavoidably, the rapidly growing communities obliged the clerks to assume additional roles and responsibilities to include teaching, supervising staff and ensuring that the curriculum was appropriate (Jackson, 1995; Norton et al., 1996).

An account of the superintendency emergence period is offered by Griffiths (1966):

The pattern of development becomes quite clear. Schools were first under the authority of local government. When the work became too onerous, committees or boards were appointed to manage the affairs of the schools. Along with the population increase came a numerical increase in schools and an increase in the complexity of school problems-the later added to be the influx of immigrants. As a result, those committees appointed to school affairs began to specialize in their duties and began to assign specific duties to specific members of these committees . . . The system of lay supervision was not to prevail, however, and all cities eventually concluded that their systems must give way to a new order . . . Thus the stage was set for a change: the appointment of a superintendent of schools to supplant the activities of lay boards. However, the long history of lay control was not to be easily replaced. In fact, the effects of the early period have lasted to this day . . . (pp. 6-8)

These early origins of the superintendency set a foundation for the evolution of the position from the 1800's to the 1970's.

The Evolution of the Superintendency from the 1800's to the 1970's

The Superintendency in the 1800's

Spring (1994) identified the period between 1830 and 1850 as the stage of the common school movement. This movement led to the establishment of state public

school districts using three well-defined elements that were previously nonexistent in the educational institutions. The three innovations were: educate all children in a common schoolhouse; schools should follow government policy and the establishment of state agencies to control schools (Spring, 1994, p. 63). The first superintendency was formed out of this movement (Spring, 1994) in the mid-1800s (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Glass et al., 2000; Konnert & Augestein, 1995; Kowalski, 1999; Norton et al., 1996).

As large groups of immigrants came to America, diversity increased in the country (Spring, 2001). A debate emerged over the focus of public education strongly including the teaching of Protestant ethic morals. Education was to be an instrument for building a free society, if such was the case than schooling could no longer be treated as a luxury for the wealthy and for preparing individuals for a godly way of life (Spring, 2001). Tyack & Hansot (1982) asserted that this debate was widespread in urban areas. Thus, governmental parties sought to diminish the controversy by removing all religious teaching from the schools. The paradigm shifted and superintendents were viewed as supporters of patriotism and governmental agendas (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

The position of the school superintendent has evolved over a century and a half from a clerical position to a prominent educational leader. “Evolution,” as defined in Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1996), is “a process of gradual, peaceful, progressive change or development, as in social or economic structure or institutions” (p. 637). In view of this definition, this section will describe the evolution of the role of the superintendent. After the Civil War, as communities became urban, most major cities appointed superintendents to lead their schools (Knezevich, 1984). Spring (1994) wrote that the development of the role of the

superintendent was important in the evolution of the hierarchical educational organization. The primary reason for creating the position was to have a person work full-time at supervising classroom instruction and assuring uniformity in the curriculum (1994). The superintendent's role was vital in communicating the elements of the common curriculum and in providing supervision to ensure its proper implementation (1994). Spring's explanation for superintendency emergence is very similar to that of Griffiths.' Superintendent appointments eventually led to the establishment of state and county school superintendents, the beginning of the position as it is known today (NEA, 1933; Norton et al., 1996; Stoops & Rafferty, 1961).

Rene R. Carter and William G. Cunningham (1997) in their study, *The American School Superintendent: Leading in an Age of Pressure*, stated that the American superintendent has gone through four major stages since its inception. The first stage, referred to as the "clerical role" (p. 23), suggests that superintendent positions were clerical and assisted the community committee with the day-to-day operations of the schools (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23). The "master educator" stage became more complex and required that superintendents be professional educators and provide direction in curriculum and instruction (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23). The third stage, coined "expert manager," coincided with the Industrial Revolution and called for emphasis on hierarchical bureaucracy and the scientific movement that had revolutionized the business world (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23). Schools were expected to run like factories (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Jackson, 1995). Businessmen were often hired to take the position of superintendent (Johnson, 1996) because of their strong fiscal management (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990). This was the

epoch of the “four Bs” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 23). “Chief executive officer for the board,” the fourth and present stage, defines the superintendent as leader of reforms, manager of resources, and communicator to the public (pp. 23-24).

The superintendent has many responsibilities; and the position continues to evolve as new challenges arise (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Eaton, 1990; Johnson, 1996; Konnert & Augenstein, 1990; Norton et al., 1996). Cuban (1988) offered yet another perspective of the evolution of the superintendent by identifying three prevailing roles of the superintendent as the position evolved starting in 1830, namely “instructional (teacher of teachers), managerial (administrative chief), and political (negotiator)” (p. 189). Cuban’s findings indicate that the managerial and political roles tend to dominate the behavior of the superintendent. William E. Eaton (1990) proposed three models of the superintendent evolution during the formative period (1875-1900):

1. The school inspector regular visited all schools in their jurisdiction and offered pedagogical advice. They did not manage money or facilities. They did not hire teachers.
2. The business manager obtained contracts, supervised construction, and oversaw the fiscal authority of the board.
3. The combination of the school inspector and business manager (p. 13).

By the end of the 19th century, the role of the superintendent had transformed from clerical to school executive or manager (NEA, 1965).

The Superintendency: 1900 to 1970's

Kowalski (1999) suggested that the majority of educational historians would agree that the evolution of the superintendency during the factory/industrial revolution influenced much of the practices employed by the superintendents during the 20th century (1999). In the early 1900's, the position of the superintendent continued to experience considerable transformation. A non-traditional superintendent appointment was made and the glass ceiling was shattered. For the purpose of this section, the author defines non-traditional superintendent as: out of the ordinary. In 1909, Ella Flagg Young became the first female superintendent of schools in Chicago, a major urban school district (Normore, 2006; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). While in office, she declared, "Women are destined to rule the schools of every city" (cited in Blount, 1998, p. 1). Furthermore, she proclaimed, "In the very near future we shall have more women than men in executive charge of the vast educational system. It is a woman's natural work and she is no longer satisfied to do the larger part of the work and yet be denied leadership" (cited in Blount, 1998, p. 1).

The arrival of millions of immigrants into the United States prompted public education to address major cultural and educational challenges. The American people expected the educational system to transform immigrant children into the then popular version of Americanism (Gerald, 1986; Gutek, 1986; Lazerson, 1987). In 1910, superintendents began to explore a more managerial role (Kowalski, 1999). They searched for the ideal approach to standardize instruction, attendance, student outcome and teacher training (1999). A solution came in the form of the scientific movement, which viewed leadership as controlling. In view of these expectations to transform

immigrants, the scientific movement was introduced and implemented in the schools (1999). Frederick W. Taylor's general principle as applied to schools was that they should be run in an industrious manner; thereby producing educated students (Jackson, 1995). The ultimate intent was for immigrant children to become Americanized. By 1920, the role of the superintendent had developed into one of a scientific manager who enhances operations by focusing on time and efficiency (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). This mirrored the thinking of Frederick Taylor, an American engineer, who sought to improve industrial efficiency. By 1930, the role of the school superintendents had moved from a scholar and educator to operating under a business management model (Callahan, 1962). From that point until the 1950s, the democratic system was emphasized. The superintendent converted into a negotiator, cultivating community relations in order to gain the moral and financial support of the community. This reflected the implementation of a business management model in public education.

However, along the way, external events further changed the role of the superintendent. The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, of 1954, was so significant that it changed American schools forever (Jackson, 1995). Superintendents throughout the country, who had conducted school business free of any limitations, were now ordered to desegregate and be mindful of social issues (1995). The fundamental principle of racial equality was non-negotiable; it had to be addressed. This ruling caused offense, hostility and violent riots across the country (1995). In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the successful Sputnik and in 1958 the National Defense Education Act was passed (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). The American public was disappointed with the inability of the country to compete globally, blamed the educational system for

falling behind and demanded educational reform (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Science, technology and the three R's quickly emerged. This new focus replaced the "four Bs" (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

In the 1960s, additional reform laws mandating equality both in and out of education (Jackson, 1995) forced superintendents to become change agents. There were tumultuous events in America and in the schools, such as the Vietnam War, a rise in violence, the War on Poverty, and social change. In addition, the role and responsibilities of the superintendent were being challenged by special interest groups, particularly teacher unions and organizations (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). To address inequities, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These actions had a direct impact on the educational system and particularly on the superintendency (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Minorities became active in schools and their voices demanded equality and equity in and outside of the school system. This brought groundbreaking challenges and demands to the superintendency (Jackson, 1995).

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged the Russians in a race to the Moon and school leaders were drawn in this prevailing sense of urgency. Superintendents were under pressure to draw young Americans into science and engineering and to successfully compete with the Soviet Union. At the same time, they were expected to guide and facilitate school districts in educating the less privileged to higher levels so that they might experience the American Dream. Superintendents found themselves responding to these mandates and developing and implementing responsive leadership strategies (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Furthermore, the courts became

actively involved in school governance and finance (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The position of the superintendent was continuously challenged by a very involved community and school board members (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). No longer was the perception of the superintendent that of an “expert” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 25). Instead, this chief executive had become “the target of criticism” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 25). Superintendents had to deal with special interest groups, protestors, confrontations, mass protests, state legislatures and legal challenges (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). As a result, superintendents began to resign from their positions (Jackson, 1995). Superintendents that did survive these tumultuous years and those administrators interested in assuming the position were now faced with challenges that called for a new type of chief executive.

A New Type of Superintendent: 1970’s to the Present

The 1970’s

In the 1970’s a new type of superintendent emerged. According to Cuban (1976a), superintendents were forced into the political arena. Relationships with stakeholders became contentious. Professional development became necessary in order to address specific challenges. No longer was the scientific movement that once revolutionized the business world in America an appropriate method for the educational system. The overarching challenge for superintendents was “accountability” for educational outcomes and financial management (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 27). Parent advisory councils and national assessment were chief developments that gained momentum. Major challenges that affected the educational system included the passage

of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142 [S. 6], 1975), which provided free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities.

Mandatory busing to attain racial school integration and the anti-war movement were also factors impacting the position (Jackson, 1995). The superintendent of the 1970's encountered innumerable racial, ethnic and economic issues that were prevalent and needed to be addressed in an efficient, expedient and effective manner. Partly due to court-ordered school desegregation programs, a significant number of White citizens moved from urban areas to the suburban areas. Thus urban areas became the fastest growing minority communities. This shift in population allowed for Latinos and African-American candidates to apply for and obtain superintendent positions. This was more prevalent in areas where minorities outnumbered the white population (Jackson, 1995). Prime examples include Marcus A. Foster, the first African American who was named superintendent in urban Oakland, California. He was assassinated in 1973 by the Symbionese Liberation Army, the same radical group that abducted Patty Hearst. Years later, Latino, Dr. Wilfredo T. Laboy was appointed superintendent of schools in the state of New England (Council of the Great City Schools, 2003).

The 1980's

In the 1980's education took center stage on the national agenda with calls for immediate education reform and restructuring. The educational leadership programs for the superintendency began to emerge in this era. Educational challenges were illuminated in 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) released a controversial report titled *A Nation at Risk* (NAR). This federal report

criticized the American education system for mediocre results and highlighted its poor performance in comparison with international counterparts. This indictment caught the attention of everyone, particularly the business community and policy makers prompting a call for basic reforms in education (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Former President Ronald Reagan, who had promised during his campaign to radically reform the United States Department of Education, made a 360 degree turn and ensured that a large amount of federal funds would be allocated to public schools specifically targeted for minority and low socio-economic children. This action was in response to *A Nation at Risk*. In addition, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) proposed that schools be held accountable for the implementation of standards and assessments developed to improve the academic achievement of students (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). State legislatures responded to these mandates by passing reform measures to ensure accountability. For example, in Texas, House Bill 72 which took effect in 1987 enacted teacher and student competency testing. It also set the foundations for a comprehensive accountability system, which still exists today not only in the State of Texas, but throughout the country. Top leaders found themselves in an era of massive turnover and increasing job uncertainty.

The 1990's

In 1989, President George Bush held a summit at the University of Virginia with state governors were in attendance. The monumental and pioneering purpose of the meeting was to engage in a dialogue and to develop and implement the educational goals for the country. The summit was unsuccessful. In 1996, state governors and 44 top

business and corporate leaders held a second summit and met at IBM's conference center in Palisades, New York and set out to accomplish what had escaped the participants at the University of Virginia. However, the governors' efforts were futile in this particular endeavor to define what should be taught in public schools and to enforce standardization through state mandated tests, which is often called the "standards movement." The educational movement snowballed and a third National Education Summit was held in September of 1999. The summit was co-hosted by Louis Gerstner, Jr., Chairman and CEO of IBM; Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, Chairman of both the National Governors' Association (NGA), the Education Commission of the States and Nevada Governor Bob Miller (Paris, 1994). Policies and procedures were developed out of those summits that caused a power shift from the local to the federal government (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999). Consequently, changes were implemented and superintendents suddenly became responsible for more than just student achievement. A clear account of the district's financial status, bond elections, investing the fund balance to earn interest, the utilization of everyone's talents, reduction in staff, reduction of inefficiencies, improvement in the quality of disseminated information, the use of technology, and governmental affairs are a few responsibilities that the present day superintendent faces on a daily basis as a result of these initiatives. To meet these challenges, school board members, particularly those from urban school districts, began to look for leaders outside the arena of education. Educators who had once taught children in public schools, who climbed the traditional educational administration ladder and who had survived mind-numbing school board meetings, were no longer solely being considered for the position of school superintendent. The

appointment of professional non-educators was not a legislated or mandated reform, but grew out of what some school boards considered a necessity of the times. With this historical evolution of the superintendency in mind, it is important to consider what the position will be charged with going into the 21st Century.

The Superintendency: 21st Century

Upon entering the 21st century, reformers of public education are facing especially enormous challenges. In the present century superintendents may not succeed with 20th century skills. In a book for 21st century leaders, *Skills for the Successful 21st Century School Leaders*, Hoyle, English and Steffy (1998) accentuated the traits of reflective leadership, course of knowledge, importance of partnership skills, conflict resolution and community building skills as crucial in the 21st century. Hoyle (1989) predicted that the 21st century superintendents will have a healthy respect for others and a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. They will work in a less hierarchical organization and will be comfortable with empowerment of others. The district chief executive will have strong skills in persuasion and an appreciation for ethnic diversity. Hoyle (1989) stated that the superintendents of this century will be using testing and evaluation procedures that measure more than a student's ability to recall facts.

The 21st century superintendent must have skills to enhance instructional methods, analyze and interpret assessment data as well as illuminate their district's achievement level compared to other school districts in the state as well as in the country (Hoyle et al., 2005). *The American School Superintendent: Leading in an Age of Pressure*, authored by Carter and Cunningham (1997). In the text, Paul Houston,

Executive Director of the AASA, describes a common impression of the current role of the superintendent:

In my more cynical moments, I have often thought of school superintendents as bearing the same relationship to their communities as fire hydrants bear to dogs. The superintendency is a job that attracts criticism and problems. But while the American school superintendency is one of the toughest jobs in America, it is also one of the most rewarding. (p. xi)

Houston (2001) further asserted:

But there is much about the current role that is dysfunctional. Expectations and resources are mismatched. Accountability and authority are misaligned. This means there must be a shift in the role. Part of the shift that must take place is a change in how the world sees and treats superintendents. But the bigger part of the shift must take place in the hearts and minds of those who fill the role. For one who chooses to confront the challenges of the superintendency will make all the differences. (p. 249)

Neisler (2000) contended that there is a new mission for superintendents and it is to educate and ensure that the education received is relevant in preparing students for life in the 21st century.

Houston (2001) offered his thoughts on 21st century superintendents:

1. As a service broker and an ensurer of equity, the task will be to determine which service is needed, how to provide the service, and then to make sure that every child benefits from the service.
2. Find ways to lead by sharing power and by engaging members of the organization and the community in the process of leading.
3. Focus on creating learning for students that is both individualized and connected to interests yet inclusive of broader societal contextual issues.
4. Understand that learning is no longer a place (p. 430-431).

Houston (2001) asserted that a successful superintendent is a master at processes that support connection, communication, collaboration, community building, child advocacy, and curricular choices. In his publication, Houston (2001) stressed the characteristics of the superintendent of the future are to include:

1. being a great communicator,
2. being an outstanding facilitator and persuader,
3. being able to sell ideas,
4. having the ability to operate in paradoxes without black and white thinking,
5. knowledge of pressures,
6. being a reflective practitioner, and
7. being a problem solver (p. 432).

Hess (2003b) declared:

As the nation's schools struggle to meet the needs of ill-served children, rise to the challenge of the No Child Left Behind Act, and adjust to a world of accountability and growing competition, educational leaders face unprecedented challenges. Yet we retain a system of recruitment, preparation, and induction that does not recruit the leaders we need, does not prepare them for their positions, does not reward them on par with their responsibilities, and locks out candidates with vital knowledge and experience. (p. 1)

According to Houston (2001), "The pool of good [superintendent] candidates is shallow. Five years ago, the pool was fairly shallow, and I thought it was as bad as it could get. I was not nearly pessimistic enough. It's gotten worse" (p. 1). In 2000, Detroit launched three unsuccessful searches to locate someone to head its school system. What is happening in American public schools concerning the declining pool of superintendent applicants and the high turnover rate of quality leaders may be setting up our future schools for problems (Cooper et al., 2000, pg. 4). Significant percentages of

superintendents believe that a shortage of applicants poses a crisis (Cooper et al., 2000), but what can be contributing to this phenomenon? Some suggest that the underlying causes for the scarcity of superintendents, and the unwillingness of teachers to become school leaders, include working conditions, comparative compensation, “do-ability” of the job, and the high level of stress associated with the position (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Syat & Vine, 2003b). Others suggested that the rapidly changing nature of the position, in particular the new challenges that NCLB has brought forth, and the manner in which superintendents are prepared at the university are critical factors to consider in this context. One superintendent from a large urban school cited the following:

I am retiring at the end of the current school year. In deciding whether to stay another year, two major considerations resulted in my decision to leave this year. (1) increase in mandates from the state (standards, etc.) requiring more funding, and no increase in state aid. The frustration of more to do with less \$ and no improvement in sight is not the way I want to end 34+ years in education. (2) Non-education concerns sap my time and energy. (Crisis plans, bomb threats, etc.) The list goes on and on-----. (Shields, 2000)

The superintendent of the 21st Century has many challenges as indicated by the literature. These job demands have been brought about to a large extent by four significant waves of reform.

Waves of Reform

These demands for changes in education spawned waves of reform (Fuhrman, 2003). The waves of reform were large-scale and systemic (Hess, 1999a). Superintendents were charged with the implementation of the mandates emerging from these school reform efforts. The first wave of reform focused on raising educational standards by strengthening the educational system that was in place. It resulted in

increased teacher salaries, core-subject requirements and an expanded academic calendar (Hess, 1999a). The second wave of reform, known as the restructuring movement, focused less on the systemic features of education and more on school level changes, such as site-based decision making, rigorous accountability systems, highly qualified teachers, student tutorials and lengthening the school day (Hess, 1999a). Efforts concentrated “on broadening and deepening the relationship between schools and families, addressing the needs of special groups of students, attracting and retaining effective teachers, upgrading teacher education, and restructuring teachers’ roles to make them more professional” (Desimone, 2002; p. 433). The third wave was directed at the whole educational system, with special focus on schools with large populations (Hess, 1999a). It led to improved teaching conditions, and greater emphasis on professional and teacher retention (Hess, 1999a).

The fourth and present wave of school reform encompasses school choice and the privatization movement (Hess, 1999a). The school reform movement did not only focus on what was occurring in schools, there was also an emphasis on educational leadership, accountability, compliance and choice. Consequently, the role of the superintendent became one of personal survival and less of positional power. The position experienced change converting it into what is known as “chief executive officer for the board” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 33). The superintendent began to serve in a more professional capacity, including such roles as advisor to the board, leader of reforms, manager of resources and communicator to the public (Kowalski, 1999). The most recent stages (1990’s and beyond) describe the superintendent as a “collaborator” and as someone who articulates the reasons why school reform is considered necessary

(Kowalski, 1999, p. 227). As a result of policy makers' tendency to look to the private sector to save public education, the superintendent of the 1990's grappled with the challenges of school vouchers and charter schools movements. The threat of privatization of management is a constant warning to top layer central office management as they share in the blame of poor student achievement.

The origins and evolution of the superintendent from the formation of the nation to the present have certainly shaped the superintendency, as we know it today. Kowalski (1999) suggested that the majority of educational historians would agree that the evolution of the superintendency during the factory/industrial revolution influenced much of the practices executed by the superintendents during the 20th century. The literature also suggests that educational chief executives most build upon and refine traditional job requirements as defined in the past by incorporating new skill sets to meet current challenges, such as the waves of reform and all that they have entailed. How might the next generation of school leaders gain these new competencies? A review of superintendent preparation and certification programs will provide some answers.

The Preparation and Certification of Superintendents

A Review of Superintendent Preparation Programs

Large-city superintendents after World War I were instrumental in creating training programs to identify and prepare their successors. The first of these higher education academic programs was taught at the Teachers College in Columbia University in New York City. Many of the professors of educational administration were former large-city superintendents. Elwood P. Cubberly (Bowles & Gintis, 1976)

was a leading education reformer of the early twentieth century. He was a professor and the first Dean of the School of Education at Stanford University. In 1922, Cubberly captured the essence of the superintendency by asserting, “No profession offers such large personal rewards for the opportunity of living one’s life in molding other lives, and in helping to improve materially the intellectual tone and moral character of a community” (p. 131). Conceivably, his most important contribution to the field of educational administration was a detailed study of every operating aspect of selected large-city school districts. Out of these studies came important pieces of best practices on how to build and administer quality school districts. Importantly, Cubberly based his list of best practices and attributes on the work of large-city superintendents.

The AASA (Glass et al., 2000, p. 6) reported:

It is likely that American superintendents will revert to the role of their predecessors in the 19th century. They will be the “guardians” of public education, defending and insuring its continued existence. The challenges of 30 years of continuous criticism from the political right; parsimonious legislatures; and the emergence of vouchers, charter schools, home schooling, and privatization have all created a climate where strong and knowledgeable education leaders will have to resist efforts to funnel tax dollars away from public education.

Throughout the years, the field of educational administration has increased in its responsibilities and the outcry for educational reform has also increased, thereby demanding better preparation of future leaders (Cubberly, 1923). According to Farkas, Johnson and Duffett (2003a), several urban superintendents reported that the average educational administration programs in schools of education are not aligned with the actualities of what is needed to efficiently and effectively lead the present day public school systems (Farkas et al., 2003a). Farkas et al. (2003a) asserted that nearly one half

of the urban superintendents surveyed stated that altering educational administration programs would be beneficial to school leadership. An urban non-traditional superintendent candidate asserts, “. . . some of the schools of education are totally disconnected and clueless. They are clueless, clueless with a capital ‘C.’ Some schools of education are doing a very poor job in training and producing urban district administrators and leaders to lead institutions . . .” (N. Glassford, pseudonym, personal communication, May, 2007). Unfortunately, dozens of colleges, most lacking adequate human and material resources, were able to initiate degree and licensing programs for school administrators (Kowalski & Björk, 2005). Hess (2003b) asserted that professors of education are fixated on linking educational administration to teaching rather than developing the needed managerial skills to lead school districts regardless of size.

This pessimistic view of traditional superintendent programs can be countered by examples of successful chief executives emerging from university based preparation. For example, Dr. Shirley Neeley, a past Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas, followed the traditional career and educational preparation path. As superintendent, of Galena Park Independent School District, she led her district to exemplary status in spite of demographic challenges. In view of her district level success, she was appointed to the state’s highest administrative position in education in which she enjoyed a two and one-half year tenure (D. P. Schulte, personal communication, November 9, 2007).

Yet, another example of a successful superintendent graduating from a traditional university program is Dr. Richard Clifford who graduated from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. The traditional educator took the helm of an urban school

district in Texas. During his tenure, his goal was to ensure success for children and graduate them college ready in support of the high minority rate and socio-economic level. The integration of his professional and personal values allowed him to lead the rural school district successfully. This type of service and commitment is unique in the business of education. Presently, Dr. Clifford currently serves as an educational leadership professor at the University of Texas in San Antonio (R. Clifford, personal communication, November 12, 2007).

Note that Glassford, Pseudonym (2007) stated, “some of the schools of education are totally disconnected and clueless.” There are institutions that do have quality programs that produce strong educational leaders equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. It would be wise to identify the characteristics of successful university programs in order to replicate their designs at weaker institutions.

This being stated, it is important to be aware that state certification requirements drive preparation programs housed in many schools of educational administration (N. Estringel, personal communication, October 15, 2007). One important factor that needs exploration is the part-time student. This individual is probably already a campus administrator and preparing for a superintendent’s endorsement. Classes are taken in a drawn out, fragmented manner, which may result in a poorly sequenced program. Will this individual be well prepared to take over an urban superintendency? The candidate may be certified, but also may be ill equipped to effectively lead.

