

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AND SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT  
PERCEPTIONS REGARDING LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS FOR  
SUPERINTENDENTS OF TEXAS SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

by

KENNETH LEE GROHOLSKI

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

December 2009

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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## ABSTRACT

District Superintendent and School Board President Perceptions regarding Leadership  
Characteristics for Superintendents of Texas Schools. (December 2009)

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The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of Texas Public School superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of leadership characteristics of the superintendency.

The questionnaire used in this study was developed by Dr. Douglas D. Wilson and modified by the researcher. Responses to a Likert Scale instrument and a nominal ranking of ten leadership characteristics were solicited from superintendents and school board presidents of Texas public schools. The population was superintendents and school board presidents from the 1031 Public School Districts of Texas. The population was divided into 95 large school districts (>10,000 students) and 936 small school districts (<10,000 students).

Data was then generated regarding the respondent's perceptions of leadership characteristics. Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney Tests for differences were used to determine if possible significant differences exist in the data. Results were reported using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 14.0).

Major findings of the study suggest:

1. Superintendents view the importance of instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and effective school board relations significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than school board presidents.
2. Superintendents of small schools view the importance of instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and effective school board relations significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than school board presidents of small schools. Conversely, school board presidents of small schools view the focus on professional development significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than superintendents of small schools.
3. Superintendents of large schools view the importance of instructional leadership, comfort with media relations and politics, and effective school board relations significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than school board presidents of large schools.

The study concluded that there are differences in the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents of Texas public school districts concerning the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics. The study also shows that the leadership characteristics perceived as most important by both superintendents and school board presidents are different based on the size of the school district. It was also concluded that further study was needed to obtain a higher response rate from the population and conduct further demographic analyses of Texas public school leadership.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife and children for all of their sacrifices and support given to me throughout this educational journey. I am thankful for every one of you for standing by me during the trials and tribulations of the past several years. I could not have completed this journey without your selflessness during the times I had to be absent as a father and a husband.

This paper is also dedicated to my mom and dad for stressing the importance of community and the path of education. Although dad was called Home in December of 2006 and unable to witness the achievement of this goal, there is no doubt that his spirit lives on in me and in the completion of this quest. There is no questioning the impact the both of you have had on my life me and my home and I thank you dearly.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this paper would not have been possible if it weren't for the dedication and perseverance of all those directly and indirectly involved in the process. Special thanks go to Dr. John R. Hoyle for serving as my committee chair and his patience and leadership throughout this journey. I will forever be grateful for his trust and confidence in my abilities. His friendship and tutelage were paramount in finishing this journey.

Appreciation also goes out to Dr. Luana J. Zellner, Dr. Virginia S. Collier, and Dr. Chris L. Skaggs for their support and service on my graduate committee. Appreciation is also due for Dr. Shawn Ramsey who volunteered his services as a substitute committee member. Their efforts collectively and individually were challenging yet encouraging throughout this journey.

Much deserved thanks also goes to the EHRD staff, namely Joyce Nelson and Clarice Fulton. They were always there to answer my many questions and to provide support and encouragement throughout graduate school.

I want to acknowledge the Calvert I.S.D. Board of Trustees: Dan Jordan, Diane Grimes, Volney Alston III, Joyce Williams, Ann Satterwhite, Louise Grigsby, and Carolyn Rosemond, for their patience with my time commitments and dedication to our school system.

Thanks also to my wife and children for their love and encouragement. This achievement would not have been possible without all of you and your sacrifices.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The public education system is a complex organization where leadership is important for success (Glass, 2001b; Wilson 2006). Over the past 25 years there has been an emphasis on improving student achievement in schools and the demand to hold school leadership accountable for continuous improvement and academic success. Instructional leadership has been shown to be especially important for effective schools (Waters & Marzano, 2006). The role of the superintendent calls for exceptional leadership to transform schools into places of success.

Leadership can be interpreted in different ways. As defined by Hoy and Miskel (2008), leadership is “a social process in which a member or members of a group or organization influence the interpretation of internal and external events, the choice of goals or desired outcomes, organization of work activities, individual motivation and abilities, power relations, and shared orientations” (p.420). When district leaders carry out their leadership responsibilities effectively, student achievement is positively affected (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

In Texas, the role of superintendent of schools includes acting as the chief executive officer of the school district, serving as the change agent of reform, and holding the ultimate leadership role in the day to day operations in their schools.

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This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Educational Administration*.

In addition, superintendents bring a set of professional and personal values to their districts. These values are formed from years of study, research, and experience (Glass, 2007a). The position of school superintendent is unique and plays a critical role as connecting link between schools and communities represented by school governing boards (Glass, 2007b); yet few educators want to undertake this difficult position (Cooper, Fussarelli, & Carella, 2000).

In their role as community representatives, the governing school boards select and evaluate superintendents. Some governing boards seek a superintendent who will lead their school's reform effort and serve as the chief executive officer of the district. Superintendents are critical to creating environments susceptible to substantive reform and is the cornerstone in school reform research, but points out that the political nature of school boards affects the selection of the superintendent and also the leadership in that role (Glass 2001b, 2002, 2007).

#### Statement of the Problem

An effective relationship must exist between the school governing board and its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in order for the school district leadership to be successful (Byrd 2006; Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000 Wilson, 2006). The school board president is the leader of the school governing board and is the key communication link between the board and the superintendent (Glass, 2002). Byrd, Drews, and Johnson (2006) identify local school boards as the sole evaluators of superintendents and further point out that the quality of relationships between school board presidents and school superintendents determine the success and length of tenure of the superintendent.

School board presidents are critical leaders in the hiring and firing of superintendents in any school district (Glass, 2001b; 2002). Their presidency and their expectations of the district superintendent is a reflection of their professional/personal values and experiences (Glass, 2007b).

Conflict with the school board is cited among others as a common reason for superintendents leaving a district (Hoyle & Skrla, 1999, Rausch, 2001). Peggy Ondorvich states that dealing effectively with conflict is critical to the superintendency (as cited in Running, 2004). School board micromanagement is also a key reason for turnover in the superintendency (Glass, 2001a; Harvey 2003). This doctoral study is important in order to extend the knowledge base regarding school board-superintendent relationships and its impact on leadership for all schools. Needs and preferences of schools vary from district to district (Collins, 2005). If school are to be governed to help all students succeed it is imperative that studies be conducted to identify issues around leadership expectations by both the school board and superintendent. Therefore, it warrants investigation to compare school board presidents' and superintendents' perceptions about school district leadership characteristics of the superintendency in Texas public schools.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to compare the likenesses and differences in the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents in Texas public schools regarding the leadership characteristics of the superintendent. Specifically, this study places additional focus on the size of the school district as part of the comparative

component. This document provides an extension to the research conducted by Douglas D. Wilson in a doctoral dissertation from Arizona State University (2006). Wilson compared the perceptions of superintendents and school governing board presidents regarding leadership characteristics in Arizona schools. The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey (Wilson, 2006) was used to measure the differences in perception on the leadership characteristics of superintendents between superintendents and school governing board presidents.

### Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the differences in perceptions between school superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?
2. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?
3. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?

### Significance of the Study

The future success of public school systems depends on the leadership skills of superintendents as they relate to the expectations of the governing boards (Wilson, 2006). Conflict, inefficiency, and frustration are inevitable when there is ambiguity concerning the job duties of the superintendent (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Glass stated that many members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) believe conflict between school board members and superintendents are more prevalent today than in years past (2007). Conversely, members of the National School Board Association (NSBA) feel that the conflict is not greater than before (September, 2001).

Issues facing schools have not changed much throughout the years but the size and complexity has increased (Orr, 2002). Effective schools require superintendents to be the agents of change as they face these complexities. School superintendents need vision, skill, and knowledge to run the day to day operations of their districts (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). The school board president is the leader of the governing board but more importantly, the school board president is the key communication link with the superintendent (Glass, 2002). A substantial and positive relationship exists when the superintendent and governing board do the “right work” in the “right way” and are focused on fulfilling their leadership responsibilities (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

To date, there is limited research comparing the superintendent’s and the school board president’s perceptions of leadership characteristics of school superintendents in Texas public schools. Results from this study may significant research that will aid in

the relationship between superintendents and school board presidents in Texas schools and contribute to the literature related to school leadership and governance.

### Operational Definitions

Education Code: Officially named the *Texas Education Code*, the education code refers to the state educational statutes approved by the Texas Legislature.

Texas Public Schools: The independent school districts of the State which are legislated by the *Texas Education Code*, governed by the local school board, and accountable to the Texas Education Agency.

Superintendent: The superintendent is defined as the chief executive who is appointed by the board of trustees and given legal and administrative power to manage the day to day operations of the school district where appointed. The superintendent is superordinate to the professional and nonprofessional staff, but subordinate to the school board of the district which is responsible for the superintendent's evaluation.

School Board President: The school board president is the duly elected member of the board who presides over the board and its actions. The president of the school board also represents the board as a whole as its spokesperson.

School Board: The school board is the body of officials elected to oversee the operations of the school district. The school board is sometimes referred to as the governing board or board of trustees.

School Board/Superintendent Relations: The working relationship between the superintendent of schools and the school governing board that eases or restricts the day to day operations of the school district.



Small School Districts: Texas school districts that have an enrollment of 1000 students or less.

Large School Districts: Texas school districts that have an enrollment of 1001 students or higher.

Leadership Characteristics: Terms used to effectively describe individual elements of the expectations of the superintendent as they relate to job performance.

Perceptions: Observations and opinions of tested population.

#### Assumptions

1. The responders will understand the scope of the study and will honestly and objectively answer the questionnaire.
2. The researcher will show no bias or partiality in collecting and analyzing the data.
3. The individual returning the survey is the same individual who completed the survey.
4. Leadership characteristics are accurately reflected in the test instrument.
5. The perceived leadership characteristics of superintendents are accurately reflected by the instrument.

### Limitations

1. Findings from this study are based on data collected from presiding superintendents and school board presidents from Texas Public Schools.
2. Objectivity of the responders may have been affected by biases of the individual responders as they complete their questionnaires.
3. Limited sample size and amount of data collected from large schools. Out of 1031 public school districts, only 153 superintendents and 45 school board presidents returned surveys of which only 20 superintendents and 10 school board presidents represented large schools.

### Contents of the Record of Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and the significance of the research. Chapter II contains the review of current literature. This review outlines relevant issues associated with school leadership and management including instructional leadership. The topics of school governance and superintendent-school board president relations also were reviewed. Chapter III contains the methodology of the study including population, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis procedures. The fourth chapter presents the analysis and comparisons of the data collected in the study as it relates to the research questions. The fifth and final chapter consists of the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Leadership is a mysterious and elusive concept (Chopra, 2002) where one can get bogged down in complex theory (Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, Harvey, & Koff, 2005). As cited by Wilson, leadership finds its roots in the works of Weber, Fayol, and Taylor emphasizing efficiency and productivity (2006). From ancient times to the present, observers have remained perplexed about the actual essence of leadership (Hoyle, 2007). The changing view of what it means to lead allows for differing interpretations of literature (Schlechty, 1990). This is especially true in superintendent and school board president perceptions. The remainder of this literature review includes relevant research in the following sections: 1) leadership in general, 2) characteristics and traits of leadership, 3) research on leadership in the superintendency that includes skills and expectations of performance, 4) school boards and their roles in district leadership, 5) evaluations, politics, and conflicts of the superintendent-school board/president relationship.

#### Leadership

Hoy and Miskel define leadership as a social process in which a member or members of a group or organization influence the interpretation of internal and external events, the choice of goals or desired outcomes, organization of work activities, individual motivation and abilities, power relations, and shared orientations (2008). Collins, in his book, *Good to Great* identifies five levels of leadership (2001):

1. Highly capable individuals

2. Contributing team member
3. Competent manager
4. Effective leader
5. Level 5 Executive (p.20)

Level 5 leadership sits at the top of the pyramidal hierarchy and was found by Collins to be at the helm of every good-to-great company he researched (2001). Seven commonplaces in school leadership serve as “stakes in the ground” for leadership in today's schools. These non-negotiable “stakes” are leading, governance, standards and assessment, race and class, principals, collaboration, and community engagement (Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, Harvey, & Koff, 2005). Covey relates successful leadership to seven personal habits. These habits can be divided into the categories of private victory, public victory, and renewal. Effective people, according to Covey (1989):

1. Are proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think win/win
5. Seek first to understand, then be understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen their saws

Effective leaders have visions and work to shape organizations in accordance with that vision (Sergiovanni, 1996). Hoyle regards extraordinary leaders as those who

inspire people during their lives and make lasting contributions (2002). Chopra found that someone who has set out to become a leader will succeed through the use of fundamental spiritual rules (2002). These rules are based on the concepts of looking, listening, and showing flexibility in decision making (Chopra, 2002). In Texas, many extraordinary leaders have been and are school superintendents (Hoyle, 2002). Former military general Matt Prophet defined seven elements needed to lead any organization (as cited by Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, Harvey, & Koff, 2005):

1. You must have the right people.
2. You must have access to data about your system's performance.
3. You need an effective delivery system.
4. Logistical systems are essential.
5. You need a communications system.
6. You must have an absolute methodology for evaluation.
7. Successful leadership is a process not a destination.

### Superintendent Leadership

School superintendents assume the role of chief executive leader (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). The superintendency has historically been viewed as the person who keeps their organization running efficiently (Houston & Eadie, 2002). Today, school executives need vision, skill, and knowledge to run the day to day operations of their districts (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). Superintendents must be bold, creative, and energetic leaders who can respond quickly to issues (Hoyle, 2002). Leadership also has significant effects on learning, making the instructional leadership

of superintendents vital to the success of the district (Forsyth, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000).

Normative role expectations of the superintendency have evolved over the past 150 years (Kowalski, 2005). These role expectations of the school superintendent can vary and be very formidable (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006; Wilson, 2006). Hoyle (2002) writes that the superintendent finds himself being pulled in many directions. The public school superintendent is a job that is complex, demanding, stressful, and controversial because the educational and political balance of the job (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Hoyle, (2002); Kowlaski, (2005). Observers of the superintendency agree that the variability in working conditions is dependent on local factors such as district size, wealth, and community support (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

The superintendency encompasses an overwhelming number of responsibilities (Cunningham, 1999; Glass 2007a; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). Theodore Kowalski (2005), building on the research of Raymond Callahan (1966), identifies five overlapping role conceptualizations of the superintendency. These conceptualizations show the importance of the superintendent as:

1. teacher/scholar
2. manager
3. democratic leader
4. applied social scientist
5. communicator

Finances and accountability pressures have been of constant high concern to superintendents over the years (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Houston & Eadie, 2002). The superintendent is also responsible for the regulation of the school district including the mission, and vision of the district (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005) pulling the superintendent in many different directions (Hoyle, 2002). Hoyle (2002) adds further that increased scrutiny by legislators, special interest groups, and media have made student achievement a top priority (p. 7).

The ability to be politically astute and a manager of conflict is and will continue to be essential to the success of superintendents. Gerzon (2007) identifies eight tools that leaders use in mediation:

1. Integral vision
2. Systems thinking
3. Presence
4. Inquiry
5. Conscious conversation
6. Dialogue
7. Bridging
8. Innovation

These tools are best used in various combinations allowing the leader to mediate and transform conflict, strengthening education in the process (Gerzon, 2007).