Goodman and Zimmerman (2001) agreed that in order for meaningful school reform to take place, the traditional superintendency must be reformed, restructured and/or both. Urban communities are calling out for a stop to the resistance of initiatives

and unresponsiveness to community input. School districts are continuously facing new demands and challenges and require a new generation of leaders. Leaders must be prepared to lead change, reinvent school systems, communicate with a vision and tend to issues of management, such as district politics, teacher union relations and bond issues. Leadership with a commitment to reform is crucial. In response to these factors, Peca (2000) asserted that superintendent programs need to focus on building leadership capacity and capability. Some educational reform methods have sought to introduce a critical lens into the preparation and practice of school administration programs Peca (2000) and Fusarelli (2002), shed light on the present educational quandary by stating, “some are doing away with university-based preparation programs altogether, while others are going the opposite direction and actually increasing standards for superintendents” (Fusarelli, 2002). Some states have even “opened” the superintendency to individuals without educational, managerial, executive, or higher education backgrounds in response to changing demands.

In an August 2007 *School Administrator* journal article, the following question was posed, “How can school district superintendents be held responsible for improving student achievement if they produce no results and yet keep their job or even get a pay raise?” (p. 1). Tim Quinn (2007), author of this AASA article, stated that at the Broad Superintendents’ Academy, this is the type of question posed by non-educator executives to their educator counterparts. Quinn (2007), further stated that “certified school administrator” is different from a “qualified urban school system leader” (p. 2). In appearances, employing a non-educator implies a movement of school district management to a corporate model.

Houston (2006) posed the following fundamental questions on non-traditional superintendents and their preparation, which exposes an apparent tension between those who feel non-traditional superintendents, may be the key to school improvement and those who hold firmly to traditional pathways. Houston asked:

Do you want a Taco Bell superintendent or somebody who has actually run a school? Do you want chalupas with those test scores? If the business of education is teaching and learning, shouldn't the head have some background in teaching and learning? (p. 2)

Perhaps this tension between dichotomous views on the subject might be relaxed by innovative preparation programs designed to uniquely equip individuals with the necessary skills to thrive as a school district chief executive. In 2001, a new type of preparation program was developed for emerging school superintendents. The Broad Superintendents' Academy is a rigorous 10-month executive management program designed to prepare experienced, proven leaders from the fields of business, non-profit, military, and government to lead large urban public school districts. Additionally, The Harvard Urban Superintendents Program, New Leaders for New Schools, the Knowledge is Power Program and the Board Residency in Urban Education are leadership academies that prepare non-educators for the superintendency. These programs prepare leaders for today's challenges, such as the No Child Left Behind mandates. This accountability system is troubling some superintendents in urban districts, as they tend to experience greater difficulty in achieving acceptable academic progress from year to year (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2001). There are no "silver bullet" solutions to the challenges in public education, particularly in terms of finding the best approaches to prepare superintendents for the rigors of leadership in urban

districts (P. Houston, personal communication, June 22, 2007). In this discussion of superintendent preparation, the certification process was noted several times.

Certification requirements, which vary from state to state, constitute an important factor to consider when addressing the topic of non-traditional superintendents.

Certification Requirements for Superintendents

In the 1980's, 82% of the 50 American states passed practice-based and rigorous regulations that required school superintendents to complete a lengthy and specific course of study followed by an application for state certification endorsing the individual as a school superintendent (Hess, 2003b; Kowalski, 2005). According to Baptist, only 25 of the 41 states require teaching experience as a requirement for certification (1989). In 2003, Feistritzer reported that 54% of the 41 states offer certification waivers or emergency certificates for individuals who do not meet the qualifications. Furthermore 37% out of the 54% offer a range of alternative pathways to obtain licensure (Feistritzer, 2003). Based on these statistics, it is apparent that the pathway to a non-traditional superintendency is facilitated in some states while made more difficult to achieve in other locations.

Frederick Hess (2003a) noted that leadership, in education and elsewhere, lacks concrete benchmarks against which school leaders can be measured to determine adequacy. Therefore, he argued, states should remove most licensure requirements for principals and superintendents to allow promising leaders from other fields an opportunity to serve. Several states have passed laws over the past decade changing certification requirements for superintendents, in effect permitting almost anyone,

however trained, to become superintendent of a public school system (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). One state that has embraced the position is Tennessee. The only requirement for being a school superintendent in this state is a master's degree (Kowalski & Glass, 2002). Michigan and South Dakota are two states without a legislated certification systems for superintendents (Fusarelli, 2002). Certification of non-educators for the superintendency is not a myth; instead it is an emerging trend stimulated by more liberal entry provisions.

State certification requirements impact the hiring of non-traditional superintendents (Merrow, 1999). In those states that have not relaxed certification standards, school boards may apply for waivers from their state educational agencies when preparing to employ executives from outside the field of education (Broad Foundation & Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003; Hess, 2003b). Superintendent certification and/or waivers can be granted under the educational reform initiative that encourages people from non-educational backgrounds to enter the field of education (P. Houston, personal communication, June 21, 2007). Perhaps this is in response to a May 2003 appeal for licensure deregulation overtly and boldly appealed for in a national report issued by Broad Foundation & Thomas B. Fordham Institute, titled *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto*. There are three entrenched arguments in the 2003 report that received extensive media exposure: 1) university coursework of study and state certification for the superintendency is pointless; 2) non-educators are prepared to serve as superintendents if they can avoid the meaningless cycle of official procedures; and the 3) lack of effective educational leadership is the reason that public schools are unsuccessful (Kowalski & Björk, 2005). In contrast, in 2002, Oklahoma Governor Brad

Henry signed a bill restoring requirements that superintendents and principals must pass a competency exam, have earned at least a master's degree, complete formal training in educational administration and have two years in teaching or administration.

When urban school districts seek the recruitment of superintendents through alternative career pathways, the backgrounds and experiences of the responsive executives are more diversified than in previous years. Varied university degrees and backgrounds will serve to provide a broader perspective from other areas of the workforce. Across the nation, arguments have been made and positions have been taken that urban school systems need high-quality candidates outside education, leaders with a military, business and/or legal background. While at the helm, these leaders seek primary support for curriculum and instructional issues from professional educators. Usually they will hire chief academic officers to oversee all aspects of teaching and learning. For example, in Tangipahoa Parish School System located in Hammond, Louisiana, when a non-educator was appointed superintendent, a chief academic officer with the appropriate background and expertise was named in accordance with the state law. In other cases, non-traditional superintendents took the initiative to appoint educators to these positions without mandates of law, but out of obvious necessity.

The literature suggests that both superintendent preparation and certification are important factors to consider in relation to the non-traditional superintendency. In this section, important questions were raised regarding the adequacy of traditional preparation programs and the wisdom of state policies that limit entry to the position to career educators. In view of the evolution of the superintendency and in light of current preparation and certification trends, a more detailed examination of non-traditional

superintendents will be offered, including specific reasons for their emergence and actual examples of appointments.

Non-Traditional Superintendents: Reasons for and Examples of Appointment

Imagine a job that requires an Army officer's leadership skills, a C.E.O.'s management expertise, a lawyer's negotiating talents and an educator's understanding of how to teach children. That's what it takes to be a school superintendent in the 21st century.

Sol Hurwitz (2002)

More than 70% of urban district superintendents are former secondary school principals (Glass et al., 2000). The middle and high school principalship is usually afforded a very restricted opportunity to take control of the development of local and federal district budgets, administer cash accounts, manage facilities, purchase materials, and supervise personnel management activities. Yet, for a superintendent, these are only small pieces of the obligations and responsibilities that come with the job. The role of the superintendent is changing; there is an intricate amount of involved chess playing involved (Björk, 2001). Therefore, there is a growing movement to hire superintendents whose expertise comes far beyond academia is quickly spreading in large urban school districts (Hurwitz, 2002).

Indicative of this movement is an emerging trend to hire private companies to run public school districts, such as the Edison Project in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 2003, St. Louis, Missouri, awarded a \$5 million, 13-month contract to a private company, Alvarez & Marsal. This firm selected Businessman William Roberti for the superintendent's position, which previously served as a top-level executive with Brooks

Brothers Clothing Chain. In 1993, the Minneapolis School Board drew national attention when it replaced its traditional superintendent and it turned over the leadership of its public schools to Peter Hutchinson's Private Strategies Group. This for-profit company won a contract to run the school district. Mr. Hutchinson, a non-educator and president of the company and former Finance Director for the State of Minnesota, was appointed superintendent and took control of its 75 schools and \$220 million budget through 1997. After Hutchinson's tenure, Carol Johnson, a lifetime educator, was appointed superintendent in 1997 (T. Anderson, personal communication, October 12, 2007). Upon Johnson's departure, the Minneapolis school board named former state legislator and business leader, David Jennings, another non-educator, to the superintendency.

In each case the appointed executives have demonstrated the talent for leadership that school districts hope will translate into better-run schools and better-educated students. This movement is being pursued by large urban districts from San Diego to New York, which appointed Joel Klein, the Clinton administration's antitrust official, who serves as chancellor of the New York City schools (R. Clifford, personal communication, November 12, 2007). Although the appointment of non-traditional superintendents has been increasing in frequency in recent years, it should be noted that some of same issues prompting the trend were raised over 100 years ago. According to Cuban (1976b), as far back as 1890, school boards expressed uncertainties about the qualifications and capability of traditional superintendents to administer large school districts. School boards typically make non-traditional hires to spark change. They want a no-nonsense type of administration, individuals who will offer new perspectives on old

challenges and who have experience running large organizations. They are looking for a maverick or a “highly effective medicine man” (Cronin & Usdan, 2003, p. 177).

As large urban school districts struggle to improve academically, manage their facilities and finances more effectively, address high student mobility, manage the increasing requirements for accountability, and address the increasing numbers of students from single-parent and non-English-speaking families, school boards and/or city mayors (for those districts under mayoral control) are seeking out leaders with expertise outside the field of education.

Non-Traditional Superintendents in Urban Settings: A New Type?

Since 1994, 56 non-traditional superintendents have been hired to work in major urban school districts (See Appendix E). These non-traditional superintendents have or work in urban districts. New York Public Schools has hired 2; Chicago has hired 2, The Public Schools of Philadelphia has appointed 4, Los Angeles Unified School District has hired 2, Seattle Public Schools has employed 2 and New Orleans Public Schools has appointed 2.

An early and notable non-traditional appointment was made on September 1, 1995. The late John Henry Stanford was appointed superintendent of the Seattle Public Schools. This retired U.S. Army Major General was viewed as an inspirational and innovative leader in the district. He started a major reform effort and brought hope and energy to the district with his charismatic presence, which was demonstrated by a positive attitude. In addition, Superintendent Stanford was the first African American superintendent in the history of Seattle Public Schools and was the first non-educator

superintendent hired. He energized the schools and enacted real improvements in policy and practice. Army General John Stanford, who died of leukemia while in office, was so popular as superintendent that business leaders offered \$500,000 to keep him. Yet his tenure did not go without challenges. Prior to his passing, he wrote a book, *Victory in Our Schools*, in which he described the concerns and challenges he faced and how many campus administrators, staff members and parents felt about how a military general would run a school district. His performance made such an impact that Seattle consecutively hired three non-traditional superintendents. Many large urban school districts are looking for a self-confident and new type of superintendent like Stanford with wide experience in another profession and new ways to make schools better (Mathews, 2001).

In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest school district in the country, former three-term Colorado Governor and chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Roy Romer, accepted the superintendency. Along with the top-level position, he inherited significant challenges leading him to assert that reforming the school district were more difficult than being governor (Fuller et al., 2003). The school district had an enrollment of 700,000 students, overcrowded classrooms, crumbling buildings, falling test scores, uninterested teachers, battles among ethnic groups and 83 different languages spoken by students (Fuller et al., 2003). During his six-year tenure, he was responsible for passing four bond issues, which raised \$19.3 billion to build new schools (Fuller et al., 2003). New schools had not been built in 30 years (Fuller et al., 2003). Upon his resignation, the district hired another non-traditional leader, David L. Brewer III, a retired Navy admiral (Fuller et al., 2003).

Hopkins (2005) asserted that Romer's appointment to lead a large city school system is not without precedent. In 1998, Alan D. Bersin, former U.S. Attorney General Special Representative for Southwest Border Issues, was appointed Superintendent of Public Education of the San Diego Unified School District. In July 2005, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed this non-traditional superintendent as California's Secretary of Education. In 1998, Air Force major general John C. Fryer Jr. was selected as the superintendent of Duval County Public schools in Jacksonville, Florida. He spent his tenure reaching out to parents, working on the leadership style of principals, reducing inefficiencies and improving the quality of instruction. He retired in May 2005 (Hopkins, 2005).

Stanford, Romer, Bersin and Fryer were all considered successful before they entered the field of superintendency. They can still make that claim. The questions that drive a piece of this research are the following. How did they do it? Where did they turn for guidance, insight and wisdom for leading a public school system? What is there perception of a good leader? Can a good leader lead anywhere?

The perception is that non-traditional superintendents personify change and therefore are hired to be change agents for the district (Wong & Shen, 2003). Cronin and Usdan (2003) asserted that successful school leadership requires a talent for figuring out ways to improve classroom and student performance. In addition, thriving non-traditional superintendents frequently unite divided school boards, members of the community, parents, and staff around the vision of school improvement (Stanford, 1999).

The rise of non-traditional superintendents may stem from the rise of accountability and from the standardized assessments that measure academic performance. Assessments are quantifiable and identifiable. This educational wave fits the results-oriented culture of the military training grounds and corporate conference room that is so familiar to American executives. This is in contrast to the style and approach of traditional superintendents who may feel uncomfortable with this achievement-oriented culture. This could be partly because many educators believe that there are serious equity issues related to testing. Most important than equity, however, is the inequity of testing students on something they have not been taught and the belief that educational outcomes are either boosted or hindered by socioeconomic background and the corresponding notion that standardized assessments simply measure inequality.

Discrepancy in the quality of teaching is another explanation. Too many traditional superintendents, poor scores convey negative messages about the leadership of districts. Conversely, some non-traditional superintendents, because of their previous careers, are more accustomed to conflicts as being normal, predictable, and resolvable. In their previous careers, they may have had little trouble in quickly resolving issues or dismissing unproductive employees. The perception is that they know how to recover. Risks of failure and/or dismissal are always part of their plan of action, which means they are more likely to promise success because they know they can survive the alternative (Mathews, 1999).

This is not to say that this new type of administrator is to be viewed as the educational messiah, or immune to failure, the politics of local school boards, issues with changes in school governance structures and educational reforms. A few high-

profile cases prove that non-traditional superintendent appointments are not always most appropriate.

Non-Traditional Superintendents from the Military

Seattle, Washington's Joseph Olchefske, with a finance background, stepped down as superintendent. Army Lieutenant General (Retired) Julius Becton, after failing to gain an accurate count of students and open schools on time in the District of Columbia Public, resigned 16 months into his contract (Merrow, 2007). He described the superintendency as his most challenging assignment of all. In an interview in 1998, on "Levy Live," this executive stated, ". . . in the Army, I always knew who and where the enemy was. In the school district of Washington, I never did."

There are certainly others who had military backgrounds who did not thrive in the superintendency. Table 1 provides information regarding specific instances.

On the other hand, there are military leaders who have enjoyed success at the helm of school districts. Table 2 provides some examples.

TABLE 1. Superintendents with Military Backgrounds Unable to Maintain Superintendency

Name	School District	Annual Salary	Student Enrollment	Reason for Separation from Job
Marine Colonel Alphonse Davis	New Orleans Parish School	\$163,532,00	80,000	His father was paid large amounts of overtime from the district
U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel William Harner	Greenville County School District in Greenville, S.C.	\$163,532.00	63,000	Ousted by a majority of the board.
Three-star Air Force General Joseph J. Redden	Cobb County, Georgia School District	\$230,000.00	108,000	Mishandled a multimillion-dollar laptop computer deal.
U.S. Air Force colonel John O'Sullivan, Jr.	Savannah, Georgia School District and Osesso, Minnesota School District	\$163,532,00	253,552	Bought out in both school districts for Brusque leadership style
U.S. Army Lieutenant General Julius Becton	Washington, D.C., School District	\$160,000.00	71,007	Power Politics

TABLE 2. Superintendents with Military Backgrounds Able to Maintain Superintendency

Name	School District	Annual Salary	Student Enrollment	Purpose for Staying on Job
Army General John Henry Stanford	Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Washington	\$177,284.00	47,575	Charisma and Success
Air Force Maj. Gen. John Fryer	Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida	\$150,000.00	127,000	Data driven
Navy Commander Thomas Siegel	Boulder Valley, Colorado School District	\$179,088.00	38,000	Strong connections with community
Raymond F. Arment, III	Eatonville School District 404, Eatonville, Washington School District	?	2,098	Strong communication skills

Non-Traditional Superintendents: A New Call for Customer Service

It is important to be aware that traditional superintendents have turned urban public schools around in many cities, including Philadelphia, San Diego, and Miami. Current federal, state, and local school accountability measures as well as policy initiatives that call for improved leadership have placed increasing demands on the superintendent, CEO or chancellor. According to a study conducted by Beck (2005), parents demand a closer connection to the superintendent, as they are tired of educational experts who do not create new systems. It has been determined that the current superintendents have an overwhelming number of responsibilities and must perform countless tasks (Cunningham & Burdick, 1999). However, school boards are

looking for individuals who have experience running entities outside the field of education and argue that non-traditional superintendents bring a different set of leadership skills and experiences (Mathews, 2001). A search for leaders from the private sector, legal profession, corporate finance, the military, and from the political world to lead their school districts is becoming more prevalent.

Hess (2003b) concluded that,

In the world of 21st century schooling, leaders must be able to leverage accountability and revolutionary technology, devise performance-based evaluation systems, reengineer outdated management structures, recruit and cultivate nontraditional staff, drive decisions with data, build professional cultures, and ensure that every child is served. It is not clear that teaching experience or educational administration coursework prepares candidates for these challenges. On the whole, traditional administrators have fared poorly in recent decades, even as private sector and nonprofit managers have made great strides in addressing similar tasks. (p. 1)

Upon the arrival of non-traditional superintendents, the word “customers” was not popular in schools (Mathews, 2001). However, it was used without embarrassment by this new type of chief executive when conveying the message that people must be satisfied. The perception is that a large school district is parallel to a business or a division of the armed forces. In fact, traditional superintendents who come from an educational background often experience a rude awakening upon assuming the office. “It’s surprising how many people arrive in a new superintendent’s chair without knowing a position akin to that of a corporate CEO and they are very quickly disabused” (Harvey, 2003, p. 20). Therefore, districts look to the preparation of a new type of top executives. Alborano (2002) makes the argument that, “Crash courses, late evening reading, trusted advisors, and conversations with constituents are re-educating a new breed of superintendent after their years in the military, business, and legal professions”

(Alborano 2002, p. 13). This is in total contrast to the typical route to the superintendency, which is to be a teacher, assistant principal, principal, central office administrator, and then the top-level executive. Barbara Knisely (2004), former public relations director of the AASA, cited a survey of urban school district leaders who are members of the Council of Great City Schools. The council represents 66 of the largest urban school districts in the United States. The survey revealed that most superintendents come from a traditional background. A significant number of them hold education doctorates or Ph.D.'s in related fields. Yet large urban school district superintendents are most likely to come from the business world, a military career, higher education, and city government (Knisely, 2004). Half of nontraditional superintendents come from business and industry, while one third come from the military (Quinn, 2007).

In some large urban districts, superintendents are hired for their curriculum and instructional background and experience rather than demonstrated abilities to manage billion dollar budgets. In other similar districts, non-traditional appointments take place partly because these districts subject leaders to greater educational challenges and political pressures than experienced in suburban, small-town, and rural districts (Hess, 2005). In Seattle, Washington, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Duval County, military officers have been appointed chancellors, CEO's or superintendents. In New York, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Minneapolis and Seattle, Washington appointments have been made from the areas of business or finance. Attorneys have been tapped to serve in the top-level position in San Diego, California, Baltimore and

Dallas, Texas. Los Angeles, California, Baltimore, Maryland and Chicago, Illinois have appointed individuals with a background in government.

The Political Challenge in Hiring Non-Traditional Superintendents

Literature on non-traditional superintendents is limited and for this reason, this researcher traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to meet with N. Glassford, Pseudonym, a Broad Superintendents' Academy graduate. N. Glassford was a former Attorney with the U.S. Department of Education and is presently the Executive Vice President of a Center for the Arts. She was interviewed to gain her perceptions on the reasons for non-traditional superintendent appointments because she was interviewed for an urban superintendency, however she did not get the position. Glassford, Pseudonym offered:

. . . have you been at a table with the mayor? Have you been at a table with the Governor? Have you been at a table, um, many tables with businessmen? Do you know the new answers of what's said and what's not said? Do you know how to navigate and move legislation through a very complex state capitol? Do you know about those things? Can you communicate to a businessperson to get the resources that that teacher and the classroom need so that Johnny can have music lessons, do you have those skills? And I would say, that maybe you have some of those skills but usually there are other people who have been dealing with those types of things, that they have greater skills. They don't know what they're doing in the classroom but they do know how to have a conversation with the mayor, and the governor and the speaker of the house and whoever else to get the resources to the classroom for the student. So, what you haven't been doing is being developed in the skills that it takes to manage and run a complex enterprise. (N. Glassford, pseudonym, personal communication, May, 2007)

It is important to note that twenty-four out of the fifty states have passed legislation authorizing the management of school districts by either city mayor or state officials (Cibulka, 1999). Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have experienced

school district takeovers. In particular, the districts that are experiencing lack of academic progress are particularly subject to takeovers in places like New York, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Illinois; Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore; Cleveland; Detroit; and Washington, DC. (Wong & Shen, 2006). This policy reform has occurred partially because of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which identifies takeover as a corrective action to turn around failing districts. Thus, this trend towards takeovers, often by mayors in these urban areas, provides fertile ground for the appointment of non-traditional superintendents.

Mayoral Involvement in Non-Traditional Superintendent Hiring

Strategies to improve urban school districts include increasing mayoral involvement, which alters the selection and composition of school boards, increases the possibility of non-traditional appointments and usually results in greater involvement by business and corporate leaders (Usdan & Cronin, 2003). A movement in which mayors are actively involved in school governance is quickly spreading across the nation (Usdan & Cronin, 2003). In the 1990's, mayoral control began in Boston when a change of control from an elected board to a board of trustees appointed by the mayor occurred. In New York City, on June 12, 2002, Mayor Michael Bloomberg was present and eager to sign the mayoral-control bill. The premise is that a mayor who has experience in governing a large urban city can do the same for a large urban school district. In addition, the demise of school bureaucracy and the increase in transparency and accountability may occur. The push for mayoral control also reflects the rising dissatisfaction and extreme anxiety experienced by stakeholders over poor student

achievement, degenerate buildings, bureaucratic power struggles and revolving-door superintendents. The intent for mayoral control is to bring forth accountability and for urban children to grow academically (H. Levy, personal communication, July 5, 2007).

This intent became a reality in the New York Public Schools. In September of 2007, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg accepted the Broad Prize for Urban Education, a prestigious award that recognizes this mega urban school district as the country's most improved. The improvement must reflect improved academic performance in all sub-groups, including a reduction in the achievement gap between ethnic and income groups. The non-traditional chancellor, Joel L. Klein, appointed in 2002 by the Mayor Bloomberg hails from the legal profession. His approach was to give principals the necessary authority to make decisions at the campus level, while holding them responsible and accountable for raising student achievement (NYC.gov, 2007).

If experience in other cities is to serve as an indicator, neither mayoral control nor a corporate professional is a guarantee that children will achieve academic success. In cities such as Chicago, Illinois; Boston, Massachusetts; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Washington State and Baltimore, Maryland where there has been some form of mayoral control, traditional and non-traditional superintendents have been able to solve financial and administrative problems quicker than student performance on state-mandated tests (H. Levy, personal communication, July 5, 2007).

Mayoral control can work if it is sensibly designed and actively engaged in improving the schools. According to Hess, "how" mayoral control is implemented is a lot more important than *whether* to implement it. It has provided some school districts with stability, yet the impact on student achievement is largely unknown (Hess, 2007).

Is there a distrust of professional educators to serve as urban district superintendents? Does the corporate culture better prepare individuals to lead the schools than those trained in the schools of education? Appendix D illustrates that some mayoral control school districts are appointing non-traditional leadership (Wong, 1999).

Needed Experiences and Strengths of Non-Traditional Superintendents

According to Tom Quinn (2007), managing director of the Broad Foundation Superintendent Academy, non-traditional superintendents, who are accomplished leaders in other arenas, bring critically needed strengths and experiences to the job, including:

- Experience managing large, complex, diverse operations;
- Experience leading large-scale systems change and culture changes;
- Skills in strategic visioning, planning and accountability;
- Expertise in financial management; and
- Skills in systems and operational management (p. 2).