Cooper, Fusarelli, and Carella (2000) and Hoyle (2002) agree that that the numbers who seek the superintendency diminish each year. Glass (2002) identifies the

following four possible reasons for fewer candidates seeking the role of the superintendency:

1. Lack of qualified applicants for the superintendency.
2. Frequent turnover.
3. Deteriorating board relations.
4. Lack of gender and racial diversity in the superintendency.

According to Pascopella (2008), superintendents feel the position of superintendent is stressful because of school finance shortages, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates, negative media attention, individual board member relations, and conflicting community demands.

Clearly, the demands of the school superintendent require patience, knowledge, and skill (Hoyle, 2002). Increasing student achievement is cited as the biggest reason that few people desire to pursue the superintendency (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 2000; Farkas, Foley, & Duffet, 2003). Hoyle (2002) along with Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000) point out that salary and benefits are insufficient for the level of responsibility and accountability demanded. Glass and Franceschini counter that one out of ten superintendents enters the superintendency for monetary reasons (2007). Hoyle agrees that interest in the superintendency in Texas has decreased due to the demands of the position compared to the compensation (2002). Cooper, Fusarelli, and Carella argue that improved pay and benefits would possibly attract and retain more qualified individuals into the superintendency (2000). In research conducted by Hoyle and associates seven reasons are identified for the disinterest in the superintendency (2005):



1. Financial pressures of the district
2. Board conflict
3. Personal attacks from media/special interest groups
4. poor compensation packages
5. increased number of violent students
6. stress on personal/family life
7. decline of respect for the position

There are many factors contributing to the instability of the superintendency.

Current superintendents state that the lack of fiscal resources was the key reason for lack of success as school leaders (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). Perceptions also play a role in the effectiveness of the superintendent. The 2002 study entitled *Cultivating a Successful Relationship Between the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Trustees* (as cited by Running, 2004) identifies the following behaviors of superintendents that could be detrimental to the district and its perception:

1. Theft of school property.
2. Misuse of authority.
3. Tampering with documents.
4. Participation in school board campaigns.
5. Failure to keep up with the changes in community and school board philosophies and attitudes.
6. Failure to administer district policies.
7. Failure to serve as a role model (pp. 14-16).

School board presidents also identify the lack of funding as a perennial problem facing school districts, but also point toward teacher shortages, low achievement, and poor parental involvement as other possible causes (Glass, 2002). Time is cited as a factor that can be quickly exhausted by special interest groups and community pressures (Glass, et al. 2000; Harvey, 2003). Byrd and associates identify apathy in the decision making process and the decision making by the legislature along party lines as a contributing factor to the instability of the superintendency (2006). Working with the School Board President, not being able to get decisions made at the board level, and superintendent-School Board relations were cited as significant factors in the instability of the superintendency (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006). In contrast, Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, and Glass (2005) state that the reasons for success and/or failure is not always easy to discern.

Another primary source of frustration for school administrators is the micromanagement by the school board and board conflict (Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, Harvey, & Koff, 2005; Harvey, 2003; Rausch, 2001;). School board members who practice power in a dominating or oppressive manner can overtly and covertly disrupt a school's democratic foundation (Mountford, 2004). Points of contention can range from curriculum design to personnel management (Hoyle, 2002). Glass (2001b) found that many members of the *American Association of School Administrators* (AASA) believe conflict between school boards and superintendents are more prevalent today than in years past. As written by Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000), and supported by Hoyle (2002), research shows a contradictory view in terms of

negative superintendent/school governing board relationships. Members of the *National School Board Association* (NSBA) feel that the conflict is not greater than before. Issues facing schools have not changed much throughout the years but the size and the complexity has increased (Orr, 2002). Success of the superintendent is conjectured to lie in the gleaned wisdom from criticisms without being defeated in the process (Harvey, 2003).

The meaning of leadership in public schools has been interpreted a number of different ways. Wilson (2006) notes the changing view of what it means to lead allows for conflicting interpretations of existing literature. Schlechty (1990) proposed that superintendents must use their office to lead their respective districts, meaning that the challenge is to lead without force. Houston and Eadie (2002) add that defining goals and the mode of accomplishing them becomes a blurred line between superintendents and school boards. Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, and Glass also found that twenty-first century superintendents must be able to interpret data, augment instructional methods, and explain their district's achievement in comparison to other districts (2005). Over one-half of superintendents in a study by Farkas, Foley, & Duffet (2003) listed increasing achievement as the most daunting task of the superintendency.

The Institute for Educational Leadership believes that the challenge for district leaders is to unite the community around a common vision and then structure the entire school system around that vision (Usdan, McCloud, Podmostko, & Cuban, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1996). Waters and Marzano (2006) find that effective superintendents include all relevant stakeholders in establishing district goals. Glass (2001a) points out

that superintendent search firms cite the need for superintendents to be communicators and have interpersonal/school board relationship-building skills as opposed to financial management and instructional leadership. The model supported by the National College for School Leadership in Europe states that leadership must be both instructional and transformational (Earley, 2003). Schlechty (1990) proposed that superintendents must use their office to lead their respective districts, meaning that the challenge is to lead without force. Waters and Marzano (2006) identify four major findings in their meta-analyses of leadership in effective schools:

1. District level leadership matters.
2. Effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts.
3. Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement.
4. A “Defined Autonomy” of the campus building.

The AASA *Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators* was the first widely distributed guidelines for school district or “central office” administration (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). In 2002, years of further research in educational leadership by the AASA, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) culminated in the production of the *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership*. However, the AASA guidelines remain the best guide for superintendent preparation because of its focus on strategic elements of the superintendency (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005).

In Texas, the superintendent of schools is the chief executive officer of each school district and holds the ultimate leadership role in the day to day operations in their schools (Glass, 2007b). Adams, Hill, and Bullard state that under Texas State law, the superintendent has broad responsibilities and ultimate accountability for all district operations as leaders of schools (2009). This leadership role is based on eight professional standards from the American Association of School Administrators and authored by John R. Hoyle in *Professional Standards for the Superintendency* (Hoyle, 2007; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005; Running 2004). These standards involve executive leadership and executive vision in (Hoyle, 2007):

1. Shaping district culture.
2. Societal and school board governance issues.
3. Internal and external communications.
4. Resource management.
5. Curriculum.
6. Instructional management.
7. Personnel management.
8. Personal values and ethics.

Within each of these eight standards exists five to seven specific duties or performance indicators. These standards have their limitations but provide an objective basis in the evaluation of the superintendent through the setting of specific targets (Eadie, 2003; Hoyle, 2007).

The approved standards or “framework” of the superintendency in Texas is comprised of three primary domains encompassing ten competencies:

1. Leadership of the educational community
  - a. Integrity, fairness, and ethics
  - b. Shaping and facilitation, and implementation of a vision
  - c. Communication with stakeholders
  - d. Response to and influence of larger political contexts
2. Instructional leadership
  - a. Strategic planning and implementation to enhance learning
  - b. Nurture and sustain the instructional program and district culture
  - c. Staff evaluation, development, and supervision
3. Administrative leadership
  - a. Financial planning and resource allocation
  - b. Facilities planning and management
  - c. Change agent with organizational and problem solving skills

#### School Governance

The local school district was created to carry out the State system of public education. The governing body of the local school district is the school board. In the majority of communities across Texas, the elected school board is the primary way a community defines itself. The school board is the place where basic values of communities are articulated, debated and adjudicated (Nemir, 2009).

The governing work that must be done in schools is daunting. Updating the vision, prioritizing decisions, agreement on objectives, and monitoring financial and educational performance are integral to the governing process. The following work must be done to assure school district success (Eadie, 2003):

1. Updating the school district's vision and mission periodically in response to environmental change.
2. Spotting strategic issues that are coming down the pike in enough time to address them effectively.
3. Deciding which issues to tackle now and in the near future and investing in change initiatives to deal with them.
4. Reaching agreement on operational targets.
5. Rigorously monitoring financial and educational performance.

Strategic planning and decision making are considered the gold standards for board involvement in school leadership. Close collaboration can have a strong impact on school improvement (Houston & Eadie, 2002).

School governing board members bring their desire to make a real difference in their districts and a capacity for hard work (Eadie, 2003). Cassel and Holt (2008) found that school board members run for office to give back to their communities, to help preserve good schools, to support public education, and to participate in local democracy. Eadie says that along with being able to give back to the community, serving on a school board can be a deeply satisfying experience (2008).

The role of a school board member is, in most cases, an unpaid office requiring servant leadership. Cassel and Holt identify six significant characteristics of servant leaders:

1. Listening
2. Healing
3. Persuasion
4. Foresight
5. Commitment to people
6. Community building

The selection of the superintendent is the single most important decision made by school boards. Superintendents receive their power from the local school board (Glass, 2000). The selection process varies depending on the size of the district but after the interview process, the school board nominates a final candidate (Bjork, Glass, & Brunner, 2005). Hoyle, Hogan, Skrla, and Ealy (2001) found a growing crisis in the superintendency and predicts a lack of high performing schools unless the best and brightest educators become the CEO's of Texas schools. The superintendent is the board's closest partner in providing leadership to your district and its most precious human resource (Houston & Eadie, 2002). Glass (2000, 2002) agrees that the school board and superintendent must work together to connect the school district and the community. The line between good and bad in terms of a superintendency hinges on united or fractured support (Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, Harvey, & Koff, 2005). The leadership priorities of the superintendent with the school board call for



collaboration to formulate specific performance targets (Houston & Eadie 2002). The “rub” is that satisfying governing board expectations may or may not coincide with what is required to succeed educationally (Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, Harvey, & Koff, 2005).

The superintendent and school governing board are the two most important elements of the district’s strategic leadership team (Houston & Eadie, 2002). Thus, a good relationship between the school board/school board president and the superintendent is critical to success (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006). This fundamental relationship can be strengthened by the superintendent understanding the current dynamics of the leadership team through the use of situational governance. This continuum of situational governance is a non-static approach to leadership through the use of different leadership styles for four scenarios of school governance (Domenech, 2005):

1. A Micromanaging Board
2. A Supportive Board
3. A Wait-and-See Board
4. A Mature Board

Eadie (2003) points out the importance and high stakes nature of the superintendent-school board relationship by declaring the need for building a close, positive, productive, lasting board-superintendent relationship. He states further that the board-superintendent relationship is notoriously difficult to build and prone to deterioration if not nurtured (2003). The success of the school governance team is directly linked to the

future success of Texas' education (Running, 2004). This could lead to longer tenures and a better focus on academic achievement (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006).

The success of any school district in fulfilling its mission to educate children depends on the ability of the superintendent and the board of trustees to jointly establish goals and objectives. An effective means to provide focus and direction to the leadership team is a well-conceptualized and well-developed evaluation process (Adams, Hill, & Bullard, 2009). Houston and Eadie agree that one of the most important functions of a high impact governing board is the performance evaluation of the district CEO (2002). Superintendent evaluation is required by statute, but in most states specific criteria are not mandated (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). Texas law states that funds may not be used to pay an administrator who has not been appraised in the preceding 15 months (Adams, Hill, & Bullard, 2009). Glass and Franceschini found that over 80% of superintendents in the United States are evaluated annually (2007).

To evaluate a superintendent's performance is to make value judgments (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005; Hoyle & Skrla, 1999). The evaluation of superintendents consists of a document written by the school governing board president and/or the entire board (Glass, 2007b). The document should be cooperatively developed and reviewed in advance of the evaluation so that the district, the board, and the superintendent can prepare for and benefit from the evaluation. The superintendent evaluation in Texas must address the following minimum criteria, or descriptors (Adams, Hill, & Bullard, 2009):

1. Instructional management
2. School/organization morale
3. School/organization improvement
4. Personnel management
5. Management of administrative, fiscal, and facility functions
6. Student management
7. School/community relations
8. Professional growth and development
9. Academic excellence indicators and campus performance objectives
10. School board relations

The superintendent evaluation is unique in comparison to how other professional educators are evaluated (Adams, Hill, & Bullard, 2009). The purpose of the evaluation process is to determine the superintendent's future compensation and/or contract renewal or extension (Glass & Franceschini, 2007); however it also aims to improve the superintendent's executive skills in leading the district to greater effectiveness (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005).

The evaluation of the superintendent can only be effective if board members and the superintendent have knowledge and understanding of the legal, practical, and political implications of the evaluation process (Adams, Hill, & Bullard, 2009). The magic of assessing the performance of the superintendent does not lie in the evaluation process itself. Evaluation procedures must have specific performance targets or else become dangerously subjective (Eadie, 2003). Adams, Hill, and Bullard found that the

superintendent and the school board must operate as a team in establishing goals and objectives of the district (2009). The following steps in conducting an annual review are recommended (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005):

1. Establish procedures for setting goals or targets that define expectations and set priorities for the superintendent being appraised.
2. Develop evaluation processes in collaboration with the superintendent being appraised.
3. Conduct formative conferences to provide ongoing monitoring of performance.
4. Conduct a final summative conference (p. 211).

Houston & Eadie (2002) support these steps with the following recommendations:

1. Utilization of the board's executive committee to ensure the evaluation process is well designed and carried out.
2. Basing the evaluation on agreeable and negotiated performance targets.
3. Including active face to face dialogue in meetings between the superintendent and the executive committee.
4. Keeping the focus on education and growth.
5. Reaching formal consensus and formal documentation thereof.
6. The entire governing board is fully informed and invited to comment (pp. 86-88).

The success of the leadership team is based on building a close, positive, productive, and lasting superintendent-school board partnership. Effective

communication is an obvious, yet vital component in any relationship that involves collaboration and teamwork. Both sides of the leadership team must reach explicit agreement on what you will regularly see and hear from the superintendent and the types of interaction you will have revolving around four expectations (Eadie 2008a):

1. Pertinent Issues
2. Emerging Issues
3. Informal Interaction
4. Accurate Information

It requires the superintendent to devote time and energy to the superintendent-school board relationship. Effective communication between the superintendent and the governing board should be based on the following themes (Houston & Eadie, 2002):

1. Openness and honesty in communication.
2. Share the right information.
3. Be timely in communication (pp.93-94).

The key ingredient effective school leadership is trust (Cassel & Holt, 2008).

Eadie (2003) states that sweeping changes are taking place in working with school boards. The demand for immediate gratification, the distrust of authority, the graying of formalities, and time pressures all are broad changes to the landscape of school leadership.

The school board president is the leader of the governing board but more importantly, the key communication link with the superintendent (Glass, 2002). The relationship between the school board president and the superintendent is another piece

of the partnership puzzle. Strong superintendent-school board president partnerships have been supported by board-savvy superintendents who (Eadie 2003):

1. bring a positive attitude to their working relationship with the board president.
2. take the trouble to get to know the board president
3. reach agreement on the basic division of labor with the board president.
4. make sure that the president succeeds as chair of the board.
5. help the board president achieve hi/her professional objectives.

It is because of this important relationship between the superintendent and school board president that further study is needed into the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents as they relate to leadership characteristics of superintendents.

#### Summary

This literature review has described leadership as it pertains to school district leadership and school governance in Texas public schools. The review has focused on the characteristics and expectations of superintendent leadership in Texas schools based upon previous research in educational leadership. This review has also identified the importance of effective school governance and the importance of the superintendent-school governing board president relationship ultimately connecting the two sides of school governance through the superintendent appraisal. This literature review also details the evaluation of the superintendent and its critical relationship to the characteristics of the superintendency and the importance of the superintendent and the

governing board as the leadership team. The focus of this study and its research questions were based on this literature cited in this review.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The major purpose of this study is to compare the likenesses and differences in the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents in Texas public schools regarding the leadership characteristics of the superintendent. This study was designed to collect and analyze data pertaining to the perceived importance of leadership characteristics in the superintendency. The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey, a questionnaire initially developed by Dr. Douglas D. Wilson (2006), was adapted and used to collect data from Texas school superintendents and Texas school governing board presidents. The data were analyzed to establish a relationship between the perceptions of superintendents and the perceptions of school board presidents and identified variables.