In order for non-traditional superintendents to succeed, greater emphasis must be placed on the complex idea of “distributed leadership” shared by multiple individuals at different levels of the organization (Riordan, 2003). Distributed leadership is maximizing the human capacity within the organization (Harris, 2002). Lashway (2003) asserted that distributed leadership provides a more democratic leadership focus for school districts. The new type of superintendents’ often select strong chief academic officers with proven track records for improving student achievement, thus supplementing their own weakness in academics and raising their credibility with teachers. Another perspective regarding the basis for appointing non-traditional

superintendents is Fred Edward Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership. This view contends that the group's performance level and the leader's effectiveness are contingent upon the leader's motivation level and the degree to which the leader controls and influences the situation (Northouse, 2003). The theory predicts that the effectiveness of the leader will depend on both the characteristics of the leader and the favorableness of the situation. Fiedler asserted there are only leaders who perform well in certain situations, but not in every single circumstance. Second, almost anyone can be a leader by carefully selecting those situations that match his or her leadership style. Finally, a leader can meet the demands of the organization by designing job responsibilities to fit the manager (Fiedler, 1964). In this study, government bodies selected non-traditional leaders because the districts they governed had special challenges, which they believed could only be addressed by a person with a unique set of leadership skills or a non-traditional superintendent.

An essential piece of Alan D. Bersin's strategy in his superintendency plan was his early hiring of an Academic Chancellor. He chose Anthony J. Alvarado, who had been superintendent of New York's Community District II for 12 years. Bersin was to focus on the political and administrative aspects of reform, while Alvarado was to concentrate on all aspects of curriculum and instruction (Zimmerman, 2005).

Summary and Conclusion

How can urban education meet the needs of the 21st century? In order to attempt to answer the coveted question, it was necessary to review the roots of public education and the evolution of the American superintendent. It was also necessary to take an

inventory of the needs stakeholder concerns. Through the review of the literature, it came full circle. The phenomenon of the non-traditional superintendent is not a new phenomenon. Since history is “an unending dialogue between the past and present” (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995, p. 3) the researcher was illuminated and discovered that the first non-traditional superintendents came to existence not in 1995 but in the 18th century. It was then that non-educators were first in demand. In order to uncover this, historical data of the inception of the superintendency had to be pieced together from incomplete records dating as far back as to the end of the eighteenth century (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

The present day urban non-traditional superintendents have learned many lessons in their second career. They have quickly learned to surround themselves with traditional educators. While the researcher is not making a general statement about all non-traditional superintendents, such is the truth for the 5 respondents. They have also learned that they need to understand the differences between their jobs and those of the school board members, and allow trustees to set policy. Despite the efforts of some districts to look for talented leaders from outside of the ranks of the educator workforce (Mathews, 1999), the traditional career pathway to the superintendency is usually through a principalship, a central office position, assistant superintendency and culminates by accepting a superintendency position five to ten years subsequent to the attainment of the first administrative position (Glass et al., 2000).

One important point that must be highlighted is that few women have been hired as non-traditional superintendents. Paula Dawning, who served as the superintendent of the Benton Harbor Public Schools in Michigan, brought with her a business background

as a former executive for AT&T (LaFee, 2004). In 2006, she was chosen as Superintendent of the Year for the State of Michigan (Wacyk, 2006). She recently retired. The under representation of women in the superintendency begs a closer look at the question: Do search consultants help or hinder the advancement of non-traditional candidates into the superintendency? The answer can be yes and no. It depends on who is asked. The most powerful position in public education is the superintendency, and it is dominated by men both in the world of traditional and non-traditional superintendencies. This leads to the next question and perhaps another study, is the “old boy” network still in control?

The roles, responsibilities and procedures of the superintendency will continue to evolve in order to serve the needs of children, families and communities (Elmore, 2004). Superintendents must be in a position to distribute power and influence in such a way that it supports the continuous improvement of school districts and student achievement (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). The emergence of the non-traditional superintendency is but one response to these new educational challenges.

In view of the evolution of the superintendent, multiplication of their responsibilities, and current demands placed on the position, school districts are beginning to hire a new type of chief executive officers. This chapter provided specific examples of appointments, including the reasons for these hiring decisions and the results. In addition, it was noted that superintendent preparation programs and certification requirements are being reevaluated and realigned in response to this trend. In light of this review of the literature, this study intends to examine and discuss the

experiences, views and perceptions of nontraditional superintendents regarding educational administration.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The function of research is not necessarily to map and to conquer the world, but to sophisticate the beholding of it.

Robert Stake (1995, p. 43)

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the methodology and research design that was used to engage non-traditional superintendents in a discourse addressing their perceptions of service in their unique capacity. The chapter is presented in twelve sections: (a) an introduction, (b) purpose of the study, (c) the research design of the study, (d) participant selection, (e) instrumentation, (f) institutional approval, (g) pilot study, (h) field packet, (i) interview preparation, (j) data collection procedures, (k) data analysis process, and (l) summary.

Introduction

According to Merriam (1997), qualitative researchers are “interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 6). Qualitative research methods seek to understand, explore and probe the human experience as it relates to the subject being studied (Berg, 2001; Glesne, 1999; Patton, 1990, 2002). Qualitative research can be defined as “multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic

approach to its subject matter” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). In a qualitative methodology, the researcher seeks to obtain qualitative depictions that are at the core of a person’s experience (Patton, 1990). Although qualitative research design is achieved utilizing different methods, such as ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory, phenomenological approaches were heavily relied on for the purpose of this study. The intention was that the researcher would allow the participants to tell their stories. The goal of phenomenology is to create an account that best captures what the respondents will report. The researcher captured the participants’ experiences on paper. This study was primarily concerned with the understanding and describing (phenomenology) the respondents’ lived experiences. The goal of the researcher is to capture the rich descriptive text about the participants’ experiences. The goal of a case study researcher is to re-tell the story from the participant’s point of view (Yin, 1989).

Interpretivism stresses that there are multiple realities. Reality is constructed by each individual person based on their personal life experiences. Therefore interpretivism was used to gain the insights of the respondents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this interpretive study was to examine and describe the experiences, views and perceptions of non-traditional superintendents. Specifically, this study engaged these leaders in a discourse addressing their perceptions of being non-traditional superintendents. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to:
 - a. characteristics of effective leadership.
 - b. their preparation for the superintendency.
 - c. their being hired in their respective districts.
 - d. successful experiences and challenges during their tenure as urban school leaders.
2. How do five urban non-traditional superintendents compare and contrast their responsibilities as school leaders with previous leadership roles?
3. What are the recommendations for superintendent preparation and support?

The following additional beliefs shape the study design: (a) qualitative research promotes understanding of context and environment in which decisions occur and (b) individual's narratives provide meaningful, valuable data (Erickson, 1986).

Research Design of the Study

This study was interpretive in nature as the researcher studied the phenomenon in its natural setting and constructs meaning directly from the voices and actions of the respondents (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Of particular importance was the respondents' point of view, their focus and importance given to everyday life and the offering of a multitude of sources for interpretation purposes. It is the subjective experiences of the respondents that were taken as their truth or truths. This was discovered through interviews and observations. Therefore the biases, points of view and experiences of the

researcher that impact the study were addressed and considered (Guba & Lincoln 1985). The researcher, using an interpretive lens, brought herself into the narrative. The researcher's voice was heard and ultimately recognized her own epistemological, ontological, and axiological orientation.

Donald and Soldwisch (2004) define the dichotomy of quantitative versus qualitative research by stating:

Quantitative research is deductive. It presupposes a constant, stable, external reality that is measurable and follows discernible rules of science. Its purpose is to measure some portion of that fixed reality. In contrast, qualitative research is inductive, moving from the perspective of the individual or group to possible wider themes. Qualitative researchers believe that reality is that to which people pay attention and value. If an individual or group is not thinking about something or doesn't value it, then, at that moment, it has little or no reality, however physically real the object, event, or condition may be. (p. 354)

Qualitative research methodology was deemed most appropriate for this study because it elicited the respondents' feelings, values, and perceptions that underlie and influence human behavior. In addition, the nature of the posed research questions, required depth and detail, and an "insider" perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to observe and dialogue with the participants and engage in a discourse addressing their motives, experiences and what they perceived to be the biggest differences between educational administration and their original leadership positions. The qualitative researcher found the process of discovering meaning and understanding to be a scholarly activity. Berg (2001) stated, ". . . qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings

and the individuals who inhabit these settings” (p.6). Merriam (1988) identified six basic characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products.
2. Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning-how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world.
3. The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines.
4. Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behavior in its natural setting.
5. Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures.
6. The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details (p. 19-20).

Moreover, Myers (1995) stated:

The motivation for doing qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, comes from the observation that, if there is one thing, which distinguishes humans from the natural world, it is our ability to talk! Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. (p. 241-242)

Merriam (1998) stated that qualitative research “assumes that there are multiple realities . . . that the world is not an objective thing but a function of personal interaction

and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring” (p. 17).

In addition to Merriam’s views on multiple realities, there are several other reasons for selecting qualitative research methodology. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that, “qualitative methods come more easily to the human-as-instrument” (p. 198). They further state that:

. . . human-as-instrument is inclined toward methods that are extensions of normal human activities: looking, listening, speaking, reading, and the like. We believe that the human will tend, therefore, toward interviewing, observing, mining available documents and records, taking account of nonverbal cues, and interpreting inadvertent unobtrusive measures. (p. 199)

More specifically, Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined qualitative study as a “snapshot of reality,” “a slice of life,” or “an episode” (p. 214).

The goals of this research fit well with Bogdan and Biklen’s (1992) description of the five characteristics of qualitative research. They are as follows:

1. “In qualitative research, “the researcher is the key instrument” (p. 27).
2. “Qualitative research is descriptive” (p. 28).
3. “Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products” (p. 28).
4. “Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively” (p. 29).
5. “Meaning’ is of essential concern to the qualitative approach” (p. 29).

Stake (1995) described three types of case studies as being: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Intrinsic case studies examine a single case to better understand a specific aspect of the case. An instrumental case study focuses on understanding a theory.

Collective case studies research several cases in order to understand a particular phenomenon. Furthermore, Stake (1995) suggested that collective case studies are effective vehicles to capture a better understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Therefore, collective case studies were employed in this research project.

Case studies are papers in which the author describes case material obtained while working with an individual with an individual or organization to illustrate a problem, to indicate a means for solving a problem, or to shed light on needed research or theoretical matters. (American Psychological Association, 2001, pp. 8-9)

Yin (1989) asserted that a qualitative collective case study design is preferred when the researcher's goal is to gain understanding of the participants' experiences. A limitation that has been taken into consideration by the researcher is that a qualitative single case study design is limited in the generalizing of the results (Merriam, 1988). However, the strengths of this method support its use for the purpose of this study.

The need for case studies according to Yin (1989) "arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (p. 14). Therefore, a collective case study design will be implemented. Case studies can include: "(a) persons, (b) events, (c) programs, (d) organizations, (e) time periods, (f) critical incidents, or (g) communities" (Patton, 1990, p. 283).

Participant Selection

Marshall and Rossman (1995) asserted that the first and most influential decision made by the researcher is choosing the setting, population, and phenomenon of interest. The criterion for site selection was purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is most

often used in interpretive research, often noting qualitative research as the method used to support the sampling. It “. . . is used as a strategy when one wants to learn something and come to understand something about certain select cases without needing to generalize to all such cases” (Patton, 1980, p. 100). “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Since this study focuses on the experiences, motivation and leadership variance of a select group composed of urban public school non-traditional superintendents, a qualitative collective case study methodological framework will be employed.

The collective case study encompasses more than one case “in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). Since the purpose is to help advance understanding, a collective case study is a grouping of instrumental case studies (Stake, 2000). Using a collective case study approach can allow for the possibility of stronger interpretation and “perhaps better theorizing” (Stake, 2000, p. 437).

The qualitative segment of data collection requires the selection of interview participants who provide insight into the multifaceted world of the public school districts’ non-traditional chief executive officer. Therefore, the participant selection was made through intensity case sampling, a form of purposive or purposeful sampling. “The purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Mason (1996) states that

purposeful sampling consists of choosing a sample of a population which fit characteristics of the study's purpose and which may conform to working hypotheses.

Merriam (1998) contended that prior to selecting the sample; desired criteria/attributes must be identified.

In criterion-based selection, you 'create a list of the attributes essential' to your study and then 'proceed to find or locate a unit matching the list.' The criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases. (p. 61-62)

The participants were identified through their reputations and through input of fellow colleagues, university professors and public school educators and state commissioners.

In this study, the criteria for participant selection was five urban non-traditional superintendents who lead or have led an urban school district in the United States of America for two years or more in the same school system. Of the numerous non-traditional superintendents serving urban areas since 1994 (see Appendix E), the participants who agreed to participate in the study were: (1) Howard Lee, attorney, (2) Walter White, financial officer, (3) John Newton, attorney (4) Patrick Vogel, financial officer (5) Daniel Schulman, military background. Demographic data for the participants, including role, age, previous career, locale of school district and number of superintendencies are presented (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Pseudonym and Demographic Information

Pseudonym	John Newton	Walter White	Patrick Vogel	Howard Lee	Daniel Schulman
District Pseudonym	District A	District B	District C	District D	District E
Role	Former: Non-traditional Superintendent	Former: Non-traditional Superintendent	Present: Non-traditional Superintendent	Former: Non-traditional Superintendent	Present: Non-traditional Superintendent
Age (2007)	57	70	54	55	55
Previous Career	Attorney	Finance	Finance	Attorney	Military
Dates of Superintendency	2004-2006	2000-2002	2002-2007	2000-2002	2001-Present
Locale	North Central Texas United States	South Central United States	Northeastern United States	Northeastern United States	Northwestern United States
Sought Job or Recruited?	Recruited	Recruited	Recruited	Recruited	Sought
Number of Superintendencies and Size of District	1	1	3	1	2
Student Enrollment	38,425	40,150	210,432	1.1 million	27,804
Reason for leaving superintendency	Recruited and took a job with non-profit organization	Personal Reasons	Each time was recruited and took a job with a more challenging urban district	Personal Reasons	Recruited and took a job with a more challenging urban district

Instrumentation

A feature of qualitative research is that the researcher is the “the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998, p. 7; Patton, 1990). Another role of the researcher is that of a “detective” (Merriam, 1988, p. 37). It was important that the researcher remained in touch with her biases, values and judgments, and they were explicitly stated and discussed in the research report (Creswell, 2003). As the instrument of this study, the researcher, a Latino educator for 33 years, brought multifaceted lenses, a background in general education, special education, and school administration, to the research process. The author began her career in education as a teacher assistant in an elementary school. A number of positions were held in the public school setting, including special education high school teacher, special and general education middle school counselor, elementary, middle and high school principal, interim superintendent for a 5-A school district and numerous other central office positions. In addition, the investigator has experience monitoring school districts in a Southwestern state for compliance and accountability with state and federal statutes. This position involved interviewing teachers and administrators, visiting classrooms, examining student folders and conducting parent roundtable discussions throughout the state.

The researcher maintained a reflexive journal to record field procedure notes such as reflections, observations and thoughts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote,

. . . a kind of diary in which the investigator on a daily basis, or as needed, records a variety of information about self (hence the term ‘reflexive’) and

method. With respect to self, the reflexive journal might be thought of as providing the same kind of data about the human instrument that is often provided about the paper-and-pencil or brass used in conventional studies . . . It consists of . . . a personal dairy that provides the opportunity for catharsis, for reflection upon what is happening in terms of one's own values and interests, and for speculation and growing insights. (p. 327)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined reflexive journals as “introspective journals that display the investigator's mind processes, philosophical position, and bases of decisions about the inquiry” (p. 109). The researcher's intention for the reflexive journal was to serve as a chronological historical account for ideas, thoughts, and literature references.

Bruscia (1995) stated that in a journal, “The researcher records significant or interesting events, observations, or insights that occur in collecting or analyzing the data” (p. 3).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), stated:

. . . the tape recorder misses the sights, the smells, the impressions, and the extra remarks said before and after the interview. Field notes can provide any study with a personal log that helps the researcher to keep track of the development of the project, to visualize how the research plan has been affected by the data collected, and to remain self-conscious of how he or she has been influenced by the data. (p. 107)

Glesne (1999) suggested:

This is the time to write down feelings, work out problems, jot down ideas and impressions, clarify earlier interpretations, speculate about what is going on, and make flexible short-and long-term plans for the days to come. (p. 53)

The reflexive journal was carried at all times. Written were noted reflections on epistemological assumptions and possible biases in the data collection. Keeping a journal also enhanced the study's conformability. It is full of detailed descriptions of experiences, airports, taxis, hotel rooms, waiting rooms, conference tables, secretaries, and conversations, feelings of emptiness, nervous stomachs and discrimination. The

description of a car accident in which the researcher was involved following an interview with the executive of a mega urban district is a powerful piece. The journal describes the voices in the background of the police officers, the ambulance siren and the beeping of unfamiliar machines. One of the most dramatic parts of the journal entries includes an account of the researcher's husband being notified of the accident following the interview (See Appendix G)

Institutional Approval

This study began in the mid-spring of 2007. Prior to collecting any data, this research proposal was submitted to the Texas A&M University in College Station Institutional Review Board of Educational Administration and Human Resources Development for approval. The protocol calls for measures to be taken to provide anonymity for the participants. A copy of the Institutional Review Board's letter of approval, along with accompanying documents, is included in the Appendix.

Pilot Study

Prior to going into the field to collect data from the study participants, the researcher conducted a pilot study. The purpose for a pilot study served to ensure that the researcher understood the research process; test the substance and language of the interview questions and make any necessary changes. A former non-traditional superintendent who served in the executive capacity in an urban district agreed to serve

as a pilot participant. He was asked if he would participate in the study and declined by stating, “Let’s not go there” (W.F. Jennings, Personal communication-pseudonym, March 3, 2007). He did agree to assist with the pilot study by reviewing the interview questions and making suggestions to edit the questions. Presently, the former non-traditional superintendent is retired. The process served and refined the pre-formulated interview questions and the interview process. According to Conrad (1996), the purpose of the pilot study is “to practice and reflect on skills of negotiating entry, observation and note taking, interviewing, analysis, reflexivity, and reporting of data” (p. 3). The edited interview questions were used with a group of three professional non-educators and non-participants. Their input was taken into consideration. The pilot study was conducted with the assistance and guidance of Dr. Don Park Schulte, assistant professor of Leadership and Foundations at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Field Packet

The researcher prepared individual field preparation packets for each of the participants. The packet included the following equipment: two desktop tape recorders for recording with built-in microphones (one battery operated and one electrical with battery support), several labeled 90 minute professional cassette tapes, spare batteries and electrical cord. Lincoln and Guba (1985) do not recommend tape recorders because they can be invasive and may be subject to technical failure. It is for the latter reason that an extra recording device was part of the field packet. In addition, color coded spiral notebooks, blue pens, sharpened pencils, colored paper clips, high lighters, Post-it

stickies and index cards were included. A map of the city was always on hand. Several typed copies of the interview guide were included in the field packet.

Patton (1990) explained the purpose of the interview guide.

An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. An interview guide is prepared in order to make sure that the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. (p. 283)

Interview Preparation

The prospective participants were contacted via electronic mail, telephone and/or in person and invited them to participate in the study. A full verbal explanation of the study was provided to each respondent, which included the purpose of the study, the general methodology and the value of the study. However, it is important to note that after the initial conversation with the potential participant, due to conflicting schedules, the majority of the time, it was the executive secretary that this researcher spoke with and received all documents that were sent to the prospective participants. On two occasions, it was Dr. Tom Anderson, a former State Commissioner of Education, who assisted the author in making the preliminary contacts and all necessary arrangements for the face-to-face interviews. Making contact with mega urban district non-traditional superintendents was often challenging. The researcher began to sense that if a person does not have political power or clout, then it would be next to impossible to meet with any of the non-traditional superintendents, chancellors or CEO's. Therefore, the author

contacted a State Congressman to assist in making contact with the former non-traditional superintendent in North East United States. That was a successful venture. Soon after, the secretaries actively corresponded via email and telephone calls.

Upon participant acceptance, each received a formal letter of introduction, and pertinent information that addressed the purpose of the study, the questions that were to be asked, the length and number of the interviews, the projected use of the findings, the storage and ultimate disposal of audio tapes and printed documents and the possible benefits and risks to the participants. Copies of the dissertation proposal, the interview protocols and of the University's Institutional Review Board are for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. They were given the opportunity to remain anonymous, confidentially were assured and all was to be done on a voluntary basis. All the participants were assigned pseudonyms. Names of participants with their assigned pseudonyms have been secured in separate locked cabinets, in two different cities, throughout the research project. Each participant was informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and their decision would not affect any current or future relations with Texas A&M University at College Station. The researcher was always prepared to listen, answer questions and to provide further information. The respondents who allowed the researcher to record them received the interview transcripts for their review, approval and necessary editing. One of the four interview documents was edited and revised by the participant on-site. The audiotapes and transcripts were secured in locked cabinets and in two different cities, throughout the research project.

Data Collection Procedures

The Interview

Given the complexity of the role of the superintendent, the data was collected from two sources: interviews and documents, which included e-mails. Data collection for case studies usually focuses on three sources of data: observations, interviews, and document analysis (Merriam, 1998, 2002; Patton, 1980). Two interviews took place in the southwestern region of the United States, while two others took place in the Northeast and one in the Northwest. Further the interviews took place in five different states.

“We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Furthermore, the researcher was aware that the respondent may be influenced by “multiple intentions and desires, some of which are consciously known and some of which are not” (Scheurich, 1997, p. 62). Data for this study was collected through what McCracken (1988) calls “the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory-the interview” (p. 9). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) asserted that a favorite qualitative research tool is “the art of asking questions and listening” (p. 353). Moreover, interviews are referred to as a “conversation with a purpose” (Dexter, 1970, p. 136). Well-informed participants provide insight into a current situation, provide shortcuts to prior history of the situation, and help the investigator identify other relevant sources of data (Yin, 1989). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated “a major advantage of the

interview is that it permits the respondent to move back and forth in time- to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future, all without leaving a comfortable armchair” (p. 273).

The researcher did not claim expertise in the phenomena of interest. The researcher did not build a hypothesis, instead one observed and questioned and then made sense of the interviews and observations. According to Merriam (1998), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, how they make sense of their surroundings, their world and the experiences they have in the world. Accordingly, the researcher used multiple open-ended questions to stimulate conversation while seeking to identify the attitudes and motives of the respondents (Patton, 1990). Bernard (2002) suggested that semi-structured interviewing is desirable when the researcher wishes to “demonstrate that you are fully in control of what you want from an interview but leaves both you and your respondent free to follow new leads” (p. 205). Bernard (2002) further stated, “The rule is: Get people onto a topic of interest and get out of the way. Let the informant provide information that he or she thinks is important” (p. 209). Reflecting back upon this intriguing process, the researcher learned that key stories emerged when the participants expressed themselves freely in their unique manner and deviated until they completed their tales (Mishler, 1986). Furthermore, Patton (1990) stated, “the raw data of interviews are the actual quotations spoken by interviewees. There is no substitute for these data” (p.347). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also characterized interviews by their degree of structure, their

degree of overtness and the quality of the relationship between the interviewer and respondent.

“Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is knowable and able to be made explicit” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated:

Qualitative interviewing is a great adventure; every step of the interview brings new information and opens windows into the experiences of the people you meet. Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds. Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate. (p. 1)

Lincoln and Guba “do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons” (1985, p. 241).

After much deliberation, the researcher opted that with the consent of the participants, all interviews would be audio taped by a standard cassette recorder using 90-minute audiotapes per session to ensure accurate data collection. A total of seven “face-to-face” interviews with respective non-traditional superintendents were held. Two of the participants were available at various state conferences and “follow up” interviews took place in locations convenient to the participants. Each initial interview ranged from 45-60 minutes in length. Several distance interviews were conducted either by telephone, teleconferencing or electronic e-mail in order to clarify matters.

Ten questions were prepared to guide the interviews along with some possible follow-up questions to probe deeper when needed (See Appendix A). Throughout the interviews, it became evident that it was not necessary to ask each and every question. For instance, when the first question was asked, “When and how did you discover you

wanted to be a superintendent,” the participants went into detail about their professional careers and inevitably answered the following question, “How would you describe your leadership style. Was it different from your first career?” The two non-traditional superintendents that were from large school districts that exceeded a population of 100,000 students further illustrated this tendency. When answering the question, “If you could give advice to a non-traditional superintendent, what would it be?,” both superintendents responded in such detail that the subsequent question, “How do you feel about the political nature of the superintendency?” was also answered. There were instances where all respondents provided the same answer to a particular question. For example, all five leaders mentioned *change agency* when asked the following question, “How would you describe the leader the board was looking for?”

While the interview questions were well designed, modifications were made during each interview to acquire needed information without imploring participants to repeat their responses. Each interview was a learning experience. The interviewees took time and effort to provide thoughtful responses while offering great insight into the non-educational leaders’ experiences. The five non-educators who participated in this study represented diverse situations and backgrounds.

The tape recorder is often found to be an important tool in case studies. Patton stated that in an interview a tape recorder is “indispensable” (1990, p. 348). This practice allowed the researcher to focus attention on the non-verbal signals communicated by the respondent. The researcher took written field notes throughout the interview and recorded expressions, impressions, and gestures that were not captured on

the audiotape. Upon completion of each interview, the researcher turned off the audio-recorder, and following the advice of Kvale (1996), began to debrief with the respondent. “Debriefing is likely to occur after the tape recorder has been turned off . . . The interview may bring up topics he or she did not feel safe raising with the tape recorder” (p. 128).

Upon completion of debriefing, the researcher left the interview site and recorded field notes to capture thoughts and perceptions (Glesne, 1999). Depending on the location of the interview, additional field notes were written either on a taxi, airport, train or in a hotel room. These notes differ from the ones found in the reflexive journal as they contain as Patton (1990) suggested, “insights, interpretations, beginning analysis, and working hypotheses” (p. 242) about what occurred. To guarantee accuracy, only one tape was examined at a time and was kept in a secure location. The researcher produced a preliminary transcript. The purpose of the preliminary transcript was to gain increased familiarity with the data. This decision enhanced the researcher’s knowledge of the data. Yet, the researcher chose to hire a professional, external transcriber who produced word-for-word transcriptions numbered by line. The researcher, through comparison with the audio taped version, verified the typed written transcripts including the edited and revised transcript. In addition, the peer researcher, Dr. Sergio Garza, also checked for accuracy. The audio recordings were used to support findings and claims. Finally, the researcher mailed the participants letters of appreciation for their time and insight devoted to the interview process. In addition, at the end of the research study, the secretaries were sent a thank you card with a courtesy copy to the participant.

Data Analysis

. . . the interview researcher's road to hell becomes paved with transcripts.
Kvale (1996, p. 166)

As anticipated, the analysis of the data was an extremely demanding piece of the study. Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991) contended that the purpose of data analysis is "to summarize the completed observations in such a manner that they yield answers to the research questions" (p. 360). Analysis of qualitative research translates the data into findings. "Data interpretation and analysis involves making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said" (Patton, 1990, p. 347). The researcher began data analysis immediately after the first data collection. "Data analysis must begin with the very first data collections" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 242). According to Merriam (1988), "Data collection and analysis are a simultaneous activity in qualitative research," (p. 119). They cannot be separated.

Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, and the first document read. Emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses direct the next phase of data collection, which in turn leads to refinement or reformulation of one's questions, and so on. It is an interactive process throughout which the investigator is concerned with producing believable and trustworthy findings. Unlike experimental designs where validity and reliability are accounted for before the investigation, rigor in a qualitative case study derives from the researchers' presence, the nature of the interaction, between researcher and participants, the triangulation of the data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich thick description. (pp. 119-120)

Hatch (2002) asserted that,

Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others . . . Researchers always engage their own intellectual capacities to make sense of

qualitative data . . . only the intelligence, and reflexivity of the human mind can bring meaning to those data. (p. 148)

One goal of this study was to organize the data into what Yin (2003) referred to as a “case study database” (p. 103). The case study database was organized in chronological order so that the data could be reviewed in a seamless manner. This allowed the researcher to be cognizant of the development of the research process and proceeded in implementing the inductive code approach (Patton, 1990). Qualitative researchers analyze their data inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the inductive coding approach, the codes, themes or patterns emerge from the data to explain and describe the phenomena being studied (Patton, 1990). Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined inductive coding approach as “a process for ‘making sense’ of field data” (p. 202).

The point of analysis is not simply to find a concept or label to neatly tie together the data. What is important is understanding the people studied . . . the analytical process is meant to organize and elucidate telling the story of the data. (Patton, 1990, p. 392)

This study incorporated an emergent design, a characteristic of qualitative research, “because it is inconceivable that enough could be known ahead of time about the many multiple realities to devise the design adequately” and because the diverse perspectives and values systems of researcher and participant “interact in unpredictable ways to influence the outcome” of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 41). The emergent design developed and evolved through the research process and each data collection and analysis activity informed subsequent data collection and analysis activities. This research study called for flexibility in order to respond to the

researcher's evolving understanding and to pursue new avenues of inquiry as needed (Patton, 2002). The researcher had the opportunity to follow new leads during fieldwork while taking advantage of the unexpected. The emergent design refers to growing number of decisions that need to be made during the research process. Decisions include subsequent information and where to research for it. The purposive sampling is an indication of the emergent design and guides the data collection course in the process. The process ended when saturation was reached for those concepts and categories and were considered pertinent to describing the phenomenon. This is a complete contrast to those researchers who want to know in advance exactly what data will be collected from whom and in what time frame (Figure 3) (Patton, 2002).

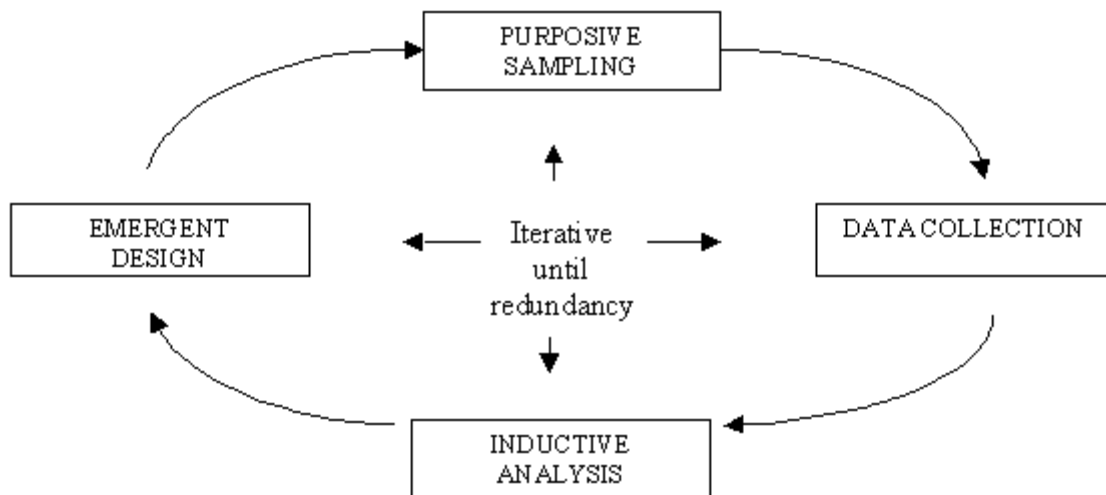


FIGURE 3. Implementation stage (adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 188).

Yet, the researcher was attentive to Marshall and Rossman's (1989) description of the analysis process. They offered, "Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning . . . It is a messy, ambiguous, time –consuming, creative, and

fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat” (p. 112). Analysis of qualitative data requires a search for general statements and relationships among specific categories of data (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). When the data analysis is conducted concurrently with data collection, the study gains focus (Glesne, 1999). The patterns that emerged from the data were reported as themes. The next section details the data analysis process.

Data Analysis Process

From the initial interview, the data analysis process began. Being an integral part of the study, the analysis actually began almost immediately after each interview. A description of the process follows. To organize the data for this circular analysis, the following steps were taken:

1. A copy of each of the interview transcript (emails, documents, etc) was placed in a three-inch binder, organized by pseudonym.
2. Using five different colors of highlighter, one for each non-traditional superintendent, the interview transcripts were read several times and information about each leader was highlighted with their corresponding color.
3. Once the data were color-coded by non-traditional superintendent, themes were written in the margins that each piece of the transcript supported. For example, when one of the non-traditional superintendents stated, “Schools of

educational administration are clueless about preparing superintendents,” the researcher wrote the words “schools of education” in the margin.

4. The themes identified in step three were also categorized and coded with the appropriate pseudonym so statements could be attributed to the appropriate participant.
5. An additional copy of the interview transcripts was made available and significant pieces of the dialogue were cut out and glued to an index card.
6. The data were then clearly organized by the themes that were identified in the margins.
7. The purpose of the index cards was to make lists of the dialogue, organizing the pieces by leaders and then by theme.
8. The pertinent information on the lists was used to author narratives about each of the non-traditional superintendents.

After reviewing the interview transcripts, reflexive journal notes, telephone call notes, emails, authorized web sites, state education records, census records, city records and school district records, prevalent themes and patterns began to emerge from the data.

Developing Categories

Immediately after each interview, the audiotapes were sent to the professional transcriber and the manual coding commenced as soon as transcriptions were received and the frequencies for each theme were calculated

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) illustrated how a coding system is constructed:

You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are *coding categories*. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected . . . so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data. Some coding categories will come to you while you are collecting data. These should be jotted down for future use. (p. 166)

Emerging themes were identified and categories of findings were created based on identified themes. The data were then color-coded according to theme and frequency. It is important to note that the analysis is an on-going process. Observations, interviews field notes and journaling provide analytic insights during the data collection process (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Trustworthiness

“How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 290). The answer is to establish trustworthiness with the audience.

Trustworthiness is a set of criteria used to judge the quality of qualitative research. A primary factor in ensuring the trustworthiness of results from a qualitative field study is the preparation of the human instrument for research. Yin (1989) provided a format for such research:

To help prepare an investigation to do a high quality case study, intensive training should be planned, a case study protocol developed and refined, and a pilot study conducted. These procedures are especially desirable if the research is based on multiple-case design or involve multiple investigators (or both). (p. 61)

In qualitative research, the researcher must meet trustworthiness criteria; it provides evidence of rigor in data collection and analysis of the data as compared with reliability and validity in quantitative research.

According to Tellis (1997), triangulation is the means the researcher uses to confirm the validity (trustworthiness) of the methodology followed. Triangulation of data was used in this study, as is another important element of trustworthiness and credibility. This process uses multiple sources of data, which strengthens the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Lincoln and Guba (1985), asserted that:

Triangulation of data is crucially important in naturalistic studies. As the study unfolds and particular pieces of information come to light, steps should be taken to validate each against at least one other source (for example, a second interview) and/or a second method (for example, an observation in addition to an interview). No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated. (p. 283)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed, “It’s as though a fisherman were to use multiple nets, each of which had a complement of holes, but placed together so that the holes in one net were covered by intact portions of other nets” (p. 306). This researcher used “multiple nets” to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 306). Notions of validity and reliability are important matters in qualitative research. Triangulation increases the reliability of qualitative research, thereby increasing trustworthiness. Triangulation is based on the concept that if several independent participants coincide, the results have higher reliability (Merriam, 1988; Schwandt, 1997). Lincoln and Guba (1985) addressed the critical importance of triangulation:

As the story unfolds and particular pieces of information come to light, steps should be taken to validate each against at least one other source or a second method. No single item of information should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated. (p. 283)

According to Patton (1990), “triangulation is a powerful solution to the problem of relying too much on a single source or method, thereby undermining the validity and creditability of findings because of the weakness of any single method” (p. 193).

In addition to triangulation, (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) peer debriefing and member checking is recommended to establish trustworthiness. Peer debriefing as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). In order to ensure credibility of the data, peer debriefing with colleague, Dr. Sergio Garza took place during the data analysis process.

Member checking was used to determine the “accuracy of the qualitative finding by taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether participants feel they are accurate” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Member checking is a process through which respondents authenticate the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is the systematic solicitation of feedback about the views of participants in the study about data and conclusions (Maxwell, 1996). This was done in order to ensure that the participants’ realities were represented precisely. The research participants received by postal mail and/or electronic mail a professionally transcribed and typed copy of the interview audiotapes for review and revision. The suggested

changes made by the participants were corrected and the participants agreed with the content. Only one transcript needed additional revisions, which were made and finally approved. Data were verified through this process and consequently more data was gathered. The new data were analyzed, coded, triangulated, member checked, peer debriefed and incorporated into the data set from which themes emerged. In addition, drafts of the concluding report with conclusions were shared with the non-traditional participants and allowed them to comment, reflect, amend, expand and/or ensure accuracy. The major role of the research participants was to determine if the interpretations are accurate representations of their responses. It was important that continuous research participant feedback was sought on a regular basis throughout the study in order to clarify any conflicting statements or confusing data.

The combined use of the aforementioned strategies contributed to the trustworthiness of the study. The non-traditional superintendents were interviewed on at least three occasions. Follow-up interviews were requested upon review of the interview transcripts and when needed for further elaboration or information verification. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four constructs of trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility reflects the confidence one can have in the truth of the findings. It is defined as the “extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded in events rather than the inquirer’s personal constructions” and parallels internal validity

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 324). Credibility in this research method centers on the skill and competence of the researcher (Patton, 2002). “The principle is to report any personal; and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation either negatively or positively in the minds of the users of the findings” (Patton, 2002, p. 566).

The burden of proving credibility for this study lies with the researcher. The investigator’s bias is unavoidable and is openly stated. The researcher includes a discussion as part of the methodology section under “Instrumentation” so the reader, knowing a bit more about the researcher, can make better sense of the findings to be made. Another way credibility was ensured is the visibility of data. Visibility refers to the extent others have access to the actual data of a study. Visibility was addressed by providing pieces of the interview transcripts, police report, field notes and pages of the reflexive journal. By having access to the original data, readers can judge the accuracy of the findings. This will be accomplished by providing readers with enough surrounding text that they could draw some conclusions of their own as they assess the findings.

Transferability

Transferability is defined as the process of providing enough data so that external judgments may be made about the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It addresses the extent to which the research findings can be applied to other settings or groups. Transferability

is supported by thick descriptions generated from data gathering and collection through interviews, document reviews and field notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher enhanced transferability with the presentation of thick and rich descriptions of the phenomenon. The researcher probed for more in-depth responses when necessary and gathered as much information as possible. The thickly detailed descriptions emerged from the level of detail in the audio recordings and interview transcripts. However, it is important to remember that one of the participants did not allow any audio recording.

Dependability

Dependability is defined as the technique assumed by the researcher to establish stability in the study and is comparable to reliability (Yin, 1989). According to Lincoln and Guba, (1985), another method of ensuring dependability is to “audit the product” (p. 318). This was accomplished by asking the peer reviewer, who read all of the transcripts and reviewed them with the researcher, to read the final manuscript for “acceptability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318).

To ensure dependability, the researcher created an audit trail to examine the process utilized for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This technique was conducted in a very simplistic manner. All data sources and data analysis processes were very carefully documented both during and after data collection and analysis.

Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that data and interpretations be confirmed by someone other than the researcher. Confirmability seeks objectivity and assurance that the research findings are reflective of the respondents and not a creation of the researcher's biases. The ultimate goal is for the data and findings be upheld by another researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To ensure confirmability, the researcher used triangulation. Interviews, field notes, and reflexive journal entries were examined to determine if they all pointed to the same themes, categories and conclusions. Having provided a thick and rich description of data sources and analysis, the themes and words that emerge revealed a connection to what the limited literature disclosed about non-traditional superintendents.

Summary

This chapter focuses on the interpretative methodology and qualitative research as a method, the population sample, the data collection and analysis employed in this study. The decision to use the qualitative research was based on the considerations of the research questions, the personal experiences of the researcher, and the audience (Creswell, 2003). It is anticipated that the urban non-traditional superintendents, through the sharing of their stories, may challenge the predetermined philosophies often embraced by those who come to this executive position from the usual career path. Two notable exceptions to what was normally relaxed and open researcher-participant interaction were also described. The data collection procedures, the in-depth interviews,

provided the evidence through triangulation. The following chapters describe the research findings and present the results within the context of the research questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

You don't need to have an MBA to be a good leader, whether you come from education or business. Leading a school system is a blend of these two. Whatever skill set you bring you have to augment, supplement it with the other.

Johnson (2003)

Introduction

Wolcott (1990) pointed out that a good starting point for disclosing the findings of any research project is with a basic description of what happened. Therefore, the first section of this chapter begins with some general reflections of this researcher's experience, which are captured in a description of a journey to one of the five interviews. This chapter continues with profiles of the five participants prefaced by a restatement of the problem, research questions, study sample and purpose of the study. Following these profiles, a discussion and listing of prevalent themes emerging from the data analysis are presented. In the final section of this chapter, interview responses and themes will also be viewed in light of the research questions.

“How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The researcher was reading text, on her first ever Amtrak train journey to a northeastern part of the United States. Although the researcher had been preparing for the rigorous

journey that covered the eastern and western parts of the country, the unexpected had always resulted in an anxious stomach. The seats were comfortable with plenty of legroom, however the view was unfamiliar. Snowflakes were swirling out of the sky like feathers. The ground was covered with freshly fallen snow. It had snowed throughout the night and it was a pristine and spectacular sight! In 52 years, the researcher had imagined snow many times but had experienced a semblance only twice. Time stood still, it was an incredible mental portrait.

Suddenly inner voices interrupted the moment. With a sense of urgency, the voices declared: Did you use purposeful sampling? Are you equipped to maintain anonymity? How will you establish credibility? Be quiet and listen. You are not here to listen to yourself talking. Will the epistemological and ontological positionality of the author be suggested in the study? What is the positionality of this Latina, bilingual female? Did the researcher maintain a continuous focus on the research agenda? Was the motive for engaging in this specific study a naïve choice? It was at that point in time that the miraculous Virgin de San Juan silenced the voices and enlightened the researcher to continue on this upward journey and to keep in mind the wise words that guided many qualitative studies in the past. The lessons learned from scholars such as Michael Quinn Patton, Robert Stake, Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba suddenly brought clarity and focus. For instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) taught this researcher that a well thought out plan of inquiry translates to credibility. Stake (1995), suggested techniques for organizing and conducting research successfully. Patton (1990) conveyed that critical case sampling can help the researcher make strong and dramatic points

regarding the study area. With these lessons in mind, it is important to consider the purpose of this study. The purpose of this multi case study was to capture the nature of the experiences of five non-traditional superintendents.

As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the researcher listened to the participants and learned that they wanted to tell their stories; they enjoyed being asked to talk about their careers. Great care was taken by the researcher to utilize research understandings as a result of being quiet and listening attentively. The identification of possible prevalent themes and patterns began to emerge. It was at that critical juncture that the researcher realized that the stories of these non-traditional superintendents did not begin with their voices. Their stories began years ago and resurrected when they were reiterated. The researcher found herself immersed in the stories, listening, taking notes, looking for body language that would not be recorded on the audiotape. It was then that a self-realization occurred. This is significant because it was at that point that the researcher fully realized that interpretivism was truly her philosophical orientation. If there was a doubt why interpretivism methodology had been chosen, it was at the point in time that insight took place. Initially it was a personal career experience that compelled the researcher to understand a phenomenon of interest. During the interviews, it became evident that the researcher enjoyed interviewing with the objective of retelling how the participants made meaning of the phenomenon of non-traditional superintendents.

In order to understand the phenomenon, an in-depth look and a hands-on approach was taken. The suggestion that “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton,

2001, p. 14) was found to be the invitation to enter a world of challenges presented in this study. The researcher accepted the invitation and entered the real-world settings where the “phenomenon of interest unfold naturally” (Patton, 2001, p. 39). The process came full circle. Since qualitative researchers are learners, they go to places where people live, talk, listen, observe, read documents and look at the participants’ material space, attire, and decorations (Patton, 2002).

This is a vital piece of information because it sheds light as to why the participant stories were viewed particularly interesting and found illuminating. Their stories were never the truth, or the one truth. The researcher was threading on foreign territory. An impending self-awareness of the epistemological and ontological positionality ensured that the choice of a qualitative research study was a philosophical one. In light of this basic description of what happened (Wolcott, 1990), a review of the statement of the problem, research questions, sample and purpose of the study will set the stage for the profiles of the principal participants.

Statement of the Problem

A new type of educational administrators, professionals with knowledge outside the field of education is being tapped to lead many of the nations largest and, for the most part, challenging school systems (National School Board Association Superintendent Survey, 2002). Some large urban districts are seeking out chief executive officers of large corporations with successful track records in management, aging infrastructure and management accountability (Hess, 1999b). Some urban school

boards are of the opinion that there are ample personnel with instructional expertise who can assist the non-traditional superintendent with the educational role of the position. Typically non-traditional superintendents will delegate the responsibility of improving instructional methods and student achievement to the trained educators who often assume second in command positions. However, this trend begs a fundamental question. Is there ample research to support these hiring decisions?

Research Questions

The following research questions served to focus the form and content of this study:

1. What were the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to:
 - a. characteristics of effective leadership
 - b. their preparation for the superintendency
 - c. being hired in urban districts
 - d. successful experiences and challenges during their tenure as urban school leaders
2. How did five urban non-traditional superintendents compare and contrast their responsibilities as school leaders with previous leadership roles?
3. What were their recommendations for superintendent preparation and support?

Research Sample

Selection Criteria for Non-traditional Superintendents

Five non-traditional superintendents were selected using purposeful sampling.

The following criteria were applied using this method:

1. The selected leaders' expertise was to come from outside the field of education and they lacked experience in the field of education (Mathews, 2001).
2. The participants must lead or have recently led an urban school district in the United States of America.
3. The participants must have served as an urban non-traditional superintendent for a period of two years or more in the same school district.
4. The participants must have served as an urban non-traditional superintendent of a school district of over 20,000.

The five non-traditional superintendents interviewed brought promising context for the exploration of their experiences.

Profile of Principal Participants

Five non-traditional superintendents were the focus of this interpretive study.

Although much about these participants is revealed through the presentation of data and data analysis, a concise snapshot of each participant follows as well as the district and local community information. Each profile contains the superintendent's biographical

sketch and descriptions of the school districts, including demographics, and information about district governance. The following sources were consulted for compiling the case study's profile information: interview transcriptions, telephone calls, emails, journal notes, authorized web sites, state education records, census records, city records and school district records. The names of the participants, the school districts, the cities and states have been changed in order to ensure anonymity.

John Newton and School District A

Why did you choose the superintendency?

I never deliberately planned to be a school superintendent. I was recruited because of a long and distinguished career in education and leadership.

On April 19, 2003, Mr. John Newton, an attorney, was named sole finalist for superintendent of School District A. In the summer of 2004, he began his duties as a non-traditional superintendent in School District A. He was the district's first non-traditional superintendent, one who did not follow the traditional career pathway to the superintendency. According to the school board president,,

Mr. Newton brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise, along with a strong commitment to public education. He will be a visionary leader for our school district, drawing on the best of our traditions and legacy while guiding our students and staff to their highest possible levels of learning and success. Another board member from School District A stated Mr. Newton was hired because: 'he is and always will be a passionate advocate for children.'

Mr. Newton, former superintendent and education activist, born in 1950, was raised in Texas and attended Texas Christian University. In 1972, he earned a Bachelors of Business Administration from a university in Texas. In 1976, he graduated with a Juris

Doctorate from a Texas School of Law. He is married to an educator and their children all attended and graduated from public schools. His law practice of 24 years primarily focused on insurance defense and general civil litigation.

John Newton served as senior vice president overseeing state and federal relations of a national reading program. Two state governors appointed Mr. Newton to serve as Commissioner of Education from 1995 to 2002. During his tenure, he was instrumental in the authoring of the state policy, which impacted over 1100 school districts in the state. One of the many major challenges he faced was the development and implementation of the current state accountability system. He is a board member of a Washington, D.C. nonprofit organization that is committed to improving standards-based education in American school districts. In the spring of 2003, he served as a Senior Advisor to the Iraq Ministry of Education from June 2003 through September 2003. In this capacity, he was charged with the reorganization of schools in war-torn Iraq.

In order to serve as superintendent of School District A, he needed a state waiver in lieu of a superintendent's certification. The state granted the waiver. Mr. Newton signed a five-year contract, making him the fourth-highest paid superintendent in an urban area. His starting salary was \$229,500 and he was eligible for a ten percent performance bonus subject to his summer evaluation. During his tenure in District A, he implemented a new elementary reading program, a math initiative supported by a major technology corporation; passed a \$145.4 million bond package; and consolidated several campuses. He also worked with state officials to pass a promising school finance bill.

School District A: A Description

School district A is located in North Central Texas. The student population in 2006 was 38,425. In 2005-2006, the district earned an accountability rating of *Recognized*, along with a Gold Performance Acknowledgment in Social Studies. The city encompasses 38.5 square miles with a population of 98,200. At the time, the school district had 55 schools, which included four high schools, seven junior high schools, three freshman centers, 41 elementary schools and one alternative-learning center. The district is a major area employer with 4,511 employees, including 2,544 full-time classroom teachers. School District A allocated approximately \$3,661 per pupil for instructional expenses. Table 4 describes average class size information for School District A during 2004-2006.

Student Performance

More than 84% of the 2006 AISD graduating class took college entrance exams. Approximately 90% of AISD students attend college upon graduation. Table 5 provides pertinent information regarding the ethnic distribution of students and staffing.

TABLE 4. 2004-2006 AISD Average Class Size

Elementary	Class Size Average
Kindergarten	18.9
Grade 1	18.5
Grade 2	18.4
Grade 3	17.8
Grade 4	18.3
Grade 5	22.5
Grade 6	21.0
Secondary	Class Size Average
English/Language Arts	21.2
Foreign Languages	21.0
Mathematics	20.8
Science	23.8
Social Studies	24.5

TABLE 5. Student Ethnic Distribution – AISD

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	34.6%
Hispanic	31.1%
African-American	25.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.9%
Native American	0.4%
Staff	
Total number of Teaching Staff	2,544
Average years of experience	9.1
Average salary	\$46,341
Beginning salary, with bachelor's degree	\$42,850
Total number of AISD employees	4,776
Professional staff holding upper-level degrees	33%

Governance

School District A is governed by a traditional school board. The Board of Trustees is composed of seven board members who serve three-year staggered terms to ensure that board membership includes experienced members. In general, they exceed the number of state required hours of training year after year. All board members have college degrees, ranging from an associate to a Juris Doctorate. Elections are held every May. The School District A Board meets on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m., with special called meetings as needed. Meetings are held during the school year.