#### Population

The populations of interest in this study are current superintendents and school board presidents of public school districts in Texas. Questionnaires were sent via email to current Texas public school superintendents and school board presidents from public school districts using the following enrollment figures respectively: less than 10,000 students and 10,000+ students. At the time of the study there were 1031 Public School Districts in the State of Texas (Texas Education Directory, 2008). Overall there were 95 large districts and 936 small districts which made up the population studied. The large



school district category for this study was 9.2% of the population studied. There were 936 small districts which made up 90.8% of the population studied.

Out of 95 large school district category 20 superintendents successfully responded to the survey which made up 21.1% of the superintendent population sample. Ten school board presidents from the large school category successfully responded to the survey making up 10.5% of the school board president population sample. Out of 936 small school districts 133 superintendents successfully responded to the survey making up 14.2% of the superintendent population sample. Thirty five school board presidents from small school districts successfully responded to the survey making up 3.7% of the school board president population sample. The decision was made by the researcher to test a cross-section of superintendents and school board presidents of the 1031 Texas Public School Districts.

The 1031 public school districts are placed in geographical regions known as Educational Service Centers (ESC). Superintendents and school board presidents from all 20 ESC's were represented in the study with the exception of Region I and Region XV where no responses from school board presidents were submitted. See Table 1.

**Table 1. Frequency distribution of responses by ESC (N=198)**

ESC	Superintendent Responses	School Board President Responses
I	6	0
II	4	1
III	9	3
IV	5	4
V	10	3
VI	18	4
VII	7	3
VIII	8	1
IX	10	4
X	4	1
XI	5	1
XII	17	3
XIII	3	4
XIV	2	1
XV	2	0
XVI	12	2
XVII	16	3
XVIII	8	3
XIX	4	2
XX	2	2

### Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is *The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey* developed by Douglas D. Wilson in 2006 and was distributed with minimum modifications. This survey was chosen for this research because of its validity and reliability in gathering perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents in regard to superintendent leadership characteristics. The first part of *The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey* is a forced choice Likert instrument consisting of 17 questions pertaining to leadership characteristics of the superintendency and factors related to job effectiveness.

Each of the 17 items required the responder to choose one of the following choices regarding their perception of leadership characteristics of the superintendent:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

The second part of *The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey* allows the respondent to rank ten school leadership characteristics in order of importance perceived by the responder. These 10 leadership characteristics are as follows:

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Understanding of School Finance

3. Focused Professional Development
4. Effective School Board Relations
5. Visionary Leadership
6. Understanding of School Law
7. Community Building
8. Political Astuteness
9. Team Building
10. Intellect

Modifications included the gathering of selected demographic variables included gender, district size, and if the responder was a school board president or the district superintendent. The purpose of the research is to collect quantitative data regarding perceptions of leadership characteristics of Texas superintendents by asking the same questions of Texas superintendents and school board presidents.

A copy of *The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey* (Wilson, 2006) is attached to this study. Wilson stated his confidence and satisfaction as to the validity of the instrument based on the following design principles F.J. Fowler Jr. (1998).

1. The strength of survey research is asking people about their first-hand experiences.
2. Questions should be asked one at a time.
3. A survey question should be worded so that all responders are answering the same question.

4. All responders should understand the kind of answer that constitutes an adequate answer to a question.
5. Survey instruments should be designed so that the tasks of reading questions, following instructions, and recording answers are as easy as possible for all responders.

#### Data Collection

There were 1031 independent public school districts in Texas at the time of the research. Questionnaires were emailed to all superintendents and school governing board presidents of these districts. A cover letter explaining the survey and confidentiality of subjects were emailed as a preface to the survey. The process was repeated bi-weekly two more times to complete the survey. Returned surveys were sorted into two groups: school board presidents and district superintendents and divided into large school districts and small school districts. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of returned surveys from Texas school superintendents.

**Table 2. Distribution and return of superintendent surveys (N=153)**

Group	n returned	Percentage of Populaton
Large Districts	20	21.1%
Small Districts	133	14.2%
Totals	153	14.8%

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of returned surveys from Texas school board presidents.

**Table 3. Distribution and return of school board president surveys (N=45)**

Group	n returned	Percentage of Population
Large Districts	10	10.5%
Small Districts	35	3.7%
Totals	45	4.4%

### Data Analysis

The 1031 public school districts of Texas were divided into two groups: large school districts (>10,000 students) and small school districts (< 10,000 students). Questionnaires and cover letters were emailed to the superintendent and school board president of each school district. As questionnaires were received from the survey instrument, the data was entered in Microsoft Excel format using a personal computer.

At the completion of the data collection, the information was exported for analysis to the statistical program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows-Standard Version 14.0 (SPSS, Inc., 2006). Descriptive statistical analyses produced means, frequencies, central tendencies, and standard deviations. Mann-Whitney tests produced significance values. The Demographic data collected pertained to the size of the district and the position held by the responder. These variables were used in the analysis of the perceptions of school board presidents and superintendents as they related to leadership characteristics of superintendents in Texas public schools.

Data analysis included specific statistical procedures for each research question.

The questions are:

1. What are the differences in perceptions between school superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?
2. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?
3. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The major purpose of this study is to compare the likenesses and differences in the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents in Texas public schools regarding the leadership characteristics of the superintendent. Specifically, this study places additional focus on the size of the school district as part of the comparative component. This document provides an extension to the research conducted by Douglas D. Wilson in a doctoral dissertation from Arizona State University (2006). Wilson compared the perceptions of superintendents and school governing board presidents regarding leadership characteristics in Arizona schools. *The Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey* (Wilson, 2006) was used to measure the differences in perception on the leadership characteristics of superintendents between superintendents and school governing board presidents. This study compared survey responses from school board presidents and superintendents based on the size of the district of the respondent.

One hundred and fifty three (153) superintendents and 45 school board presidents of Texas public independent school districts responded to a research instrument developed by Dr. Douglas D. Wilson (2006). This instrument was slightly modified by the researcher. Both superintendents and school board presidents were given the same questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of three sections. The first section consisted of 17 forced choice Likert instrument questions related to superintendent



leadership characteristics. The second section allowed the responder to conduct a numerical ranking of ten superintendent leadership characteristics in the order of perceived importance. The final section of the survey gathered descriptive demographic data about the responder.

This chapter is organized into three sections. Section one provides the demographic data from the study along with frequency distributions. The second section examines the research questions and provides a descriptive statistical analysis and discussion of the data. Section three is a discussion of the major findings of the research.

#### Demographic Data

Data regarding demographic information of the respondents are analyzed in this section. The questions asked on the research instrument pertained to the identification of the respondent as the superintendent or school board president and the size of the school district for each responder. Although the researcher collected data regarding the gender of the responder, this data did not produce an adequate sample size and was not used in the research. In addition, the review of literature did not reveal any research comparing perceptions of leadership to the gender of the superintendent and the gender school board president.

Table 4 refers to the frequency distribution of the respondents as it relates to the size of the district they represent and the position held by the respondent in the study. There were 153 superintendents and 45 school board presidents that completed the survey.

**Table 4. Demographic information regarding participants related to school size and position (N=198)**

Type	Superintendents	School Board Presidents
Large (10,000 + Students)	20	10
Small (Less than 10,000 Students)	133	35

#### Research Questions

The first and second parts of the questionnaire addressed the perceptions of school board presidents and of superintendents concerning leadership characteristics of Texas public school superintendents. Section one of the survey included 17 questions pertaining to school district leadership. All 17 questions were answered through the use of a forced Likert response scale. The second part of the survey required each respondent to rank 10 leadership characteristics in the order of perceived importance to school district leadership. Variables used in processing this information included the Size of the District and the position of the respondent in their respective school districts.