Walter White and School District B

Why did you choose the superintendency?

I did not apply for the superintendency. I couldn't; I was not certified. But I was helping out the school district by being a part of a committee. See, the schools were in terrible shape, physically. Many of the schools were dilapidated, run down physically and in need of repair. The technology in the district was essentially non-existent for teaching. Anyway, going back to the committee, I kept making suggestions and the board liked my ideas. One day, I got a telephone call from the board asking me to seriously consider stepping in and taking the superintendency.

Dr. White started his duties as leader of District B, the second- largest in the state in January of 2000 and resigned in 2003 for personal reasons. He stated that he accepted the job because he was "committed to help the kids." Because he was not a certified school superintendent, he initially began his tenure as the Chief Executive Officer of the district. In order to be named superintendent of schools, the state would have to award him a waiver in lieu of a superintendent's certificate. Since the state had never

employed a non-educator to lead its schools, the state legislators added an exemption to the law allowing Dr. White to assume this position since he had not taken the state required assessments to serve the district in the capacity of superintendent. The State Education Board agreed to waive the required certification.

Dr. White explained the process in this manner:

. . . when I was Superintendent of Schools then was moved to First Chief Executive Officer and they changed the law for me so I could superintend because I had not taught kindergarten for two years or something like that. There was some guideline that I had not met that the state required that all superintendents needed. Anyway, the law was changed in a snap and I was superintendent.

Dr. Walter White was formerly a citizen of District B. He graduated from the district schools and, after being away for a number of years, he, his wife and children returned to the city to find a much-changed community. He received a bachelor's degree from Wheaton College in 1961, a master's degree from the University of Illinois in 1963 and in 1973 earned a doctorate from a university in Michigan. His focus was industrial psychology and working in major corporations and ensuring turnaround efforts, "very much a change agent." He served as human resources vice president for a large national chain store company. He was also as a managerial consultant for over 300 companies and governmental agencies in the United States of American and Western Europe. Dr. White also worked in the Management Institute in Oslo, Norway. He is a published author in peer-reviewed professional journals. He has also authored a textbook used in schools of business. As superintendent of schools, he quickly became aware that the

school district was not a first choice for many community members who had school-aged children. School buildings were older and were crumbling from neglect.

School District B: A Description

School District B is located in South Central United States. The student population in 2003 was 40,150. The district encompasses 184 square miles. The district employs 5,722 individuals of which 2,903 are certified teachers. During Dr. White's tenure, the school district had 77 schools, which included six high schools, 14 junior high schools, 52 elementary schools and five alternative schools. School District B allocated approximately \$3,915 per pupil for instructional expenses. Table 6 describes average class size information for School District B during 2000-2002.

TABLE 6. 2000-2002 BISD Average Class Size

Elementary	Class Size Average
Kindergarten	18.6:1
Grade 1	18.6:1
Grade 2	18.6:1
Grade 3	18.6:1
Grade 4	14:1
Grade 5	14:1
Grade 6	20:1
Secondary	Class Size Average
English/Language Arts	20.0:1
Foreign Languages	20.0:1
Mathematics	20.0:1
Science	20.0:1
Social Studies	20.0:1

Table 7 provides pertinent information regarding the ethnic distribution of students and staffing.

TABLE 7. Student Ethnic Distribution – BISD

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	33.3%
Hispanic	19.9%
African-American	38.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.7%
Native American	5.6%
Staff	
Total number of Teaching Staff	2,903
Average years of experience	11.5
Average salary	\$29,121
Beginning salary, with bachelor's degree	\$23,000
Total number of BISD employees	5,722
Professional staff holding upper-level degrees	38%

Governance

School District B is governed by a traditional school board of whom none are educators. Five of the board members have college degrees in the areas of finance; one has a degree in Criminal Justice and the later in Computer Science. The seven-member school board represents a specific geographic district and serves a staggered four-year term. Board members receive \$20.00 per meeting and the amount may not exceed \$100.00 per month. All of the board members donate their funds to a scholarship fund. They meet on the first and third Thursday of every month.

Patrick Vogel and School District C

Why did you choose the superintendency?

My family knows that I want to ensure that every child has access to an excellent education and if it means taking the bold step of being a CEO or superintendent that is what I will do and that is what I did.

In 2002, Mr. Patrick Vogel, who was viewed by the community as the savior of urban schools started his duties as the second non-traditional superintendent for School District C. Patrick Vogel, a six-foot, five-inch gentleman from Greek descent. He grew up in a close family in west Chicago. As a youngster, he attended Catholic, Greek Orthodox and public schools. Upon his high school graduation, his parents did not allow him to attend a four year college because of his low grades. Instead he attended a community college. Soon after he transferred and earned a bachelor's degree in education, a Magna Cum Laude graduate and two master's degrees: in political science and another in history from a Midwestern university. Mr. Vogel is married to a former peace officer and together they have three sons. The children do not attend public schools. Instead they attend a religious school affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church, Mrs. Vogel's denomination. This decision was made early in the marriage.

Prior to Mr. Vogel entering the field of education, he served as a policy adviser to the state senate and was director of a state's Economic and Fiscal Commission. He also served as city revenue director and finally as city budget director, managing a budget of over \$3.75 billion. The urban city mayor appointed him to head a school district of 500,000 students, 557 schools, 45,000 employees and he remained as

superintendent for over six years. He resigned to enter the political arena. In 2001, he narrowly lost a race to become a nominee for state governor.

His plans to improve education at District C included increasing school safety, building and/or renovating all instructional buildings, balancing the district budget by 2007, implementing mandatory summer school for all students who did not successfully complete their grades or subjects and involving parents in their children's education.

School District C: A Description

School District C is located in Northeastern United States and is one of the largest urban school districts in the country. District C is in a historic and culturally rich setting with a racially and ethnically diverse community. The student population in 2007 was 210,432 and growing annually by 3%. The district consisted of 276 public schools with a per pupil expenditure of \$5,971. The city encompasses 142.6 square miles, with a population of 1,517,550. Table 8 describes average class size information for School District C during 2002-2007.

Table 9 provides pertinent information regarding the ethnic distribution of students and staffing.

TABLE 8. 2002-2007 CISD Average Class Size

Elementary	Class Size Average
Kindergarten	18.3:1
Grade 1	21.6:1
Grade 2	21.6:1
Grade 3	21.6:1
Grade 4	21.6:1
Grade 5	21.6:1
Grade 6	18.3:1
Secondary	Class Size Average
English/Language Arts	24.9:1
Foreign Languages	24.9:1
Mathematics	24.9:1
Science	24.9:1
Social Studies	24.9:1
Librarian	922:1
Counselor	543:1

TABLE 9. Student Ethnic Distribution – CISD

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	13.0%
Hispanic	16.9%
African-American	62.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.0%
Native American	0.2%
Other	1.2%
Staff	
Total number of Teaching Staff	10,109
Average years of experience	7
Average salary	\$50,553
Beginning salary, with bachelor's degree	\$39,914
Total number of CISD employees	25,104
Professional staff holding upper-level degrees	40%

Governance

The school district is not governed by a traditional school board. In December of 2001, CISD was taken over by the state, and the governor was given the power to appoint a majority of the five-member School Reform Commission. The Governor of Urban City C appoints three of the members, and the Mayor appoints two members of the commission. The reasons for the state takeover were the continuous low assessment scores and repeated financial crises.

Harold O. Lee and School District D

Why did you choose the superintendency?

I was offered the job and took a leave of absence to fight for children, to defend them from politicians and bureaucrats. Not a small feat considering the size of the district. I wanted to do something for the most important issue in the country-education.

Harold O. Lee is of German and Jewish descent. His grandparents were captured and killed in German concentration camps while his parents escaped to the United States. His parents owned and operated a business. Throughout his childhood he attended the city public schools. His most fond memory of his primary years is of being assigned playground monitor in which he supervised his classmates using a whistle during recess. At the time of the interview, his two children were attending one of the city's most exclusive private schools.

In 2000, Harold O. Lee was appointed to serve as chief executive and instructional leader of a mega, overwhelmingly poor public school system and served

until 2002. This large and overwhelmingly poor public school system has a student population of close to one million children, of which 84 % are children and youth of color. There are 200,000 employees, not including approximately 80,000 teachers. A major concern is that 18% of the teachers were not certified. The district has over 1,100 buildings and a roughly \$13 billion budget. Mr. Lee would be earning a salary of \$245,000.00 plus undisclosed benefits. This corporate attorney and banking executive is a graduate of Cornell University with a Bachelor's degree in industrial and labor relations (1974) and a Juris Doctorate from the Cornell Law School (1979). He also holds a Masters in Arts Degree from the University of Oxford. In addition, he holds honorary doctorates from Baruch, Bard and St. Francis Colleges.

Mr. Lee never planned on being a superintendent; instead he “planned on being a civil rights lawyer.” He instead enjoyed a successful corporate law practice. In 1999, he showed interest in the superintendency and accepted the job at a fraction of his former salary. This leader, accepting the job,”...out of a commitment to public education.” Over the mayor's strenuous opposition, the Board of Education voted four to three to make Mr. Lee interim superintendent. For Mr. Lee's months on the job, the mayor refused to address him. Using a professional and respectful approach to improving relations with the mayor, within a few months, he was unanimously voted permanent superintendent.

Due to his lack of traditional education credentials, the State Commissioner of Education granted Mr. Lee a waiver to serve as superintendent. The waiver was granted even though the city had filed legal documents with the state education department

seeking to block the waiver. Mr. Lee's appointment was viewed as a conflict of interest because he had been a member of the 16 member State Board of Regents until one week prior to his assuming the position. Among the roles and responsibilities of the board is to set statewide education policy and standards and appoint the state commissioner of education.

School District D: A Description

D Independent School District (DISD) is located in upper Northeastern United States. The student population in 2000-2002 was 1.1 million, with over 170 languages spoken at the schools and over 1,400 schools. All correspondence was translated from English to Spanish, Chinese, Urdu, Russian, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Korean, and Arabic. In 2002, the teaching staff totaled over 80,000 teachers, of which 11,000 were not certified and 78,000 belonged to a union. District D spent an average of \$11,627 per student per year. The city encompasses 322 square miles with a population of over eight million people. Table 10 describes average class size information for DISD during 2000-2002.

Table 11 provides pertinent information regarding the ethnic distribution of students and staffing.

TABLE 10. 2000-2002 DISD Average Class Size

Elementary	Class Size Average
Kindergarten	13.1
Grade 1	20.2
Grade 2	20.2
Grade 3	20.2
Grade 4	26-3
Grade 5	26.3
Grade 6	26.3
Secondary	Class Size Average
English/Language Arts	27.7
Foreign Languages	27.7
Mathematics	27.7
Science	27.7
Social Studies	27.7

TABLE 11. Student Ethnic Distribution – DISD

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	10.0%
Hispanic	36.9%
African-American	34.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18.5%
Native American	0.0%
Other	0.0%
Staff	
Total number of Teaching Staff	80,000
Average years of experience	13
Average salary	\$49,019
Beginning salary, with bachelor's degree	\$31,884
Total number of AISD employees	120,000+
Professional staff holding upper-level degrees	30%

Governance

School District D was under the traditional governance of elected Boards of Education. Usually, the school board sets educational policy for a school system and hires a superintendent to administer that policy. However, in many urban districts, the city mayors want state governments and city councils to give them the ability to bring about the sweeping structural overhaul they say the school systems in their cities require. The mayor of District D wanted to be held directly responsible for school progress and provide essential management and financing assistance. To these ends, the state legislature gave the mayor full control of the schools in 2002, who immediately began reorganization and reform efforts. Mr. Lee resigned from his leadership post after serving two years.

Daniel Schulman and District E

Why did you choose the superintendency?

I wanted to continue serving my country. I can't think of a better way of serving my country than by involving myself in education.

Daniel Schulman, a career military officer, holds a bachelor's degree; three master's degrees and has completed coursework for a Ph.D. in Public Administration from the Graduate School of Public Affairs at a state university. He served as an intelligence officer for more than 25 years. He retired from his naval career as a commander.

During his tenure as superintendent in 1997, he took 27 semester hours of night and weekend courses so that he could qualify for the required state license and in preparation for his state exam. He had the following to say about the educational administration courses that he took, “When I go to school I am ready to absorb information. I don’t want it to be just seat time. I want to learn something.” Mr. Schulman, was appointed superintendent in 1997.

School District E: A Description

E Independent School District (EISD) is located in Northwestern United States and has a student population of 27,804 students, 4,200 staff members, including 1,544 teachers. The district has 55 schools, 32 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 12 high schools and one alternative school. The school district area covers approximately 495 square miles with a population of 118,000.

Table 12 describes average class size information for School District E during 2007.

Table 13 provides pertinent information regarding the ethnic distribution of students and staffing.

TABLE 12. 2007 EISD Average Class Size

Elementary	Class Size Average
Kindergarten	10.0
Grade 1	16.7
Grade 2	16.7
Grade 3	16.7
Grade 4	16.7
Grade 5	16.7
Secondary	Class Size Average
English/Language Arts	22.0
Foreign Languages	22.0
Mathematics	22.0
Science	22.0
Social Studies	22.0

TABLE 13. Student Ethnic Distribution –EISD

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	77.2%
Hispanic	14.2%
African-American	1.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.4%
Native American	0.7%
Staff	
Total number of Teaching Staff	1,544
Average years of experience	13
Average salary	\$48,952
Beginning salary, with bachelor's degree	\$30,096
Total number of AISD employees	4,200
Professional staff holding upper-level degrees	33%

Governance

A seven member traditional school board governs and determines policy to guide the district. Members are elected each year for overlapping terms, each member serves

for four years. They were elected to represent specific geographic areas within the district boundaries. They are volunteers who serve without pay. This board is very aware that it is critical that they balance the interests of the constituents which elected them with the needs of the entire system. The board meetings are broadcast live on the local television channel. They meet one a month on the third Thursday of the month. They hold committee meetings as needed.

Conclusion

These brief introductions help to contextualize the study. Final sections address actual research findings. Prevalent themes emerging from the research are discussed and participant responses relative to the research questions are presented.

Prevalent Themes

After reviewing the interview transcripts, reflexive journal notes, telephone call notes, emails, authorized web sites, state education records, census records, city records and school district records, prevalent themes and patterns began to emerge from the data.

The following list of prevalent themes emerged from the data:

- Change agency
- Accountability
- Political Connection/Clout
- School reform

- Student Achievement
- Excellent Leadership

Using the list, the data collected from the interviews were analyzed further and in more depth. The process can best be described in two factions, living with the data and circular, with each passing through the data creating an almost redundant conceptualization of the emerging themes and patterns. The process ended when saturation and repetition in the data cycle was reached. The researcher was no longer hearing or seeing new information. The emerging themes will be discussed in detail.

Change Agency

It was clear from the data that these non-traditional superintendents believed that one of the reasons they were hired was because change needed to occur in order to bring success to the school district. In terms of change agency, John Newton believed that his board hired him for this purpose, but he thought that traditional educator's could also transform districts. In addition, he contended that trustees thought that his legal background would be a benefit in the change process. He asserted,

. . . school board members actually told me I was expected to make some tough decisions and it would take someone with a legal mind to be able to make them yet not end up with a lawsuit on their hands.

This school board's view is consistent with contingency theory. Newton had a legal background and trustees felt that hard changes were needed, thus matching his set of skills with the situation at hand. This participant also believed that change had to be managed in an intelligent manner, regardless of whether a traditional or non-traditional

leader was at the helm. Other non-traditional superintendents offered different perspectives of change.

Walter White felt that there were two prerequisites to effective change. He offered,

Change requires two things to be successful. It requires confrontation and compassion. It requires a special kind of person to take on change-it needs to be a change agent.

In terms of confrontation, White believed that leader must “. . . send out a message early that is hard . . .” He did not fully explain the compassion part of this dichotomous approach to change. The implication seemed to be that educators needed to hear tough messages, such as those communicated on a frequent basis in the business world. White differed from Newton in this respect. Newton felt that educators were also up to the challenge of changing organizations to better serve students. Yet another participant emphasized the need for the change agent to have some historical distance from the organization.

Patrick Vogel stated that the leader for change would be,

. . . preferably an external agent without any baggage or relation to a school board member, city mayor or staff member. How’s that for a tall order?

Similar to John Newton’s board’s desire to bring in a person who has a unique set of skills or characteristics needed to confront a particular situation, Vogel also believed that a certain kind of leader was needed to make effective change. Again, this is consistent with contingency theory. Vogel also asserted that change takes time and that organizations should make intelligent choices about what kind of change is needed.

While the above participants emphasized the nature and their general philosophies of change, Howard Lee's focus was more pragmatic.

Lee targeted the specific changes that were needed in his district in his comments regarding this topic, with a particular emphasis on eliminating discrimination. He contended,

I did not allow any organizations in my district that discriminated against my homosexual students. I also did not allow any school administrators to make inappropriate sexual comment to students. . . .

Howard Lee also enumerated a number of other items that were in need of change in his district, including school violence, disrespectful treatment of customers, budget shortfalls, and crumbling facilities. He believed that the school system did not offer the tools he needed to make these changes. Lee asserted,

You're given these mechanical, structural things, and what you really need is a podium, and a checkbook-I tried to change that.

Returning to a more philosophical view of change, David Schulman pondered the definition of the word, *change agent*. He offered,

A change agent is hard to define. It is not someone who just makes changes; it is a process that is designed to improve practices.

In terms of process, Schulman believed that change must be deliberate with a well thought out plan leading the way. He felt that thorough planning was needed to effectively confront inevitable barriers to change. Schulman ended his comments about this topic with a discussion concerning the complexities of the superintendency in terms of change. He contended,

The superintendency is probably one of the most difficult jobs in the country (because) the system needed to have changed with the times. Time does not stand still; educational systems are the only ones that stand still.

Discussions of change agency involving these participants ranged from a philosophical, conceptual level to more pragmatic views. Some mentioned the need, or perceived need, to hire a superintendent that had a unique set of skills or experiences to fit a particular situation. Others were more pragmatic, citing specific changes that were needed in their districts. Even though this subject was discussed in various ways and at different conceptual levels, all of these non-traditional superintendents emphasized the importance of change in their respective school systems with the end goal of providing a better quality of education to students.

Accountability

The demand for accountability in public education has never been higher than it is today. The revolutionary No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), has increased the responsibility of all public school educators by mandating an accountability system that measures school performance through the test results of all students. The Act addresses the little evidence of accountability in school districts, between top level administration and the schools. Greater accountability has become entrenched in education and has instituted a new level and demand of responsibility.

The superintendents in this study emphasized the importance of a wider view of accountability by including other operational areas beyond academics in their

discussions. John Newton suggested that traditional superintendents are usually hired to improve academics, while non-traditional leaders are called upon to address additional concerns that exist within a district. He stated,

. . . if an educator is called to step up to the plate it is usually to increase student success. If an outsider is called in, the district is probably in trouble both in student success and in all other areas.

Further, Patrick Vogel offered that a superintendent must lead by example in order to set the appropriate tone for accountability.

Everybody was held accountable. One of the first things I did when I accepted the CEO job was to freeze my own salary and not sign a contract. I did the same thing to all top level administrators. They were not issued contracts, no expense accounts, no golden parachutes. Everybody had jobs as long as we performed and produced.

It is clear from this statement that Vogel embraced other aspects of accountability, including financial responsibility. He also believed that employees were not the only ones that should be held to standards. Vogel stated that students must also be held accountable. To this end, he did away with social promotion in his district. This non-traditional superintendent not only argued that there were many operational areas that should fall in the accountability realm, but that responsibility for performance should also be extended to the learner.

Howard Lee named specific examples of nonacademic areas that should be scrutinized. He cited instances of ramshackle school buildings and lost computers in his district. Quality education involves much more than immediate test preparation within the four walls of a classroom; it also includes providing adequate facilities and

equipment for optimal learning. Lee suggested that there was limited time for the education of students that should not be wasted. He asserted,

In education every second counts. The clock ticks and youthful minds are being wasted.

This non-traditional superintendent believed that leaders must address a wide variety of problems in a timely manner to improve education and that educators should be held accountable for accomplishing this goal. Other participants focused on the importance of truthful data systems and strong messages to their staffs to increase accountability.

Walter White contended that strong data systems were essential to meeting accountability standards. He asserted,

Truthful data systems are necessary for well informed decisions to take place.

White further stated in respect to accountability;

Questions better be answered and the answers better be measurable, acceptable and truthful. The last thing anyone likes is surprises.

In addition to his definitive views on strong data systems, he also felt that he needed to convey hard messages to his staff regarding accountability. He offered,

I could say to the principals, I feel your pain-but that would be a joke--that equals to don't worry. Everything will be ok. How can you hold anyone accountable with that kind of butterball attitude?

This assertive approach to dealing with accountability issues was not dissimilar to his strategy for communicating the need for change as discussed above. Again, this approach was indicative of business practices that encourage "bottom line" communication, as opposed to softer messages often associated with traditional superintendents.

Walter White was not the only participant who believed in straight talk. David Schulman recalled his first staff meeting:

In my first staff meeting, I told everyone they were accountable for the success of all students. They looked at me with disbelief. They could not believe this was the important message. After all, they had heard this many times from their traditional superintendents. But what they had not heard is, Why have you let an entire school district down? Why have you allowed so many children of color to be pulled out of this district? Why do you still have a job?

The participants in this study cited a number of factors involved in holding schools more accountable, namely leading by example, extending responsibility to the learners, recognition that accountability should include more than just academic performance, the need for strong data systems, and the need to send strong messages to the staff regarding expectations. As John Newton pointed out, non-traditional superintendents are often called in when the problems extend beyond the academic arena. However, it must be noted that there are traditional superintendents who have experienced success in light of accountability systems and that there was no empirical evidence to prove that these approaches cited by the participants actually improve student performance.

Political Connections/Clout

In the 1970's a new type of superintendent emerged. According to Cuban (1976a), superintendents were forced into the political arena. Relationships with stakeholders became contentious. Top-level administrators have used their political capital to build institutional support for education, expand the managerial capacity of school districts, and promote better working relationships between school districts and

other levels of government. The participants in this study support Cuban's (1976a) view that superintendent's were forced to deal with political elements of their environments.

These non-traditional superintendents emphasized the importance of political astuteness, savvy, and connectedness. One participant even observed that the non-traditional superintendency begins and ends in the political realm. John Newton stated,

The superintendent's political future depends greatly on how the schools perform and by now you figured that most non-educators were appointed or recruited by other political leaders.

David Schulman appeared to disagree with the political nature of appointments when he asserted,

There is no room for political leadership in education. Some non-educators have gained the position because of their names and their connections to bureaucrats.

While Newton and Schulman focused on the importance politics plays in the actual hiring of a non-traditional leader, others commented on the pervasiveness of politics in education. Walter White asserted:

Politics are everywhere, in the school system, in department stores, in the airplane that you flew in. In order for me to have done well in my position, I needed to be politically connected, politically savvy and not have kept it a secret.

White obviously emphasized the importance of people knowing that he was politically connected. Patrick Vogel also believed that it should not be a secret. He contended,

Political leaders who are overtly connected to city and business officials will take a broken school district regardless of size and convert it to a fortune 500 company.

It was clear that these leaders believed that their political involvement should be open and observable.

In the mid-1950's, John F. Kennedy authored a book entitled *Profiles in Courage* while in bed recovering from back surgery. He profiled United States senators who had exhibited great political courage in the course of their tenures; some even losing their jobs as a result of their strong positions on issues. Howard Lee echoed this theme when he proffered,

In this job, you need political courage. A lot of political courage because if some groups did not like what I was doing, they had no problem going to the mayor.

Within this particular theme, these participants focused on the role politics plays in appointments of non-traditional superintendents, the pervasiveness of politics in education, the need for open and observable or overt political connectedness, and the need to have political courage. The next major theme to be discussed is a direct product of the political process – school reform.

School Reform

Demands for changes in education spawned waves of reform (Fuhrman, 2003). These waves of reform were large-scale and systemic (Hess, 1999a). Superintendents were charged with the implementation of the mandates emerging from these school reform efforts. The non-traditional superintendents in this study are not excused from this responsibility. They are charged with dealing with changes in school policy as economic, social, and technological forces make new demands on what students need to know to be successful. Reform may be perceived as several small steps towards

bringing about change. In this study, school reform was found to be very much on the minds of the participants.

Non-traditional superintendents in this study observed that school reform is not a fixed and stagnant concept; rather it is a moving target. For instance, Walter White contended,

We keep calling it reform, but every five to 10 years there is a new definition of what reform means. It evolves but it has to—society evolves.

Howard Lee had a different conception of the changing nature of reform when he stated,

School reform is not new. Every few years, educators think of a new name for the same practice.

White felt that the definition was constantly changing while Lee believed that reform equates to the same set of practices, but assumes different titles through time. Whatever reform truly is, there are those that profess that it is not an absolute answer to the problems that schools face today.

There are no “silver bullet” solutions to the challenges in public education. (P. Houston, personal communication, June 22, 2007). At least one of the participants agreed with Houston’s assessment of reform efforts. John Newton stated,

School reform is not a “silver bullet” to greater student achievement. This non-traditional superintendent further stated that substantive school reform “requires an extended period of time and commitment from all stakeholders. It is not an overnight fixation.

This reference to gaining a commitment from all stakeholders was congruent with distributed leadership, which is offered as one of the theoretical bases for this study.

While these participants concentrated on the changing nature of reform and on the fact that it was not a “silver bullet” to the problems that confront public education, others referred to specific district level effects of reform.

Patrick Vogel recalled that his reform efforts resulted in an uprising in his community. He stated,

In my first school district, there was a parent riot because of school reform. I didn't allow their junior high school children to participate in the annual graduation ceremony if they did not successfully pass to the ninth grade.

Howard Lee was not confronted with parent riots, but with dysfunctional buildings. Lee recalled,

Those kids needed safe buildings for school reform to take place. This state has refused to take care of its students. It was only until my tenure that classrooms were still heated with coal furnaces. That is school reform.

It is interesting to note that similar to the discussion of change, presented earlier in this chapter, these non-traditional superintendents tended to approach the subject of reform from either a philosophical standpoint or from a more pragmatic platform.

David Schulman took the widest view of reform when he asserted,

This country is a reform. We must and will do everything to ensure that we rise to being the best country in the world. If school reform is what we need then so be it.

He added that educators must prepare students to thrive in a global economy.

These participants offered that reform is changing and dynamic in nature and that it was not a “silver bullet”, which can totally address all challenges faced by schools. They also discussed district level examples of reform efforts; including references to circumstances that one would not normally associate with reform, such as parent riots

and inferior buildings. These references to the more practical, district level aspects of school reform might be significant in informing policymakers as they pass future legislative acts intended to improve our educational system, particularly in the area of school finance.

Student Achievement

Educational challenges were illuminated in 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) released a controversial report titled *A Nation at Risk* (NAR). This federal report criticized the American education system for mediocre student achievement results and highlighted its poor performance in comparison with international counterparts. This indictment caught the attention of everyone, particularly the business community and policymakers prompting a call for basic reforms in education (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). These non-traditional superintendents were very much concerned that public education was at a critical juncture, particularly in the area of academic performance. Students are not well prepared for the 21st century workforce and they are being held back by bureaucracies and egos. A driving concern of all five participants was the improvement of student achievement.

All of the non-traditional superintendent's felt the pressure of elevating student test scores. The essence of this pervasive view was best captured by Patrick Vogel when he stated,

It doesn't matter, traditional or not, superintendents are under the gun to improve student achievement.

They all concurred on the *what*, which was to improve student performance, but the more important consideration was related to the *how*.

Improved teacher quality was mentioned as a means to the end of better student test scores. John Newton articulated that effective teachers and high academic performance are inseparable when he asserted,

I focused on teacher quality and student achievement. You don't have to be an educator to figure that one out.

Howard Lee suggested that achieving the goal of having a high qualified teacher in every classroom is difficult. He contended,

It is virtually impossible to remove an incompetent teacher-instead they get transferred from one school to another and unfortunately they usually end up in the schools with the greatest needs (laughs). Incredible!

These participants recognized that there were factors beyond teacher quality that make a difference in student achievement.

Two participants contended that educational leaders need to be prepared to address a more comprehensive set of challenges beyond good teaching and improved student learning. In respect to administrator preparation as it relates to be academic performance, Walter White offered:

It's a struggle to improve academically, manage facilities, finances effectively. That is why boards are looking for leaders with business expertise outside the field of education. The CEO hires an academic person and he or she does nothing else but academics. That is one way to insure student success. It is based on supply and demand.

Patrick Vogel held a similar position on the problem of lagging student performance. He contended:

We don't want kids to fall behind there just has not been enough progress and the courses that are taught in education schools do not teach enough about change, accountability, finance, human resources, diversity. Instead you are taught pedagogy-good pedagogy.

The participants mentioned the need for better teacher quality and for more well-rounded leaders. But what was the ultimate goal of improved student performance? These non-traditional superintendents believed that at the end of the day the objective was to prepare children for the future. John Newton offered,

I needed to ensure that we met the demands of the 21st-century economy.

Howard Lee emphasized the importance of preparing students for future studies at the university level when he stated,

In the ideal world, my top priority would be to find new ways to ensure that all students met academic standards and promoting college readiness.

Finally, David Schulman's focus was on developing productive citizens. He commented,

We should prepare tomorrow's members of society to succeed; therefore, we must educate all students to an optimum level.

All participants in this study asserted that student achievement had improved under their leadership. However, it should be noted that this study was not a quantitative analysis of test scores in these districts. The primary purpose of this interpretive study was to examine the perceptions of urban non-traditional superintendents on educational administration. Therefore, these assertions regarding improved student performance were purely anecdotal in nature as opposed to being subjected to rigorous quantitative examination. Furthermore, three of the five participants had served only two years at the

helm of their districts before departing. Of the remaining two, one served five years prior to leaving and the other had been in the position for seven years.

With this qualification in mind, these participants all felt the pressure of demands for improved student performance, believed that teacher quality was a key factor in the achievement process, recognized that academic growth involved more than sound pedagogy and emphasized that the ultimate goal of better student achievement was to more effectively prepare students for the future. These non-traditional superintendents frequently mentioned superior leadership while discussing student achievement. The final major theme emerging from this study was in fact excellent leadership.

Excellent Leadership

Upon entering the 21st century, reformers of public education are facing especially enormous challenges. In the present century superintendents may not succeed with 20th century skills. In a book for 21st century leaders, *Skills for the Successful 21st Century School Leaders*, Hoyle et al. (1998) accentuated the traits of reflective leadership, course of knowledge, importance of partnership skills, conflict resolution and community building skills as crucial in the 21st century. Hoyle (1989) predicted that 21st century superintendents would have a healthy respect for others and a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty.

Leadership has been the purpose of numerous studies since the Golden Age of Greece, yet no one clear definition of the phenomenon exists. It was suggested that an essential ingredient to successful change is leadership. Despite the ambiguity associated

with the understanding of leadership, the participants agreed that it is a vitally important role and responsibility.

Distributed leadership is a form of collective leadership in which members of the organization develop expertise by working collaboratively. Accordingly, the central principle of formal leaders is to create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities. In short, distributed leadership is maximizing the human capacity within the organization (Harris, 2002). Lashway (2003) asserted that distributed leadership provides a more democratic leadership focus for school districts, which in turn develops districts as learning organizations. Distributed leadership empowers everyone to make his or her job more efficient, meaningful, and effective.

The participants in this study recognized that the empowerment and commitment of others was a key to success. John Newton explained,

It was all about hard work; it is about dramatic improvements in the schools – a real commitment by people all across the district to accomplish it.

Walter White suggested that leadership goes beyond gaining commitment when he stated,

The 21st century leader is about uniting everyone and getting them to work for one common goal.” In addition to commitment and unity, a sense of ownership is part of the distributed leadership approach.

Patrick Vogel reached back far in history when he offered his view on this subject. He referred to a belief of 4th century B.C. Chinese philosopher. He offered:

Some of the most insightful guidance on leadership was captured by Lao Tzu, 4th century B.C. Chinese philosopher, who believed that the most effective leaders are the ones who talk little, and when the work is done people say ‘we did it ourselves.’

It is interesting to consider these participants' perceptions on leadership in light of other comments made within preceding themes. In reference to being a change agent and managing accountability, several participants emphasized the need to send strong and hard messages to the staff. This approach implies a more autocratic, top-down strategy. However, when the participants reflected on excellent leadership, they focused on distributed leadership characteristics, such as empowerment, commitment of all, unity and ownership. Could it be that effective leadership often involves paradox? This finding might suggest that two apparently contradictory notions can coexist without necessarily being hypocritical.

Summary of Six Themes

The major themes that emerged were presented. This section was preceded by concise snapshots of each participant and information regarding the district and local community. Each profile contained the superintendent's biographical sketch and descriptions of the school districts, including demographics, and information about district governance. An analysis yielded six themes, change agency, accountability, political connections/clout, school reform, student achievement and excellent leadership. The themes described the perceptions and experiences of urban non-traditional superintendents as they related to public educational administration.

The responses of the participants revealed delimitations of their role as non-traditional superintendents. The non-traditional superintendents were perceived as highly intelligent, well educated, politically connected and outspoken. For the most part,

the participants perceived their career change as a learning experience. Consideration of participant views relative to research questions will be considered in the following section.

Participants Views – Research Questions

This study included a series of research questions. These questions are included in an earlier section of this chapter. In this section of the report, interview responses will be viewed in light of the research questions. Each research question will be presented, followed by a summary of the responses and specific quotes supporting the summary.

(1. a) What are the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to characteristics of effective leadership?

Research has shown that students who achieve more in schools have strong leadership at the helm (Andrews & Soder, 1987, Edmonds, 1979). As presented in the *Excellent Leadership Theme* section of this chapter, there was an emphasis on distributed leadership. These non-traditional superintendents accentuated the importance of gaining commitment from all, unity, empowerment, and ownership. For instance, John Newton observed:

Leaders that recognize that the people in the organization are its greatest resource is the sign of good leadership. Once you have done that give them all of the professional development that is needed in order to meet the needs of those kids.

Walter White recognized the importance of people buying into the district's vision when he stated,

In any organization, you need other people to help carry out your vision; this requires the ability to lead and influence others.

However, in addition to involving others in the mission, these non-traditional superintendents also cited the importance of having a wide range of expertise in order to effectively lead a school system.

After listening to the participants' stories and their perceptions of the characteristics of effective leadership in large urban school districts, it was revealed that effective leadership must include expertise in the areas of management, curriculum and instruction, the political realm, human resources, union negotiation tactics, communication and operations skills. It was also noted that leaders must have vision. Walter White observed:

Community leaders are looking for superintendents with skills other than teaching. They are looking for proven and successful leaders and managers that can bring about change. It stands to reason, you walk into a school district and everything is literally broken from the buildings to the scores to the budget.

Without this comprehensive set of knowledge and skills, the superintendent is unable to set forth a vision and direct resources towards accomplishing organizational goals.

Under such circumstances the chief executive, in essence, cannot be an effective leader.

Frances Fowler (1999) captured the essence of their thoughts in the following.

She stated:

The principals, supervisors, and superintendents of the next decade will deal with society in flux. Much as Alice, the heroine of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, found herself in an unpredictable world where food made her expand or shrink, babies turned into pigs, and cats appeared in the air and then vanished, future administrators will find themselves in an unpredictable world where they can take nothing for granted. (pp. 594-595)

Effective leadership is reflected in an individual who truly cares about the children and stakeholders and puts theory into practice. A superintendent with effective leadership traits walks the community, observes, listens, communicates, and takes action. Patrick Vogel walked the community countless times, listening and talking with parents. He refused to pass up an opportunity to meet stakeholders who sought his help.

(1. b) What are the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to their preparation for the superintendency?

The preparation for superintendency is a critical component, an essential element, of systemic education reform, although as (Cooper, Fusarelli, Jackson & Poster, 2002) observed, “the process is rife with difficulties,” including synchronization of preparation and actual practice, the theory-practice disconnect, the need for life-long learning, and the development of an adequate knowledge base (Cooper et al., 2002, p. 242).

The responses revealed marked differences in how the participants prepared for the superintendency. Four of the five leaders chose not to engage in formal training. They offered different reasons for not being involved in traditional educational leadership preparation programs.

For instance, John Newton stated:

I didn't take any preparation courses. I didn't think it was necessary. I was a board member for years, member of state certification committee, commissioner of education; I was responsible for over 1000 school districts.

Howard Lee provided another reason when he offered:

I already had an educational leadership role in the city; I was a member of the State Board of Regents prior to my superintendency. Part of my responsibilities was to set up statewide policy and standards and appoint the commissioner of education.

In lieu of traditional preparation, they practiced self-study through reading leadership and journal articles and books. Walter White explained,

I read a book, Leadership: Magic, Myth or Method. That helped. Also, Why Leaders Can't Lead by Bennis.

These superintendents also arranged formal and informal mentoring with other non-traditional leaders. They agreed, they brought leadership skills that transferred to the superintendency. For example, Patrick Vogel mentioned,

My fiscal background has been a tremendous asset.

These participants also stated that they learned more by attending national educational leadership conferences and on the job. In this regard, Walter White indicated,

I worked quite a bit with school board members in various committees. That was my preparation.

David Schulman, represented an exception to the rule of not participating in traditional preparation. He was a former Navy Intelligence Officer. He took 27 university hours during his tenure, prepared for the state licensing exam, and passed it. He chose to take the coursework because he wanted to be well prepared for his new career.

(1. c) What are the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to their being hired in their respective districts?

The five participants believed that they were hired at their respective districts because they recognized political opportunities, limitations and were prepared to make

the tough decisions regardless of the ramifications. They also emphasized that they were perceived as effective change agents by their respective boards. Supporting this point,

John Newton offered:

My board knew that tough decision were going to have to be made in order to meet all the district goals and I was prepared to make that happen. School board members became aware of the federal mandates, AYP, school reform, student achievement gains in all sub groups, the highly qualified teacher mandate. Change was forthcoming and accountability and student achievement could not take a backseat to anything.

Walter White concurred with this reason for hiring non-traditional superintendents when he stated,

School board was looking for a change. That change is to bring successful and positive outcomes.

Yet another participant, Patrick Vogel, suggested,

Being appointed superintendent is part of the waves of educational reform. Stable and courageous leadership is needed.

Vogel was speaking of the change associated with school reform. While the need for a change agent was emphasized, the importance of hiring individuals with varied skills obtained outside the field of education was an additional reason offered by the participants.

Howard Lee stated,

I have been told I was recruited for my ruthless leadership and political connections.

Walter White added,

They wanted someone with a background other than teaching. They went as far as to buy out the superintendent who had just had his contract renewed in order to hire me.

Participants in this study particularly emphasized the importance of hiring effective change agents and individuals with different kinds of expertise to address the enormous challenges faced by the districts.

(1. d) What are the perceptions of five former and current non-traditional urban superintendents as related to successful experiences and challenges during their tenure as urban school leaders?

All of the superintendents measured their success and challenges as the activities in which they engaged during their tenure. For example, they created choices for students, reduced central office personnel, balanced budgets, cut management costs, implemented instructional technology programs and redirected hundreds of millions of dollars into classrooms. Walter White, for instance, stated,

The real success story was implementing technology in every classroom in every school. Tax dollars were redirected into the classrooms.

They also expanded small high schools, modernized classrooms and instituted high-achievement programs for all students, including the extension of early childhood programs. To this end, Patrick Vogel asserted,

I lengthened the early-childhood program to an all day type, after-school programs, mandatory summer-school and discipline alternative educational programs.

The negotiation of union contracts without any strikes, the improvement of academic programs and the development of alternative schools were also on their lists of accomplishments. Howard Lee recalled,

We were able to negotiate with the teacher union and start school on time. Union contracts were negotiated without any strikes and a host of new programs were initiated.

While these participants enjoyed many successes, they also encountered obstacles along the way.

They all agreed that one challenge that they were not able to overcome was the micromanaging of the governance entity. Several examples were given to authenticate this statement such as: “cross examining” architects at board meetings, pressuring to hire a certain employee, involving themselves in the selection of instructional programs. Walter White explained,

I left that district not being a champion for public education. Maybe it was the politics in the school district and unable to put an end to that.

David Schulman offered a notable example of the governance issues that most superintendents face on a regular basis. He stated:

Yes. I guess I need to add that the board may not always be right, but the board is always the board. Here is a great story for your dissertation, our school board meetings were televised until, at one board meeting, one board member was so angry, he got up and went over to another board member, a lovely, elderly lady, a very typical grandma type and literally put his face into her face and called her a God ##!! liar. The meeting would last until one o'clock in the morning. Better than a boxing match!

School governance problems were frequently mentioned. However, other specific issues in this category were also noted.

Patrick Vogel enumerated other disappointments beyond dysfunctional governance situations. He recalled, “I was unable to phase out the junior high schools. I could not introduce the philosophy that K-8 schools would do a better job of promoting

discipline and academic achievement. I probably moved too cautiously.” Howard Lee also had regrets associated with his superintendency. This participant stated,

I must add some of the schools were still in poor condition when I left. I did not get around finishing that project. Maybe I was ‘too passive’ on finance issues.

It is significant to note that these two superintendents mentioned upon reflection the possibility of being “too passive” and “moving too cautiously.”

These statements are somewhat ironic in view of the fact that non-traditional leaders are often perceived as assertive, bottom-line administrators. Yet both individuals expressed regret over being of the opposite nature when speaking of their disappointments.

(2.) How do five urban non-traditional superintendents compare and contrast their responsibilities as school leaders with previous leadership roles?

As school superintendents, most participants were of the opinion that school boards and city mayors controlled their fate and this tension was not typical in their former careers. They also found themselves victims of little respect from the community, print media and their own superiors. They were continuously facing intrusion from governance factions. Lack of privacy for them and their families was one of the most difficult parts of the job. In reference to this difficulty, Walter White explained:

We could no longer enjoy a dinner out, my wife and I because people would come up to us and proceed to tell me their concerns about the system. The public nature of what you do, I was unprepared for that. The superintendent lives in a glass house, 365 days a year, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

He further offered,

My wife would walk out every morning and pick up the newspaper. She would look at the front page and hold her breath. It was the same routine every day.

Howard Lee shared these feelings of personal invasion when he described how his family was impacted by his superintendency. Lee recalled,

The worst is the attacks your family takes. All of a sudden it becomes everybody's business where your children attend school, what kind of grades they earn, extra-curricular activities are they in sports, etc.

In contrast, most of the participants believed that the private sector or military offered a less complex and more peaceful life. Walter White explained,

When I was in the private sector, I worked hard, had time for my family and children. I was respected among my colleagues and treated with distinction.

David Schulman recalled,

In the military, you know who the enemy is. In school business, you have no idea.

There were two notable exceptions among the participants in terms of personal suffering brought about by the superintendency, one of which named the educational leader's position as his favorite job and the other who was indifferent.

John Newton reflected,

My favorite job was superintendent of schools. If ever I felt discouraged, all I had to do was go to any campus and have lunch with the kids in the cafeteria.

In the middle of the continuum was Patrick Vogel. He stated:

I am indifferent. I enjoyed my job in the area of finance. It was demanding, long hours and results driven. I am used to working day and night. Now that I am superintendent, I continue with my life style. If the media calls me during the day, I take their calls but they better take my calls -regardless of the hour.

Perhaps the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction surrounding experienced by both traditional and non-superintendent is related to the way in which these leaders are prepared. The next section will address preparation programs.

(3.) What are the recommendations for superintendent preparation and support?

Superintendents must take the initiative of better preparing themselves for the job, through both initial university graduate-level programs and continuing education throughout their careers (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2001). However, one participant warned that while university-based programs are beneficial, they must be up-to-date and in touch with current reality. David Schulman explained:

The coursework has to be relevant and current. I took 27 college hours to prepare for the superintendent position. I learned some-but there were very few that were eye-opening or unique. The best part of taking classes was listening to the other students, many were school administrators. I learned a lot from their insights.

Superintendents, regardless of background, would benefit from university pedagogy if they would intensify their instruction in budget preparation, policy development, legal issues, union negotiations, and technological changes. Howard Lee articulated this position when he stated:

University programs can enhance their courses by having lawyers teach the school law, chief financial officers teach school finance, technology courses, etc. This job is not for the weak and courses need to prepare the superintendent for this.

One recommendation cited by all participants was for a Certified Public Accountant or Chief Financial Officer to teach the finance course instead of an educator.

The most commonly cited weaknesses were the lack of hands-on application, inadequate access to technology, and failure to link content to practice.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter began with some general reflections of this researcher's experience, which were captured in a description of a journey to one of the initial five interviews. This chapter continued with profiles of the five participants, prefaced by a restatement of the problem, research questions, study sample and purpose of the study. Following these profiles a discussion and listing of prevalent themes are found. Major themes included change agency, accountability, political connection/clout, school reform, student achievement and leadership. In the final section of the chapter, interview responses were viewed in light of the research questions. The implications of these findings and recommendations will be made in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

I refuse to accept the idea that the “isness” of man’s present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the “oughtness” that forever confronts him.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1964, p. 761)

Introduction

A growing number of traditional school boards and city mayors are looking for the next generation of school superintendent to come prepared with a variety of professional backgrounds and provide instructional leadership and management for urban school districts. The expectation is that the acquired experiences and expertise of senior executives from corporate America, the military, municipal government, higher education and the nonprofit arenas are valuable and will transfer to public education. Non-traditional superintendents currently serve or have served in large urban districts such as New York, Washington D.C., Washington State, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, San Diego, Denver, Baltimore and Seattle.

The primary purpose of this interpretive study was to examine and re-tell the experiences of five urban non-traditional superintendents. All of the initial interviews were conducted in person. Four of the five initial interviews took place out of state and one was in the State of Texas. The researcher took four different flights and the journey

covered from the west coast to the east coast. The follow up interviews were usually on the telephone and on the internet via electronic mail.

In the following sections of the chapter, the data will be discussed in view of the theoretical underpinnings of this research and the existing literature related to the non-traditional superintendent. The first section of the chapter will include a discussion of the theoretical framework in view of the results. The next part will address the six prevalent themes as they relate to the literature. The discussion of themes is followed by a section that highlights the study in terms of the costs and benefits of the superintendency and the preparation and certification of superintendents. Finally, implications and conclusions are offered along with recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Theoretical Framework in View of the Results

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a form of collective leadership in which members of the organization develop expertise by working collaboratively. Accordingly, the central principle of formal leaders is to create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities. In short, distributed leadership is maximizing the human capacity within the organization (Harris, 2002). Lashway (2003) asserted that distributed leadership provides a more democratic leadership focus for school districts, which in turn develops districts as learning organizations. Distributed leadership empowers everyone to make his or her job more efficient, meaningful, and effective.

The districts in this study sought to hire individuals who could effectively empower others to address monumental challenges.

The participants' statements supported their recognition of the importance of effectively utilizing human resources to achieve the districts' goals. For example, John Newton stated:

Leaders that recognize that the people in the organization are its greatest resource is the sign of good leadership. Once you have done that give them all of the professional development that is needed in order to meet the needs of those kids .Leadership includes listening, communicating and providing support networks. Yet the most difficult is the listening. It takes hard work to master the art of listening and a critical aspect of leadership.

Walter White asserted,

Leadership at least good leadership is a particular set of attributes. The 21st century leader is about uniting everyone and getting them to work for one common goal.

Finally, Patrick Vogel asserted,

Leadership is about team building and creating an environment of open communication, shared responsibilities, accountability and trust. Preparing students for a global economy.

Based on these remarks and other statements made by non-traditional superintendents, it is apparent that they believe distributive leadership is necessary to achieve their visions.

The application of the results of this study to distributed leadership in many ways demonstrates congruence between the theoretical and real-life events. However, it must be emphasized that although these districts did hire superintendents from the outside to help confront tremendous challenges, they continued to count on internal staff to keep

the ship afloat. It was found that the participants relied heavily on experienced educators to lead the way in terms of instructional matters, which should be the number one priority for any school system. These individuals were often the second in command and were commonly known as Chief Academic Officers. Therefore, in many respects, this “new kind” of superintendent required the support of the “old type” of educator to ensure successful initiatives. Perhaps then it is not the single act of bringing in non-traditional superintendents that translates to success. Rather, the key may be the process of offering a new perspective to overall leadership; a different view that even embraced and valued existing instructional expertise. It may be that the hiring of non-traditional superintendents serves more as a catalyst to stimulate and more effectively organize contributing parts of the existing system, as opposed to totally dismantling the organization.

Contingency Theory of Leadership

Fred Edward Fiedler’s Contingency Theory of Leadership, is one in which the group’s performance level and the leader’s effectiveness are contingent upon the leader’s motivation level and the degree to which the leader controls and influences the situation (Northouse, 2003). The theory predicts that the effectiveness of the leader will depend on both the characteristics of the leader and the favorableness of the situation. Fiedler asserted there are only leaders who perform well in certain situations, but not in every single circumstance. Second, almost anyone can be a leader by carefully selecting those situations that match his or her leadership style. Finally, a leader can meet the demands

of the organization by designing job responsibilities to fit the manager (Fiedler, 1964). In this study, government bodies selected non-traditional leaders because the districts they governed had special challenges, which they believed could only be addressed by a person with a unique set of leadership skills or a non-traditional superintendent.

The participants in this study voiced opinions that were consistent with Contingency Theory of Leadership. For instance, John Newton contended:

They wanted change. That's why I was recruited. The school board members actually told me I was expected to make some tough decisions and it would take someone with a legal mind to be able to make them yet not end up with a lawsuit on their hands.

Another example involves one district that demanded better financial accountability. Its superintendent, Patrick Vogel, stated,

Saved thousands of hundreds of dollars for the district by bringing into the district experienced Chief Financial Officers who were able to bring the budget to an optimum level and enhanced professional development.