### Research Question #1

The first research question of this study addressed the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics. The question was:

1. What are the differences in perceptions between school superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?

Table 5 presents the descriptive data of superintendent responses to the first part of the research instrument based on a Likert scale. The items in Table 5 possess means ranging from 2.84 to 4.84. Table 5 also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. Superintendents ranked effective communication, establishing a clear vision, and the development and management of instructional resources as the three most important characteristics of superintendents. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” had the lowest mean scores of part 1 of the research instrument. See Table 4.

**Table 5. Perceptions of school superintendents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	4.595	5.00	.65	5
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	4.575	5.00	.70	6
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	4.843	5.00	.43	1
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	4.614	5.00	.62	3
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	4.660	5.00	.58	2
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	4.575	5.00	.60	6
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	3.654	4.00	.93	16
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.	3.980	4.00	.90	15
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	2.843	3.00	1.14	17
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	4.131	4.00	.74	14

**Table 5 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	4.601	5.00	.54	4
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	4.209	4.00	.71	13
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	4.268	4.00	.69	11
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	4.248	4.00	.66	12
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	4.307	4.00	.58	10
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	4.438	4.00	.58	9
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	4.536	5.00	.60	8

Table 6 presents the descriptive data of school board president responses to the first part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 2.49 to 4.88. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. The rankings in Table 6 show school board presidents perceived effective communication, establishing a clear vision, and the development and management of instructional resources as the three most important leadership characteristics of superintendents. School board presidents also ranked school board turnover, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” as having the least impact on successful superintendent leadership. See Table 6.

Table 7 presents the descriptive data of Texas school superintendent responses to the second part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 3.52 to 8.09. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. The rankings in Table 7 show that superintendents perceive effective school board relations, visionary leadership, and team building as the most important leadership characteristics in the superintendency. Superintendents also ranked focus on professional development, political astuteness, and an understanding of school law as the least important leadership characteristics of superintendents. See Table 7.

**Table 6. Perceptions of school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	4.156	4.00	.98	12
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	4.244	4.00	.83	8
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	4.889	5.00	.38	1
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	4.511	5.00	.59	3
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	4.533	5.00	.59	2
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	4.489	5.00	.63	5
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	3.356	3.00	.91	16
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.	3.733	4.00	.96	15
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	2.489	2.00	.99	17
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	4.156	4.00	.71	12

**Table 6 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	4.489	5.00	.55	5
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	4.111	4.00	.71	14
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	4.200	4.00	.59	10
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	4.244	4.00	.68	8
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	4.178	4.00	.65	11
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	4.511	5.00	.63	3
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	4.467	5.00	.59	7



**Table 7. Characteristics of superintendents ranked by Texas school superintendents**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Instructional Leadership	4.52	4.00	2.61	4
Understanding of School Finance	5.00	5.00	2.75	5
Focus on Professional Development	8.09	9.00	2.14	10
Effective School Board Relations	3.52	3.00	2.24	1
Visionary Leadership	3.58	3.00	2.55	2
Understanding of School Law	6.78	7.00	2.28	8
Effective Community Building	5.39	5.00	2.18	6
Political Astuteness	7.01	7.00	2.58	9
Team Building	4.29	4.00	2.32	3
Intellect	6.76	7.00	2.66	7

Table 8 presents the descriptive data of Texas school board president responses to the second part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 3.82 to 7.51. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. The rankings in Table 8 show that school board presidents perceive visionary leadership, team building, and effective school board relations as the most important superintendent leadership characteristics. School board presidents also ranked political astuteness, focus on professional development, and the understanding of school law as the three least critical leadership characteristics in the superintendency. See Table 8.

**Table 8. Characteristics of superintendents ranked by Texas school board presidents**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Instructional Leadership	5.22	5.00	2.95	5
Understanding of School Finance	5.11	5.00	2.83	4
Focus on Professional Development	7.18	8.00	2.71	9
Effective School Board Relations	4.64	4.00	2.50	3
Visionary Leadership	3.82	4.00	2.87	1
Understanding of School Law	6.91	7.00	2.14	8
Effective Community Building	5.84	6.00	2.66	6
Political Astuteness	7.51	8.00	2.56	10
Team Building	4.04	4.00	2.53	2

Table 9 provides the results of the Mann-Whitney Test between superintendents and school board presidents to parts one and two of the survey instrument. On question #1 of the first part of the survey instrument, superintendents perceived the importance of instructional leadership with a mean score of 4.595 as noted in Table 5. School board presidents recorded a mean score of 4.156 as noted in Table 4. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .001 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may value instructional leadership to a significantly higher degree than do school board presidents. See Table 9.

On question #2 of the part 1 of the survey instrument, superintendents perceived the importance of prior work experience in education with a mean score of 4.575 as noted in Table 5. School board presidents recorded a mean score of 4.244 as displayed in Table 6. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .002 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may value prior work experience in education to a significantly higher degree than do school board presidents. See Table 9.

In the second part of the survey instrument, superintendents perceived effective school board relations as the top ranked leadership characteristic with a mean score of 3.52 as noted in Table 7. School board presidents recorded a mean score of 4.64 as noted in Table 8. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .004 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may feel that school board relations are more valuable to superintendent leadership than do school board presidents.

**Table 9. Mann-Whitney Test results of Texas superintendents and school board presidents perceptions of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	2519.500	<b>*.001</b>
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	2604.500	<b>*.002</b>
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	3282.000	.430
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	3062.000	.184
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	3029.000	.077
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	3193.000	.416
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	2852.500	.065

**Table 9 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
8. Superintendents must effectively manage “buildings, buses, books, and bonds” to be successful.	2957.000	.123
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	2828.000	.059
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	3383.000	.845
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	3057.500	.205
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	3195.500	.422
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	3167.500	.366
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	3427.500	.969

**Table 9 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	3102.000	.254
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	3170.500	.386
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	3202.500	.417
Instructional Leadership	2972.500	.081
Understanding of School Finance	3356.500	.799
Focus on Professional Development	2867.500	.080
Effective School Board Relations	2477.000	<b>*.004</b>
Visionary Leadership	3406.500	.915

**Table 9 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
Understanding of School Law	3340.500	.762
Effective Community Building	3061.500	.257
Political Astuteness	3004.000	.190

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**\* Significant to the .05 Level**

Research Question #2

The second research question of this study addressed the differences in perceptions between Texas superintendents in small schools and school board presidents of small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics. The question was:

2. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?

Table 10 presents the descriptive data of the responses from superintendents of small schools to the first part of the research instrument based on a Likert scale. The items in Table 10 possess means ranging from 2.80 to 4.83. Table 10 also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. Superintendents of small schools ranked effective communication, establishing a clear vision, and the development and management of instructional resources as the three most important characteristics of

superintendents. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” had the lowest mean scores of part 1 of the research instrument, therefore viewed as the least important to superintendent leadership. See Table 10.

**Table 10. Perceptions of superintendents of small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	4.556	5.00	.68	6
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	4.617	5.00	.68	4
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	4.835	5.00	.45	1
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	4.632	5.00	.58	3
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	4.639	5.00	.59	2
6. The successful superintendent’s ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district’s academic success.	4.571	5.00	.54	7
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	3.669	4.00	.94	16



**Table 10 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
8. Superintendents must effectively manage “buildings, buses, books, and bonds” to be successful.	4.030	4.00	.86	15
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	2.797	3.00	1.13	17
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	4.098	4.00	.75	14
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	4.594	5.00	.55	5
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	4.196	4.00	.72	13
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	4.248	4.00	.69	11
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	4.226	4.00	.70	12
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	4.308	4.00	.57	10

**Table 10 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	4.421	4.00	.59	9
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	4.481	5.00	.61	8

Table 11 presents the descriptive data of school board presidents in small schools to the first part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 2.46 to 4.97. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. School board presidents ranked effective communication, establishing expectations, and establishing a clear vision as the three most important characteristics of superintendents. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” had the lowest mean scores of part 1 of the research instrument. See Table 11.

**Table 11. Perceptions of school board presidents of small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	4.143	4.00	.97	11
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	4.371	4.00	.73	8
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	4.971	5.00	.17	1
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	4.486	5.00	.56	4
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	4.514	5.00	.61	3
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	4.486	5.00	.66	4
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	3.343	3.00	.87	16
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.	3.827	4.00	.82	15
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	2.457	2.00	1.01	17
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	4.114	4.00	.76	12

**Table 11 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	4.486	4.00	.51	4
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	4.057	4.00	.77	14
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	4.171	4.00	.57	10
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	4.200	4.00	.68	9
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	4.086	4.00	.66	13
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	4.543	5.00	.61	2
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	4.486	5.00	.61	4

Table 12 presents the descriptive data of Texas superintendents of small schools to the second part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess a means range from 3.62 to 8.10. The items in this table also include median and standard deviation (SD) measures. The rankings in Table 12 show that superintendents perceive visionary leadership, effective school board relations, and team building as the most important leadership characteristics in the superintendency. Superintendents also ranked focus on professional development, political astuteness, and intelligence as the least important leadership characteristics of superintendents. See Table 12

**Table 12. Characteristics of superintendents ranked by Texas school superintendents of small schools**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Instructional Leadership	4.54	5.00	2.60	4
Understanding of School Finance	4.80	5.00	2.71	5
Focus on Professional Development	8.10	9.00	2.09	10
Effective School Board Relations	3.65	3.00	2.25	2
Visionary Leadership	3.62	3.00	2.57	1
Understanding of School Law	6.59	7.00	2.23	7
Effective Community Building	5.47	5.00	2.22	6
Political Astuteness	7.15	8.00	2.60	9
Team Building	4.29	4.00	2.37	3
Intellect	6.72	7.00	2.77	8

Table 13 presents the descriptive data of school board presidents of small schools to the second part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 3.86 to 7.77. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. The rankings in Table 13 suggest that school board presidents of small schools perceive team building, visionary leadership, and effective school board relations as the most important leadership characteristics in the superintendency. School board presidents of small schools also ranked focus on political astuteness, focus on professional development, and an understanding of school law as the least important leadership characteristics of superintendents. See Table 13.

**Table 13. Characteristics of superintendents ranked by Texas school board presidents of small schools**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Instructional Leadership	5.26	5.00	2.82	5
Understanding of School Finance	5.11	5.00	2.87	4
Focus on Professional Development	6.94	7.00	2.66	9
Effective School Board Relations	4.71	4.00	2.53	3
Visionary Leadership	4.40	4.00	2.92	2
Understanding of School Law	6.86	7.00	2.17	8
Effective Community Building	6.09	7.00	2.61	7
Political Astuteness	7.77	9.00	2.69	10
Team Building	3.86	3.00	2.66	1
Intellect	5.77	5.00	3.03	6

Table 14 provides the results of the Mann-Whitney Test between superintendents of small schools and school board presidents of small schools to parts one and two of the survey instrument. On question #1 of the first part of the survey instrument, superintendents of small schools perceived the importance of instructional leadership with a mean score of 4.556 as noted in Table 10. School board presidents recorded a mean score of 4.143 as noted in Table 11. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .006 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may value instructional leadership to a significantly higher degree than do school board presidents. See Table 14.

On question #2 of the part 1 of the survey instrument, superintendents of small schools perceived the importance of prior work experience in education with a mean score of 4.617 as noted in Table 10. School board presidents of small schools recorded a mean score of 4.371 as displayed in Table 11. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .027 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may value prior work experience in education to a significantly higher degree than do school board presidents. See Table 9.

In the second part of the survey instrument, superintendents of small schools perceived effective school board relations as the second ranked leadership characteristic with a mean score of 3.65 as noted in Table 12. School board presidents of small schools recorded a mean score of 4.71 as noted in Table 13. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .018 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents of small schools may feel that

school board relations are more valuable to superintendent leadership than do school board presidents of small schools.

Also in the second part of the survey instrument, superintendents of small schools and school board presidents of small schools appear to have significantly different attitudes when it comes to their perceptions of the focus on professional development. School board presidents of small schools, with a mean score of 6.94 (see Table 13), ranked the focus on professional development higher than superintendents of small schools who had a mean score of 8.10 (see Table 12) even though both populations ranked the focus on professional development at or near the bottom of the chart. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .024 level, suggesting that Texas public school board presidents of small schools may feel that the focus on professional development is a more valuable leadership component of the superintendency than do superintendents of small schools. See Table 14.



**Table 14. Mann-Whitney Test results of Texas superintendents and school board presidents of small schools perceptions of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	1729.000	<b>*.006</b>
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	1849.000	<b>*.027</b>
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	2060.500	.0750
4. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	2063.000	.224
5. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	1971.500	.102
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	2216.500	.650

**Table 14 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	1881.000	.066
8. Superintendents must effectively manage “buildings, buses, books, and bonds” to be successful.	1999.500	.165
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	1921.500	.100
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	2281.500	.857
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	2041.500	.215
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	2112.000	.349
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	2116.000	.363

**Table 14 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	2269.000	.811
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	1922.000	.073
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	2054.500	.253
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	2319.500	.968

**Table 14 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
Instructional Leadership	1995.500	.193
Understanding of School Finance	2176.000	.554
Focus on Professional Development	1766.500	<b>*.024</b>
Effective School Board Relations	1730.500	<b>*.018</b>
Visionary Leadership	2022.000	.228
Understanding of School Law	2152.500	.492
Effective Community Building	1956.000	.144
Political Astuteness	1924.000	.110
Team Building	1996.500	.193
Intellect	1905.500	.097

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**\* Significant to the .05 Level**

### Research Question #3

The third research question of this study addressed the differences in perceptions between Texas school superintendents of large schools and school board presidents of large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics. The question was:

3. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?

Table 15 presents the descriptive data of Texas school superintendents in large schools to the first part of the research instrument based on a Likert scale. The items in this table possess means ranging from 3.150 to 4.900. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. Superintendents of large schools ranked effective communication, comfort with managing media relations and politics, and instructional leadership as the three most important leadership characteristics of superintendents. Effective communication and managing media relations and politics were tied as the top ranked characteristic. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” had the lowest mean scores of part 1 of the research instrument and therefore could be viewed as the least important characteristics to superintendent leadership. See Table 15.

**Table 15. Perceptions of superintendents of large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	4.850	5.00	.37	3
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	4.300	4.00	.80	12
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	4.900	5.00	.31	1
4. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	4.500	5.00	.83	8
5. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	4.800	5.00	.41	4
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	4.600	5.00	.94	6
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	3.550	4.00	.94	16
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.	3.650	4.00	1.09	15
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	3.150	3.00	1.18	17
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	4.350	4.00	.67	11

**Table 15 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	4.650	5.00	.49	5
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	4.300	4.00	.66	12
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	4.400	4.00	.68	9
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	4.400	4.00	.60	9
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	4.300	4.00	.66	12
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	4.550	5.00	.51	7
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	4.900	5.00	.31	1

Table 16 presents the descriptive data of school board presidents of large schools to the first part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 2.600 to 4.600. The table also includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. School board presidents of large schools ranked effective communication, development and management of instructional resources, and establishing a clear vision as the three most important characteristics of superintendents. All three characteristics were tied as the top ranked choice. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness was the lowest ranked choice by school board presidents of large schools. The power of persuasion and the management of the “4Bs” were tied as the second lowest ranked characteristic by school board presidents of large schools. See Table 16.