In this case, the board valued this non-traditional superintendent's ability in the area of financial management. In these two cases, the boards matched the leaders' expertise, including law and finance, with the situation at hand or employed the contingency theory.

It is important to note that the non-traditional superintendents in this study who were hired by school boards that were looking for a person that fit the particular situation expressed concerns, which are very similar to the outcries of their traditional counterparts, about the very bodies and surrounding communities that employed them. They found themselves victims of little respect from the community, print media and

their own superiors. They were continuously facing intrusion from governance factions. Lack of privacy for them and their families was one of the most difficult parts of the job. Several examples of non-traditional superintendents who have been separated from employment were cited in Chapter II. Reasons for leaving included power politics and disagreements with the majority of the school board. These participants, hired because of their unique skills that matched particular situations, ultimately found that boards and communities quickly dismissed their unique expertise and subjected them to the same treatment as was suffered by their traditional counterparts. This finding certainly begs a fundamental question: Is the true solution to these district problems the hiring of a non-traditional superintendent who has unique skills to address certain situations or do the root problems reside within the governing bodies themselves? With the theoretical basis for this study in mind, a discussion of the existing literature as it relates to the findings is informative.

Review of the Six Prevalent Themes in Light of the Literature

Political Connection/Clout

Cuban (1988) offered a perspective of the evolution of the superintendent by identifying three prevailing roles of the superintendent as the position evolved starting in 1830, namely “instructional (teacher of teachers), managerial (administrative chief), and political (negotiator)” (p. 189). Cuban’s findings indicated that the managerial and political roles tend to dominate the behavior of the superintendent. Data analysis revealed that a prevalent theme emerging from the transcripts was *Political*

Connection/Clout, which indicates consistency between Cuban's contention and the results of this work. Several selected comments made by participants illustrated this point. Walter White offered,

Politics are everywhere, in the school system, in department stores, in the airplane that you flew in. In order for me to have done well in my position, I needed to be politically connected, politically savvy and not have kept it a secret.

Patrick Vogel stated,

Political leaders who are overtly connected to city and business officials will take a broken school district regardless of size and convert it to a Fortune 500 company.

Finally, David Schulman suggested that,

The superintendent is the political leader who handles the political realities of the school district-tough job but I asked for it.

The importance of political astuteness was evident in the findings of this study.

There appeared to be a pervasive belief that with the implementation of high-stakes accountability systems and with the challenges faced by urban districts, a tough, "all business" type of individual was best suited for the job; a person with enough political savvy and connections to advance the school system. There are, however, examples of educators who have successfully navigated the political waters of school districts to become successful superintendents. For instance, in Chapter II, Shirley Neeley and Richard Clifford were cited as effective chief executives who came from the ranks of educators. This might suggest that the often politically charged school district environment may be as good of a training ground as any; even when compared to the business world and military. In fact, it could be further argued that because of the

uniqueness of district politics, an individual that is “born and raised” in this setting would even have an advantage in terms of political awareness and intelligence. The study participants asserted that the platforms from which they came to education provided greater opportunities for political preparedness, including the business world, military and other realms.

Change Agency

In the 1960s, additional reform laws mandating equality both in and out of education (Jackson, 1995) forced superintendents to become change agents. There were tumultuous events in America and in the schools, such as the Vietnam War, a rise in violence, the War on Poverty, and social change. Participant comments revealed that *Change Agency* was a major theme. John Newton offered,

I was hired for the position as change-agent because only a non-educator could shake up the educators—at least that is what I was told.

The need for a change agent is especially apparent in the mega-districts. Patrick Vogel believed that

An agent of change is what mega school districts need especially in the middle of community outrage.

Other non-traditional superintendents participating in the study offered other views regarding the need for being a change agent.

The words of John Newton are most revealing. When he stated that,

I was hired for the position as change-agent because only a non-educator could shake up the educators—at least that is what I was told.

This researcher noted an unsupported assumption that only a non-educator can “shake up the educators.” There is no empirical evidence that suggests that only those from the realms of the corporate world, military or other professions can serve as effective change agents. Again, there are examples of educators who have acted as positive change agents to move districts forward. Increasingly, the major indicator for the effectiveness of change is student achievement. A discussion of academic performance is included in a later section of this chapter.

School Reform

School Reform was yet another prevalent theme identified from data analysis. In the 1980’s education took center stage on the national agenda with calls for immediate education reform and restructuring. The educational leadership programs for the superintendency began to emerge in this era. Educational challenges were illuminated in 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) released a controversial report titled *A Nation at Risk* (NAR). This federal report criticized the American education system for mediocre results and highlighted its poor performance in comparison with international counterparts. This indictment caught the attention of everyone, particularly the business community and policy makers prompting a call for basic reforms in education (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

In view of this historical context, it was not surprising to find school reform to be very much on the minds of this study’s participants. The essence of the relationship

between school reform and the non-traditional superintendent was captured in a statement by John Newton. He claimed,

I am a part of school reform. Non-traditionals *are* brought in to make necessary changes.

However, Newton qualified this remark when he stated,

School reform is not a 'silver bullet' to greater student achievement. Further, Walter White contended that school reform was a moving target when he proffered,

We keep calling it reform, but every five to ten years there is a new definition of what reform means. It evolves but it has to—society evolves.

Educators who have worked in school districts during the past 30 years have witnessed several stages of educational reform. Their experience began before the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and has extended to the present day. As Walter White observed,

... every five to ten years there is a new definition of what reform means.

Many from the ranks of education have enjoyed unique vantage points in observing and participating in district and school-level responses to different waves of reform. All things being equal in terms of leadership ability and other requisite skills, would this background not prove as a benefit to aspiring or practicing superintendents? The participants in this study commented that their unique backgrounds prepare them to be the effective agents of reform. Further research, particularly focusing on student performance in the districts in which non-traditional superintendents serve, is needed to answer these questions.

Leadership

This discussion would not be complete without mention of leadership.

Leadership was one of the six emergent themes in this research project. School boards are looking for individuals who have experience running entities outside the field of education and argue that non-traditional superintendents bring a different set of leadership skills and experiences (Mathews, 2001). A search for leaders from the private sector, legal profession, corporate finance, the military, and from the political world to lead their school districts is becoming more prevalent.

Hess (2003b) concluded that,

In the world of 21st century schooling, leaders must be able to leverage accountability and revolutionary technology, devise performance-based evaluation systems, reengineer outdated management structures, recruit and cultivate nontraditional staff, drive decisions with data, build professional cultures, and ensure that every child is served. It is not clear that teaching experience or educational administration coursework prepares candidates for these challenges. On the whole, traditional administrators have fared poorly in recent decades, even as private sector and nonprofit managers have made great strides in addressing similar tasks. (p. 1)

Participants in this study agree that strong leadership is vital to success as a school superintendent. Patrick Vogel drew back to a Chinese proverb to describe his philosophy of good leadership. He stated,

Some of the most insightful guidance on leadership was captured by Lao Tzu, 4th century B.C. Chinese philosopher, who believed that the most effective leaders are the ones who talk little, and when the work is done people say ‘we did it ourselves.’

Another participant, Howard Lee, focused on data-driven decisions in describing his views of effective leadership. He asserted,

Decisions are made based on fact, data, statistics, black or white. A new leadership and an outside perspective is what is needed to ensure that students learn and teachers are successful in their daily operations.

David Schulman emphasized the reconstruction aspect of leadership when he stated,

Superintendents from outside the educational circle succeed because of their human and leadership qualities that are used to take a broken down school district and piece by piece put it back together again. Not the way it was but the way it should be in this 21st century.

The non-traditional superintendents had diverse opinions on why outside leadership was important, ranging from their ability to empower others to better human relations skills to the ability to make data-driven decisions. However, there was a consensus of opinion that the non-traditional leaders took a tougher, bottom line approach to leadership. They commented that educators were often “softer,” which does not work well in a high-stakes, test-driven accountability system. It was also a disadvantage when it comes to dealing with the hard problems faced by urban districts.

In view of the fact that there are successful districts led by traditionally prepared chief executives, more research is needed to determine whether this distinction is valid. Do all educators take a soft approach? Is a tougher stance really necessary and effective? Do effective non-traditional superintendents really exhibit different leadership behaviors when compared to their traditional counterparts? These anecdotal comments sound reasonable, but are they true?

Accountability

Various education summits and meetings were held between 1989 and 1999 to discuss educational reform and accountability. For instance, in 1999, a summit was held

to discuss education, which was co-hosted by Louis Gerstner, Jr., Chairman and CEO of IBM; Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, Chairman of both the National Governors' Association (NGA), and the Education Commission of the States and Nevada Governor Bob Miller (Paris, 1994). Policies and procedures emerged out of these summits that caused a power shift from the local to the federal government (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999). Consequently, changes were implemented and superintendents suddenly became responsible for more than just student achievement. A clear account of the district's financial status, bond elections, investing the fund balance to earn interest, the utilization of everyone's talents, reduction in staff, reduction of inefficiencies, improvement in the quality of disseminated information, the use of technology, and governmental affairs are a few responsibilities that the present day superintendent faces on a daily basis as a result of these initiatives. All of these present-day duties fall under the category of accountability, which was a prevalent theme in this study.

Superintendents in this study recognized the pervasiveness of accountability in education today. They also know that accountability does not stop at test scores. Walter White explained,

We must create an environment where accountability is the rule not the exception. Truthful data systems are necessary for well informed decisions to take place.

Patrick Vogel asserted,

Mayoral control, a nontraditional superintendent, and a strong emphasis on accountability-great combination!

Howard Lee emphasized that accountability extends beyond student performance when he stated,

“I got tutorials on the idiocy that was happening, \$100,000 in computers, lost with a shrug of the shoulders; somebody records books missing because they were filed slightly the wrong way. Ever heard of being held accountable?”

The participants pointed to a wider view of accountability than what is often seen by their traditional counterparts. They also assert that accountability extends beyond test scores into financial management and other operational areas. The “harder,” bottom line corporate realms have better prepared them to take on the challenges associated with the NCLB Act and state accountability systems.

Student Achievement

In an August 2007 School Administrator journal article, the following question was posed, “How can school district superintendents be held responsible for improving student achievement if they produce no results and yet keep their job or even get a pay raise?” (p. 1). It is abundantly clear that improving student test scores is a top priority with today’s emphasis on accountability. Just as head football coaches live and die by their win-loss records, superintendents are judged to a large extent by the level of student test scores in their districts.

The respondents in this project felt the pressure produced by test-driven systems. Patrick Vogel stated,

It doesn’t matter, traditional or not, superintendents are under the gun to improve student achievement.

Howard Lee offered,

I looked carefully at the statistics on student achievement not just one, many times and had that data interpreted in every form possible. Numbers don't lie-it is the hands that input the numbers that lie. It is virtually impossible to remove an incompetent teacher-instead they get transferred school to school and unfortunately they usually end up in the schools with the greatest needs (laughs). Incredible!

Yet another chief executive, David Schulman, offered the view that,

High academic achievement of students has its roots in the military. Safety and discipline of life creates learning.

All participants in this study represented that student achievement had improved under their leadership. However, it should be noted that this study was not a quantitative analysis of test scores in these districts. The primary purpose of this interpretive study was to examine and describe the experiences, views and perceptions of urban non-traditional superintendents on public school educational administration. Therefore, these assertions regarding improved student performance were purely anecdotal in nature as opposed to being subjected to rigorous quantitative examination. Furthermore, three of the five participants had served only two years at the helm of their districts before departing. Of the remaining two, one served five years prior to leaving and the other has been in the position for seven years. Future researchers in this area might consider a quantitative analysis of student achievement in districts led by non-traditional superintendents compared to academic performance in those systems led by their traditional counterparts. There would be obvious limitations in quantitative research endeavors due to the relatively short tenures of these non-traditional superintendents and possibly due to concerns about sample sizes. In addition, any future research should also

consider other factors that may have impacted test scores beyond the presence of a non-traditional superintendent, such as changes in tests and state standards, the quality of faculty and various other factors.

Costs and Benefits of the Superintendency

Costs

Participants also addressed the personal and professional toll taken while at the helm. Most of the participants came to the conclusion that school boards and city mayors controlled their fate and this was not typical in their first careers. They also found themselves victims of little respect from the community, print media and their own superiors. They were continuously facing intrusion from governance factions. Lack of privacy for their families and themselves was one of the most difficult parts of the job.

This view of the position is also reflected in the literature. *The American School Superintendent: Leading in an Age of Pressure*, authored by Carter and Cunningham (1997) and Paul Houston, Executive Director of the AASA, described a common impression of the current role of the superintendent. “In my more cynical moments, I have often thought of school superintendents as bearing the same relationship to their communities as fire hydrants bear to dogs. The superintendency is a job that attracts criticism and problems.” Some suggest that the underlying causes for the scarcity of superintendents, and the unwillingness of teachers to become school leaders, include working conditions, comparative compensation, “do-ability” of the job, and the high

level of stress associated with the position (Farkas et al., 2003b). This study, in terms of the participants' views regarding the stressful aspects of the position, including intrusiveness and lack of respect, certainly supports these other accounts of the superintendent's position.

These findings are important because the participants reinforce the contentions of many traditional superintendents who have also grabbed ongoing and contentious governance issues. States have responded in different ways to this problem. For instance, the State of Texas attempted to bring micromanaging and/or dysfunctional boards under control by appointing masters to monitor district actions and by requiring training designed to help trustees understand their appropriate roles. If non-traditional superintendents have gained respect as more objective leaders in educational settings, perhaps their voices will increase the sense of urgency to remedy governance problems.

Benefits

In the district and superintendent profile section of Chapter IV, a response to the question, "Why did you choose the superintendency?" was included for each participant. Three of the five non-traditional superintendents offered responses that could certainly be considered as altruistic in nature. For instance, Patrick Vogel stated,

Because I want to ensure every child has access to an excellent education.

Harold Lee contributed that,

I was offered the job and took a leave of absence to fight for children, to defend them from politicians and bureaucrats. Not a small feat considering the size of the district. I wanted to do something for the most important issue in the country-education.

Similarly, Daniel Schulman offered,

I wanted to continue serving my country. I can't think of a better way of serving my country than by involving myself in education. Elwood B. Cubberly's infinite wisdom on this subject may shed light on this apparent motivation to pursue the superintendent's office for altruistic reasons.

He further stated,

No profession offers such large personal rewards for the opportunity of living one's life in molding other lives, and in helping to improve materially the intellectual tone and moral character of a community. (p. 131)

In the end, one must balance the trials and tribulations associated with the superintendency with the personal and altruistic benefits.

Superintendent Preparation and Certification

Preparation

In terms of preparation for the job, the participants in this study did not gain entry to the job through traditional educational administrator graduate programs. However, there were marked differences in how they prepared for the superintendency. Four of the five leaders did not take formal training. They practiced self-study through reading leadership and journal articles. Arranged formal and informal mentoring with other non-traditional leaders was also used. They stated they learned more by attending educational leadership conferences and on the job. Patrick Vogel stated,

I have to say it is not easy to be a quality leader in a large school district. For a large or mega school district a unique type of training is required. University programs need to address this.

There was consensus that special preparation was required to be an effective superintendent beyond what is offered in typical administrator preparation programs. This belief may be associated with what appears in the literature on this subject.

According to Farkas et al. (2003b), several urban superintendents reported that the average educational administration programs in schools of education are not aligned with the actualities of what is needed to efficiently and effectively lead the present day public school systems (Farkas et al., 2003b). A recent urban non-traditional superintendent candidate (not a participant in the present study) asserted that “. . . some of the schools of education are totally disconnected and clueless. They are clueless, clueless with a capital ‘C.’ Some schools of education are doing a very poor job in training and producing urban district administrators and leaders to lead institutions . . .” (N. Glassford, personal communication, May, 2007).

Hess (2003b) asserted that professors of education are fixated on linking educational administration to teaching rather than developing the needed managerial skills to lead school districts, regardless of size. However, it was noted in a previous chapter that there are highly successful superintendents emerging from university graduate programs (R. Clifford, personal communication, November 12, 2007).

The participants in this study offered an important perspective on superintendent preparation. Their emphasis on individual learning through reading and conference attendance and by mentoring relationships, may inform universities and school systems about better ways to prepare future leaders. They suggested that the more traditional graduate programs may need to be realigned to meet the needs of the 21st Century and

the demands of leading in large urban areas. The participants also offered that their backgrounds helped prepare them for the rigors of the superintendency. Universities and school districts may consider the inclusion of more theories and practices emerging from the corporate realm, the military and from various other professions.

Certification

Certification is yet another important issue related to non-traditional superintendency. Participant superintendents did address their respective pathways to the job. However, the literature suggests that certification policies vary from state to state. In the 1980's, 82% of the 50 American states passed practice-based and rigorous regulations that required school superintendents to complete a lengthy and specific course of study followed by an application for state certification endorsing the individual as a school superintendent (Hess, 2003b, Kowalski, 2005). According to Baptist, only 25 of the 41 states require teaching experience as a requirement for certification (1989). In 2003, Feistritzer reported that 54% of the 41 states offer certification waivers or emergency certificates for individuals who do not meet the qualifications (2003). Furthermore 37% out of the 54% offer a range of alternative pathways to obtain licensure (Feistritzer, 2003). Based on these statistics, it is apparent that the pathway to a non-traditional superintendency is facilitated in some states while made more difficult to achieve in other locations. For example, Walter White told the story of his journey to certification. He stated:

. . . when I was Superintendent of Schools, then was moved to First Chief Executive Officer and they changed the law for me so I could superintend

because I had not taught kindergarten for two years or something like that. There was some guideline that I had not met that the state required that all superintendents needed. Anyway, the law was changed in a snap and I was superintendent.

In order to serve as superintendent of School District A, John Newton needed a state waiver in lieu of a superintendent's certification. The state granted the waiver. Mr. Newton signed a five-year contract, making him the fourth-highest paid superintendent in the urban area. Harold Lee had an even tougher path to the position. Because of his lack of traditional education credentials, the state commissioner of education granted a waiver so he could serve as superintendent. The waiver was granted even though the city had filed legal documents with the state education department seeking to block the waiver. This action was viewed as a conflict of interest because he had been a member of the 16 member State Board of Regents until one week prior to his appointment.

These diverse experiences in gaining certification are not surprising in view of the different state standards and requirements associated with these credentials. This finding might suggest a need for a universal certification system, similar to the "highly qualified" guidelines for teachers and paraprofessionals under the NCLB Act. States have obviously responded to these provisions in light of sanctions connected to noncompliance. If the federal government prescribes performance standards and ties achievement to funding, then why not consider implementing national rules for the certification of chief executive officers?

Conclusions/Implications

Prior to addressing the following implications of this study, it should be noted that generalization from the results of this qualitative study was limited to a small number of urban non-traditional superintendents. Nevertheless, the depth and rich data gathered from the interviews were invaluable to the study. The study was limited to five urban non-traditional superintendents who remained in the same urban public school district for two years or more. This study did not attempt to determine whether non-traditional superintendents are superior to superintendents with an educational background. Instead, the results of this study reflect only the experiences, views and perceptions of the urban non-traditional superintendents who participated in this research endeavor and is not intended to generalize beyond that population.

It was noted in Chapter I that research into the non-traditional superintendency was scarce. It is hoped that this study will add to the knowledge base and stimulate further inquiry. Considering the limitations as enumerated above, there were conclusions that emerged from the data, which may help researchers in the future develop substantive topics for exploration.

For instance, each participant believed a superintendent for a large urban district need not have progressed through the traditional career pathway in order to lead the organization. These non-traditional superintendents found alternative ways to prepare for the job, including self-study, attendance at conferences, and networking with others in the profession. Their emphasis on individual learning through reading and conference

attendance and by mentoring relationships may inform universities and school systems about better ways to prepare future leaders. They suggested that the more traditional graduate programs may need to be realigned to meet the needs of the 21st Century and the demands of leading in large urban areas.

All participants dealt with their governing entities in a unique manner. They tended to use “bottom line approaches” to communicating with their boards, which constituted a departure from the “softer” methods employed by their traditional counterparts. Numbers seemed to be the “name of the game” for these participants, as opposed to rhetoric. Additionally, according to the participants, communication of a clear vision with open communication between the superintendent and governing entities can increase the tenure of the district leader.

There was no “silver bullet” to student achievement. The participants in this study offered different means for meeting the important end of improved academic performance. However, as noted in previous section of this chapter, further quantitative study is needed to provide evidence that there were actually improved student performance during their tenures.

Prescriptive university courses that address the unique needs of large districts would be beneficial to any leader of a school district of over 20,000 students. The large school districts of today are very different from those often addressed in educational administration courses. These non-traditional superintendents mentioned various ways they prepared themselves for the job, which were described above.

The participants agreed with the view held by many of their traditional counterparts that board members and/or city mayors are motivated by a narrow focus and have a tendency to micromanage and consequently reduce collaboration. This finding may help generate further interest in governance reform and research in related areas.

The non-traditional superintendents in this study were not as interested in the money as they were interested in helping improve American schools. There was consensus among the participants that they entered the educational arena for altruistic reasons. These non-traditional superintendents wanted to positively impact future generations.

Six major themes, including change agency, accountability, political connections/clout, school reform, student achievement and excellent leadership emerged in this study. These five participants appeared to be interested in the same key issues related to schooling as reflected in the literature.

Recommendations for Future Study

Recommendations for future research have emerged as a result of this inquiry. Future researchers may consider exploring or investigating several topics suggested by the results of this study, possibly utilizing different methodologies, namely

- (a) longitudinal, quantitative research to determine student performance trends,
- (b) studies that examine possible gender bias in the appointment of non-traditional superintendents,
- (c) projects designed to obtain the views of other stakeholders in regard

to non-traditional superintendents, and (d) the state of non-traditional superintendents in smaller district settings.

There is a need to examine the longitudinal impact of the presence of non-traditional superintendents in school districts. Because this new type of superintendents recently emerged, there is little data to learn about their true effect on sustainable change and the long-term impact on student achievement. In addition, any future research should also consider other factors that may have impacted test scores beyond the presence of a non-traditional superintendent, such as changes in tests and state standards, the quality of faculty, and various other factors.

In studying the available research, only one female non-traditional superintendent in an urban district was identified. This phenomenon needs to be reviewed and researched to discover the reasons for this disparity. The results of this field of inquiry might provide valuable information to advance “gender and color blind” employment practices.

A study to determine the perspectives of board members who hired non-traditional superintendents should also be conducted. Relevant questions in this regard might be, “Why did you hire a non-traditional superintendent instead of a traditional leader?” “Did the non-traditional administrator meet your expectations?” “Based on your experiences in working with this individual, what do you perceive as strengths and weakness of a non-traditional leader?”

This study purposively focused on non-traditional superintendents in urban settings. It was established that city districts have special challenges and characteristics

that influence school leadership. In view of these facts, different results may emerge from a similar or replicated study in smaller school systems. This research may reveal differences in perceptions of non-traditional leaders in rural, suburban or smaller city districts. Such findings may help governing boards or entities in these areas to make better informed employment decisions.

Finally, research might also be conducted to gain the views of other stakeholders, including the perceptions of community members, parents and the business sector, regarding their experiences with non-traditional superintendents. Data gathered from such an endeavor might help support the hiring of future leaders from diverse career backgrounds or may inform governing bodies of different directions and better options.

Closing Thoughts

In view of the results of this study and in light of the preceding discussion, this researcher ends with final thoughts. An urban non-traditional superintendent candidate asserted, “. . . some of the schools of education are totally disconnected and clueless. They are clueless, clueless with a capital ‘C.’ Some schools of education are doing a very poor job in training and producing urban district administrators and leaders to lead institutions . . .” (N. Glassford, pseudonym, personal communication, May, 2007). These participants did not unconditionally accept this notion. Rather, they offered suggestions for improvement, such as having attorneys and business experts teach preparation courses and ensuring that the curriculum is up-to-date and relevant to the job.

The most powerful position in public education is the superintendency, and it is dominated by men both in the world of traditional and non-traditional superintendencies. A significant question was posed in a previous chapter of this study, Is the “old boy” network still in control? In this study, it was revealed that all five of the participants were European Americans. These non-traditional superintendents not only cited the importance of politics in the context of actual job performance, but also stated that politics was a factor in hiring decisions. There is a need to further assess hiring policies and practices to ensure gender neutral and qualifications based employment decisions. There is also need to ensure that these same policies have provisions to ensure “color blind” hiring practices. However, it must be stated that these participants all recognized the need to offer quality educational programming to all students, including those of color. In Chapter IV, the tables indicate that a substantial number of the students in the participants’ districts are Hispanic and African-American. In view of these demographics, it would be important to go beyond the rhetoric in this regard and investigate whether these words have actually been deployed into effective action.

These demands for changes in education spawned waves of reform (Fuhrman, 2003). The waves of reform were large-scale and systemic (Hess, 1999a). Superintendents were charged with the implementation of the mandates emerging from these school reform efforts. Four major waves of reform were described in Chapter II of this report. The fourth and present wave of school reform encompasses school choice and the privatization movement (Hess, 1999a). The findings of this study may indicate that education is moving into a fifth wave of reform. If quantitative research provides

evidence that the presence of non-traditional superintendents does have a positive impact on student performance, this new wave might be characterized by a rapid increase in non-traditional leadership of districts and campuses.

The notion that districts hired “silver bullets” in the form of independent acting non-traditional superintendents has been challenged by the results of this study. Again, it must be emphasized that although these districts did hire superintendents from other sectors to help address tremendous challenges, they continued to rely on internal or educators to meet district goals. It was found that the participants relied heavily on experienced educators to lead the way in terms of instructional matters, which should be the number one priority for any school system. They also emphasized the importance of collaboration with stakeholders. Therefore, in many respects, this “new kind” of superintendent required the support of the “old type” of educator to ensure successful initiatives.

This study has been a labor of love. This researcher has reflected deeply on the idea to study non-traditional superintendents. This journey has taken this researcher to three regions of the United States, and five different states over a span of two years. It is hoped that this adventure ends with a beneficial contribution to the knowledge base. The non-traditional superintendents in this study often cited altruistic reasons for their entry into the educational realm. This researcher acknowledges the existence of this same altruism in their willingness to take the time from their busy schedules to share their knowledge, experience, and wisdom.

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APPENDIX A

CAREER PATHWAYS

Career Paths of Superintendents

Career Path	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D		National	
	>25,000 Pupils		3,000-24,999 Pupils		300-2,999 Pupils		<300 Pupils		Unweighted Profile	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teacher, Principal, and Central Office	65	68.4	322	59.0	624	46.4	74	29.5	1,085	48.5
Principal and Central Office	3	3.2	11	2.0	20	1.5	2	0.8	36	1.6
Teacher and Central Office	11	11.6	84	15.4	89	6.6	13	5.2	197	8.8
Teacher and Principal	6	6.3	83	15.2	488	36.3	121	48.2	698	31.2
Central Office Only	1	1.1	11	2.0	8	0.6	6	2.4	26	1.2
Principal Only	0	0.0	4	0.7	24	1.8	4	1.6	32	1.4
Teacher Only	1	1.1	3	0.5	27	2.0	18	7.2	49	2.2
Other	8	8.4	28	5.1	65	4.8	13	5.2	114	5.1
Total	95	100.0	546	100.0	1,345	100.0	251	100.0	2,237	100.0

Björk et al. (2003)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. When and how did you discover you wanted to be a superintendent?
2. How would you describe your leadership style. Was it different from your first career?
3. How would you describe the leader the board was looking for? Why may they have been looking for a leader of the type? Did you meet their needs? If so, how? If not, how not?
4. How was your time spent on the job? What priorities did you make and keep? What caused you to make these organizational decisions?
5. If you could give advice to a nontraditional superintendent, what would it be?
6. How do you feel about the political nature of the superintendency?
7. How do you think traditional superintendents in the field of education perceived you?
8. Has there been a change in the post of the superintendency since you started?
9. What did you learn from the superintendency?
10. Why did you leave the superintendency? (If this pertains)

APPENDIX C

URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

These urban districts serve nearly 23% of all public schools students in this country.

Albuquerque Public Schools	New Mexico
Aldine Independent School District	Texas
Alief Independent School District	Texas
Anchorage School District	Alaska
Arlington Independent School District	Texas
Atlanta Public Schools	Georgia
Austin Independent School District	Texas
Baltimore City Public School System	Maryland
Baltimore County Public Schools	Maryland
Birmingham City	Alabama
Boise Independent District	Idaho
Bridgeport Public Schools	Connecticut
Broward County School District	Florida
Brownsville Independent School District	Texas
Buffalo City School District	New York
Caddo Parish School Board	Louisiana
Charleston County School District	South Carolina
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	North Carolina
Christina School District	Delaware
Cincinnati City School District	Ohio
City of Chicago School District 299	Illinois
Clark County School District	Nevada
Clayton County	Georgia
Cleveland Municipal City School District	Ohio
Cobb County	Georgia
Columbus Public Schools	Ohio
Corona-Norco Unified	California
Corpus Christi Independent School District	Texas
Dade County School District	Florida

Dallas Independent School District	Texas
Dekalb County 1	Georgia
Denver County 1	Colorado
Des Moines Independent Community School District	Iowa
Detroit City School District	Michigan
District of Columbia Public Schools	District of Columbia
Duval County School District	Florida
East Baton Rouge Parish School Board	Louisiana
El Paso Independent School District	Texas
Fairfax County Public Schools	Virginia
Fontana Unified	California
Fort Worth Independent School District	Texas
Fresno Unified	California
Garland Independent School District	Texas
Guilford County Schools	North Carolina
Gwinnett County	Georgia
Hillsborough County School District	Florida
Houston Independent School District	Texas
Indianapolis Public Schools	Indiana
Jackson Public School District	Mississippi
Jefferson County	Kentucky
Jefferson Parish School Board	Louisiana
Jersey City	New Jersey
Kansas City 33	Missouri
Little Rock School District	Arkansas
Long Beach Unified	California
Los Angeles Unified	California
Manchester School District	New Hampshire
Memphis City School District	Tennessee
Milwaukee	Wisconsin

Minneapolis	Minnesota
Montebello Unified	California
Montgomery County Public Schools	Maryland
Moreno Valley Unified	California
Nashville-Davidson County School District	Tennessee
New York City Public Schools	New York
Newark City	New Jersey
Northside Independent School District	Texas
Oakland Unified School District	California
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma
Omaha Public Schools	Nebraska
Orange County School District	Florida
Orleans Parish School District	Louisiana
Palm Beach County School District	Florida
Pasadena Independent School District	Texas
Philadelphia City School District	Pennsylvania
Pinellas County School District	Florida
Pittsburgh School District	Pennsylvania
Pomona Unified	California
Portland SD 1J	Oregon
Prince Georges County Public Schools	Maryland
Providence School District	Rhode Island
Riverside Unified	California
Rochester City School District	New York
Sacramento City Unified	California
Salt Lake City School District	Utah
San Antonio Independent School District	Texas
San Bernardino City Unified	California
San Diego Unified	California
San Francisco Unified	California

Santa Ana Unified	California
Seattle School District 1	Washington
Sioux Falls School District 49-5	South Dakota
St. Louis City	Missouri
St. Paul	Minnesota
Stockton City Unified	California
Tucson Unified District	Arizona
Tulsa	Oklahoma
Wake County Schools	North Carolina
Wichita	Kansas
Ysleta Independent School District	Texas

APPENDIX D

OVERVIEW OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

State by State Overview of Certification Requirements

State	Is state experiencing a shortage of superintendents?	Does state require certification for superintendents?	Does state have certification waivers for superintendents?	Does state have alternate certification routes for superintendents?
Alabama	Some	Yes	No	Under Discussion
Alaska	Maybe future	Yes	No	No
Arizona	Not aware	Yes	No	No
Arkansas	Maybe future	Yes	Yes	No
California	Some areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colorado	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Connecticut	No	Yes	No	Under Discussion
Delaware	Yes	Yes	Yes	Under Discussion
D.C.	No	No	No	Local districts set requirements
Florida	Maybe future	No	No	Local districts set requirements
Georgia	Maybe future	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	No	No	No	Local districts set requirements
Idaho	Yes	Yes	Yes (Limited Approval Alternatives)	Yes
Illinois	Yes	Yes	N/a	Yes
Indiana	No	Yes	No (Emergency)	No
Iowa	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
Kansas	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Kentucky	No	Yes	Not available	Yes
Louisiana	Not available	Yes	Yes	No
Maine	Yes	Yes	No	No
Maryland	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michigan	No	No	No	No
Minnesota	Yes - Some	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	Yes - Small	Yes	No	No
Missouri	Quality Issues	Yes	No	No
Montana	Not available	Yes	No	No

State	Is state experiencing a shortage of superintendents?	Does state require certification for superintendents?	Does state have certification waivers for superintendents?	Does state have alternate certification routes for superintendents?
Nebraska	No	Yes	No	No
Nevada	No	No 4/	No	No
New Hampshire	No	Yes	Yes (Permission to Employ - rarely used)	Yes
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
New Mexico	Yes - Some	Yes	Yes (few)	No
New York	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	Yes	No	No	Local districts set requirements
North Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ohio	No	Yes	Not available	Yes
Oklahoma	No	Yes	No	No
Oregon	No data	Yes	Yes (Exceptional)	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	Yes	Yes (Emergency)	No
Rhode Island	No	Yes	Yes (Crossover & Emergency)	No
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes (Permit)	Under Discussion
South Dakota	No	No	No	No
Tennessee	No	No	No	No
Texas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utah	No	Yes	Yes (Letter of Authorization)	No
Vermont	Yes	Yes	Yes	Under Discussion
Virginia	No	Yes	No (Provisional)	Yes
Washington	Not available	No	No	No

State	Is state experiencing a shortage of superintendents?	Does state require certification for superintendents?	Does state have certification waivers for superintendents?	Does state have alternate certification routes for superintendents?
West Virginia	No	Yes	Yes	No
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes	No (temporary Administrator License for Superintendent)	No
Wyoming	No	No	No	Local districts set requirements

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (2007)

APPENDIX E

NON-TRADITIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Non-traditional Superintendents

District	Governance Structure	Superintendent	Appointed	Professional Background
School District of Philadelphia	State Control School Reform Commission	Thomas M. Brady	2007-Present	Retired Army Colonel
Louisiana State Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	Paul G. Pastorek	2007-Present	Attorney-at-law
Toledo Public School	Traditional School Board Governance	William Harner	2007-Present	U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel
Recovery District New Orleans	Traditional School Board (diminishing) State Control (increasing)	Paul Vallas	2007-Present	Budget Director, City of Chicago
Baltimore, Maryland	Mayoral Control City- Joint with Governor 199	Andrés Alonso	2007-Present	Attorney-at-law
Los Angeles California	Mayoral Partial Control	David L. Brewer, III	2006- Present	U.S. Navy Admiral
Aurora Public Schools in Colorado	Traditional School Board Governance	John L. Barry	2006- Present	Major General, U.S. Air Force
Pittsburgh Pennsylvania	Traditional School Board Governance	Mark Roosevelt	2005-Present	Attorney-at-law
Duval County Public Schools,	Traditional School Board Governance	Joseph Wise	2005-Present	Walt Disney Studios Executive
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District, California	Traditional School Board Governance	Arnold W. Carter	2005- Present	Colonel, U.S. Army
Richardson School District	Traditional School Board Governance	Jim Nelson	2004-2006	Attorney-at-law
East Baton Rouge Parish School System	Traditional School Board Governance	Charlotte D. Placide	2004-Present	Finance
Bowling Green City Schools, Ohio	Traditional School Board Governance	Hugh Caumartin	2004-Present	Marine lieutenant
Seattle, Wash., Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	Raj Manhas	2003-2007	Finance

District	Governance Structure	Superintendent	Appointed	Professional Background
Minneapolis Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	David Jennings	2003-2004	Former state legislator
Benton Harbor, Michigan	Traditional School Board Governance	Paula M. Dawning	2002-2007	AT& T Sales Executive
New York City Public Schools	Mayoral Control 2002-2010	Joel I. Klein	2002-Present	Attorney-at-law and Assistant Attorney General. U.S. Justice Department
School District of Philadelphia	State Control 2001-School Reform Commission	Paul Vallas	2002-2007	Budget Director, Chicago
Madison Plains Local Schools, Ohio	Traditional School Board Governance	Adam Miller	2001-2002	Attorney-at-Law
Savannah-Chatham County, Ga.	Traditional School Board Governance	John F. O'Sullivan, Jr.	2001-2005	U.S. Air Force Colonel
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	Merrett R. Stierheim	2001-2004	Public Service
Bethel School District No. 403 Washington State	Traditional School Board Governance	Thomas Seigel	2001-Present	U.S. Navy Commander
East Valley School District in Washington State	Traditional School Board Governance	Michael H. Jones	2001-2007	Corporate America
Portland Public Schools Oregon	Traditional School Board Governance	Jim Scherzinger	2001-2005	Legislative Staff Member
Chicago Public Schools	Mayoral Control 1995	Arne Duncan	2001-Present	Professional Basketball Player

District	Governance Structure	Superintendent	Appointed	Professional Background
School District of Philadelphia	Traditional School Board Governance (2000) Mayoral Control (2001)	Philip R. Goldsmith	2000-2001	Banker
Brevard County	Traditional School Board Governance	Richard DiPatri	2000-Present	State Education commission
Cobb County, Ga.,	Traditional School Board Governance	Joseph J. Redden	2000-2005	U.S. Air Force General
Los Angeles California	Traditional School Board Governance	Roy Romer	2000-2006	Three-term Colorado Governor
Okaloosa County Public Schools, Florida	Traditional School Board Governance	Dan Gaetz	2000-2005	Owner of VITAS Health Care Corp.
Greenville County, South Carolina	Traditional School Board Governance	William Harner	2000-2004	U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel
Oklahoma City	Traditional School Board Governance	William Weitzel	2000-2002	Business
New York City Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance (2000) Mayoral Control Appointed Board (2002)	Harold Levy	2000-2002	Attorney-at-Law and Finance
Dallas Independent School District	Traditional School Board Governance	Michael Moses	2000-2004	Commissioner of Education
Polk County, Florida	Traditional School Board Governance	Roscoe Thornhill	2002-2006	Government Administrator
Gig Harbor, Wash.,	Traditional School Board Governance	J.J. Coolican	1999-2005	U.S. Marine Corps Colonel
Austin Independent School District	Traditional School Board Governance	Pasquil Forgive	1999-Present	Government Administrator

District	Governance Structure	Superintendent	Appointed	Professional Background
New Orleans Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	A.G. Davis	1999-2002	U.S. Marine Corps Colonel
Seattle, Wash., Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	Joseph Olchefske	1999-2003	Investment Banker
Kansas City, Missouri	Traditional School Board Governance	Benjamin Demps, Jr.	1999-2001	Attorney at Law
Eatonville, Washington State #404	Traditional School Board Governance	Raymond Arnett, III	1998-Present	U.S. Army Colonel
Baltimore City Public School System	Traditional School Board Governance	Robert W. Booker	1998-2000	Chief Financial Officer
Seneca County, Ohio	Traditional School Board Governance	Michael Wank	1998-Present	Vice President St. Francis College Associate
Cincinnati Public Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	Stephen Adamowski	1998-2002	Secretary of Education in Delaware
San Diego, California	Traditional School Board Governance	Alan Bersin	1998-2005	U.S. Attorney
Duval County Public Schools, Fla.	Traditional School Board Governance	John C. Fryer, Jr.	1998-2005	2 Star U.S. Air Force Major General
Detroit, Michigan	Elected Board 1998/Mayoral Control 1999-2004	David Adamany	1998-1999	University President
Greenville County	Traditional School Board Governance	William Harner	1998-1999	Military
Denver, Colorado	Traditional School Board Governance	Jerry Wartgow	1998-2005	University President
Boulder Valley, Colorado	Traditional School Board Governance	Thomas G. Seigel	1997-2000	U.S. Navy Commander

District	Governance Structure	Superintendent	Appointed	Professional Background
District of Columbia Schools	Traditional School Board Governance	Julius W. Becton Jr.	1996-1998	U.S. Army Lieutenant General Budget
Chicago Public Schools	Mayoral Control 1995	Paul Vallas	1995-2001	Director, City of Chicago
Seattle Public Schools		John H. Stanford	1995-1998	U.S. Army Major General Dean at the College of Education at Texas Southern University
Houston, Texas	Traditional School Board Governance	Dr. Rod Paige	1994-2001	
School District of Philadelphia	Traditional School Board Governance	David Hornbeck	1994-2000	Attorney-at-Law
Federal Way, Washington	Traditional School Board Governance	Thomas Vander Ark	1994-1999	Business

APPENDIX F

POLICE REPORT

POLICE CRASH REPORTING FORM

AA 500 5 Police Use Only Page 06 Crash Number P 1285126

SNYDER AVENUE

SNYDER AVENUE

Witness Name	Address	Phone
1		
2		

Narrative and additional witnesses: Accident Investigation Notification Issued? Property Damage

- ON 07/16/07 @ 1330 HOURS AT NB I-95 + SNYDER AVENUE.

- WINTER MIX PRECIPITATION, LOW VISIBILITY, ICE-COVERED ROAD.

- UNIT 2 IN LANE 1, UNIT 1 IN LANE 2. UNIT 1 MADE ABRUPT LANE CHANGE, HIT UNIT 2 IN RIGHT SIDE (RIF OF UNIT 1 INTO RIGHT SIDE OF UNIT 2). UNIT 2 CAME TO REST ON LEFT SHOULDER.

- UNIT 1 WENT INTO A COUNTER-CLOCKWISE SPIN ACROSS ROAD, MADE 2ND CONTACT W/ RIGHT WALL W/ FRONT END, MADE 3RD CONTACT W/ RIGHT WALL AFTER ROTATING 180 DEGREES.

- 3 INJURIES TO AN: OPERATOR 2 PASSENGERS.

- UNIT 1 TOWED

- ENTIRE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WITNESSED BY P/O WINTERS 5022, RPC X-24.

- UNIT 1 OPERATOR CITED & FILED FOR MVC 3361 UPON COMPLETION OF THIS REPORT.

APPENDIX G

FIELD NOTES

-The day \rightarrow final journey

I just thank God, Freddy was able to take time off from work to accompany me on this last and final journey. At this time, we are having breakfast at the airport in El Paso, Texas. It is 5:15 in the morning and I need to make sure I have my field packet with me at all times. I refuse to check it in. (stop)

I can't believe I did this to myself. The flight has been delayed 45 minutes. In order to get to Washington in time, and not a car to finally get to the district by 3:00 in the afternoon - I only gave myself a $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour passing time. We should have landed in Dallas at 9:15 and boarded @ 10:00 and landed @ 1:00. It is 9:10 and we just started flying. This is not a good thing. I have spent over \$1,000.⁰⁰ on this one trip. We better make it on time. Freddy doesn't seem to think we are going.

to make our flight. My son is not feeling very positive. That is not exactly what I need to hear as a father.
(Short prayer)

- I can't believe it! We made it!
All planes were delayed. My son said he never knew I could run so fast, without stopping. I made it! We made it. Boarded both planes on time and made it to Washington. Rented a car and drove another 1 hour to our final destination. Freddy drove and I made final preparations.

Tape cassettes (2) Electrical cord
 Batteries (8)
 Spinal notebook

- I arrived @ the supervisor's office @ 2:45.
The building is made of light brown brick, the grass is dried, a lawn mower is out in the front and a garden hose is running without a sprinkler.
Freddy and I walked in to the office. It was an empty office. There were two leather couches, 4 leather seats

a table against the wall. On the table there were informational pamphlets and a desktop computer @ internet. On the screen of the computer was the human resources web page. I went up to the receptionist and introduced myself. They were expecting me and asked me to wait a few minutes. I sat on one of leather chairs and waited around 20 minutes. The Superintendent Secretary came out to get me and asked me if I wanted anything to drink. I thanked them and did not accept anything.

Several parents walked in asking for boundary guidelines. At one point several latino parents walked in and wanted to withdraw their children from school. The receptionist could not help them because she did not speak Spanish and the parents did not speak English. At that point, I volunteered my translation services. They accepted my services - yet - at that point I was called in to the Superintendent's office. I notified

The secretary that my son was fluent in both Spanish and English. He took over the translation and I was escorted to the Supt's office.

The Supt's office was about the size of a bedroom -

He was sitting behind a large mahogany desk and a large blue cloth executive chair @ center. Behind him was a large white board. There is an oval conference table @ 4 curved chairs. The chairs do not match - there are navy blue, light blue and gray cloth chairs. In the center there was a writing instrument container. All pens and pencils were identified with E I S D. The superintendent was impeccably dressed: Navy blue pin-striped suit, white shirt, neck tie. The superintendent wore gold cufflinks and a matching tie clip. The secretary brought in 2 cups of coffee and pastries. The cups and saucers were made of granite ware. They were blue. (Very similar to hunting utensils)

APPENDIX H

TRANSCRIPT

1 I'm not that sort of person anyway. The other thing is
2 non-traditional superintendents should not be (inaudible word)
3 group or a (inaudible word) group, they are a bunch of
4 individuals just like anybody else some of them are going to
5 do great a job some of them are going to do a poor job and
6 some are somewhere in between. So it's like when picking a
7 superintendent you really need to figure out what you want I
8 guess or judge them based on their individual merits. But you
9 can't be, I think -- in the cases that I've seen a good mix
10 I've seen two other superintendents were military do a fine
11 job in very difficult circumstances and maybe that's the
12 advantage, you already got through one career you've got one
13 retirement pay if a --

14 Mrs. Sanchez: You can leave any time you want.

15 Mr. : Yeah, you can leave any time you want to
16 but before that you've already, you know, had stresses and
17 strains like people will (inaudible) I mean, you know, if
18 you're in a situation where you prepare to go to combat you've
19 already thought through what it's gonna be like to do your job
20 to survive or not do your job -- or do your job not survive
21 and ah so they've already got, you know, you go to Kuwait or
22 Iraq and get shot at a couple of times you probably will have
23 a little different view of the world about what's important
24 and what's not. But what I'm saying is you can't take some
25 magic wand and say gee this guy was an admiral or gee he was a

1 general or a colonel or what he happens to be you know
2 obviously everything is directly transferable into this
3 position. There may be those but I was the first people who
4 was (inaudible) for general officer who are total jerks. So
5 you still have to judge individually the person not just as a
6 group. It's the same -- people tend to judge people based on
7 categories and base a lot of faults (inaudible) so you've got
8 to judge people's (inaudible) retired military or racial group
9 or gender or linguistic or national origin or anything else.

10 Mrs. Sanchez: How did you prepare for the position or
11 did you prepare for the position other than your military
12 background?

13 Mr. Well, I was hired the same day I retired
14 so there was no preparation other than the fact that I already
15 had 25 years of military experience and three Masters Degrees
16 and (inaudible word) going through the state's
17 superintendent's certification program which is -- I can't
18 remember it was something like 75 semester hours --

19 Mrs. Sanchez: Oh, so you went through a certification
20 program?

21 Mr. Simultaneously. I was working about 80
22 hours a week.

23 Mrs. Sanchez: Yeah.

24 Mr. And I got a buy about half those hours
25 because I already knew more about technology than the average

1 person could ever teach me. And most of the classes I took, I
2 took but there were very few that were eye opening or unique
3 or, you know, really (inaudible) ah, some of the insights --
4 the best insights (inaudible word) students that went to
5 classes (inaudible)ah, but I went through that and I did that
6 in two years about a year and a half I completed that while I
7 was holding a job and ah, I wouldn't recommend it to anybody,
8 it's a lot of work --

9 Mrs. Sanchez: Yeah.

10 Mr. . . . -- 20-hour days, ah, specially the school
11 district that's got some major problems but, ah, whatever, you
12 know, the (inaudible) School District has always been a
13 very school district, don't get me wrong, it is academically
14 it's been number three in the state's number one in two years
15 ah, built new schools, two (inaudible)one new high school, one
16 new junior high, we closed schools simultaneously with the
17 opening of new schools passed bond levies simultaneously with
18 all seven communities voting yes on all issues first time in
19 history --

20 Mrs. Sanchez: You passed the bond election?

21 Mr. . . . -- built two bus facilities ah, repaired
22 all the exiting buildings to approximately the same level of
23 building-based resources than any other building although they
24 expanded (inaudible) a building (inaudible) 310 years of
25 design. Instituted professional involvement program that

1 should be the envy of any school district--

2 Mrs. Sanchez: And how did you know about curriculum
3 instruction?

4 Mr. Well, basically everybody that had been
5 in curriculum instruction for the exception of one approved
6 employee and about four secretaries that either quit or got
7 fired when I got there. So --

8 Mrs. Sanchez: So

9 Mr. Well, basically you had to find somebody
10 who wanted to come work in a politically chaotic environment.
11 I mean, the school district was just about non-functional in a
12 lot of ways when I got there. The internal work was so ^
13 caustic and corrosive that --

14 Mrs. Sanchez:

15 Mr. Oh, hate is a good word. Ah, you know,
16 when you have the school district school board
17 meetings are televised -- as a matter of fact, they were
18 televised as a result of the radical reformers that got like
19 -- and they became known as the Thursday night fights I think
20 they were called, ah, basically people would have friends come
21 over to their house --

22 Mrs. Sanchez: Oh

23 Mr. -- and started watching TV at seven
24 o'clock and you know --

25

VITA

Maria Severita Sanchez was born in Texas. After graduating from St. Joseph's Academy, she attended Laredo Junior College (currently Laredo Community College) and Laredo State University (currently Texas A&M International University) where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in elementary education. She taught Special Education Social Studies at Martin High School with the Laredo Independent School District. She later received her Master of Science Degree from Laredo State University and a second Master of Science Degree in educational administration from Texas A&I in Kingsville (currently Texas A&M University in Kingsville). After completing her third year as a classroom teacher, she became a Special Education Counselor, later a General Education Counselor. Soon after she became an assistant principal at an elementary school. In 1990, she became an elementary school principal, middle school principal, and high school principal and interim superintendent of the United Independent School District in Laredo, Texas. She is currently the Executive Director for Administrative Compliance and Accountability with the Laredo Independent School District in Laredo, Texas.

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