Table 17 presents the descriptive data of Texas school superintendents in large schools to the second part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 2.700 to 8.050. The table includes the median and standard deviation (SD) measures. The rankings in Table 17 show that superintendents of large schools perceive effective school board relationships, visionary leadership, and team building as the most important leadership characteristics in the superintendency. Superintendents of large schools also ranked both the focus on professional development and the understanding of school law as the least important attribute of superintendent leadership. Intellect was identified as the third lowest ranking leadership characteristic by superintendents of large schools. See Table 17.



**Table 16. Perceptions of school board presidents of large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	4.200	4.00	1.03	13
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	3.800	4.00	1.03	14
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	4.600	5.00	.70	1
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	4.600	5.00	.70	1
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	4.600	5.00	.52	1
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	4.500	4.00	.53	4
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	3.400	4.00	1.07	15
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.	3.400	4.00	1.35	15
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	2.600	2.00	.97	17

**Table 16 Continued**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	4.300	4.00	.48	10
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	4.500	5.00	.71	4
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	4.300	4.00	.48	10
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	4.300	4.00	.67	10
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	4.400	4.00	.70	7
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	4.500	4.00	.53	4
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	4.400	4.00	.70	7
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	4.400	4.00	.52	7

**Table 17. Characteristics of superintendents ranked by Texas school superintendents of large schools**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Instructional Leadership	4.350	4.00	2.68	4
Understanding of School Finance	6.300	6.00	2.77	7
Focus on Professional Development	8.050	9.00	2.52	9
Effective School Board Relations	2.700	2.00	2.08	1
Visionary Leadership	3.250	3.00	2.47	2
Understanding of School Law	8.050	8.00	2.26	9
Effective Community Building	4.850	4.00	1.87	5
Political Astuteness	6.100	6.00	2.27	6
Team Building	4.250	4.00	2.02	3
Intellect	7.00	7.00	1.81	8

Table 18 presents the descriptive data of school board presidents in large schools to the second part of the research instrument. The items in this table possess means ranging from 1.800 to 8.000. The table also includes the median and standard deviation measures. The rankings in Table 18 show that school board presidents of large schools perceive visionary leadership, effective school board relations, and team building as the most important leadership characteristics in the superintendency. School board presidents of large schools also ranked focus on professional development, political astuteness, and the understanding of school law as the least important leadership characteristics of superintendents. See Table 18

**Table 18. Characteristics of superintendents ranked by Texas school board presidents of large schools**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Instructional Leadership	5.100	5.00	3.51	5
Understanding of School Finance	5.100	6.00	2.85	5
Focus on Professional Development	8.000	10.00	2.87	10
Effective School Board Relations	4.400	3.00	2.50	2
Visionary Leadership	1.800	1.00	1.48	1
Understanding of School Law	7.100	7.00	2.13	8
Effective Community Building	5.000	4.00	2.83	4
Political Astuteness	7.771	9.00	2.69	9
Team Building	4.700	5.00	2.00	3
Intellect	6.900	7.00	2.18	7

Table 19 provides the results of the Mann-Whitney Test between superintendents of large schools and school board presidents of large schools to parts one and two of the survey instrument. On question #1 of the first part of the survey instrument, superintendents of large schools perceived the importance of instructional leadership with a mean score of 4.850 as noted in Table 15. School board presidents recorded a mean score of 4.200 as noted in Table 16. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .046 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may value instructional leadership to a significantly higher degree than do school board presidents. See Table 19.

On question #17 of the part 1 of the survey instrument, superintendents of large schools perceived comfort with media relations and politics with a mean score of 4.900 as noted in Table 15. School board presidents of large schools recorded a mean score of 4.400 as displayed in Table 16. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .007 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents may value comfort with media relations and politics to a significantly higher degree than do school board presidents. See Table 19.

In the second part of the survey instrument, superintendents of large schools perceived effective school board relations as the highest ranked leadership characteristic of superintendents with a mean score of 2.70 as noted in Table 17. School board presidents of large schools recorded a mean score of 4.40 as noted in Table 18. The Mann-Whitney Test performed on these mean scores detected a possible significant difference to the .006 level, suggesting that Texas public school superintendents of large

schools may feel that school board relations are more valuable to superintendent leadership than do school board presidents of large schools.

**Table 19. Mann-Whitney Test results of Texas superintendents and school board presidents of large schools perceptions of superintendent leadership characteristics**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.	62.000	<b>*.046</b>
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.	71.000	.196
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.	79.000	.236
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.	95.000	.846
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.	80.000	.384

**Table 19 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.	77.500	.231
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.	93.500	.779
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.	91.500	.717
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.	71.500	.205
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.	92.000	.709
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents.	91.500	.735

**Table 19 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.	97.000	.864
13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.	91.000	.741
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity.	98.000	1.000
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.	85.000	.534



**Table 19 Continued**

<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney</i>	<i>Exact Significance (two-tailed)</i>
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.	90.500	.737
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.	50.000	<b>*.007</b>
Instructional Leadership	88.000	.605
Understanding of School Finance	70.000	.186
Focus on Professional Development	92.500	.737
Effective School Board Relations	41.000	<b>*.006</b>
Visionary Leadership	65.000	.104
Understanding of School Law	69.500	.179
Effective Community Building	95.000	.837
Political Astuteness	88.500	.619
Team Building	89.500	.652
Intellect	97.000	.912

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**\* Significant to the .05 Level**

## Summary

A targeted review of the data shows that there may be similarities and evidence suggesting that significant differences exist between the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of leadership characteristics of superintendents. However the small amount of participation in the study and the absence of geographical analysis limit the overall breadth of the study.

The highest mean scores in part one of the research instrument show that superintendents ranked effective communication, establishing a clear vision, and the development and management of instructional resources as the three most critical areas of superintendent leadership (See Table 5) while school board presidents ranked effective communications, establishing a clear vision, and the development and management of instructional resources as the three most important leadership characteristics of the superintendency (See Table 6). The lowest mean scores show that superintendents identified school board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4B”s as having the least impact on superintendent leadership (See Table 5) while school board presidents identified school board turnover as a cause of superintendent effectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4B”s as having the least impact on superintendent leadership (See Table 6).

The highest ranked mean scores in part two of the research instrument shows that superintendents tabbed effective school board relations, visionary leadership, and team building as the three most important superintendent leadership characteristics (See Table

7) while school board presidents identified visionary leadership, team building, and effective school board relations as the most critical attributes to superintendent leadership (See Table 8). The lowest ranked mean scores show that superintendents place the lowest value on the focus on professional development, political astuteness, and the understanding of school law (See Table 7) while school board presidents value political astuteness, the focus on professional development, and the understanding of school law the least when it comes to superintendent leadership (See Table 8).

Using the data from part one and part two of the research instrument, Mann-Whitney Tests suggest that superintendents may value instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and effective school board relations (See Table 9) significantly higher than school board presidents. Although exact two-tailed significance was used, the limited participation in the study cannot be ruled out as a factor in the results.

Further analysis shows that there may be similarities and evidence suggesting that there are significant differences in the perceptions of superintendents of small schools and school board presidents of small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics. The highest mean scores in part one of the research instrument show that superintendents of small schools ranked effective communication, establishing a clear vision, and the development and management of instructional resources as the three most critical areas of superintendent leadership (See Table 10) while school board presidents of small schools ranked effective communications, establishing expectations, and establishing a clear vision as the three

most important leadership characteristics of the superintendency (See Table 11). The lowest mean scores show that superintendents of small schools identified school board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4B”s as having the least impact on superintendent leadership (See Table 10) while school board presidents identified school board turnover as a cause of superintendent effectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4B”s as having the least impact on superintendent leadership (See Table 11).

The highest ranked mean scores in part two of the research instrument shows that superintendents small schools rated visionary leadership, effective school board relations, and team building as the three most important superintendent leadership characteristics (See Table 12) while school board presidents of small schools identified team building, visionary leadership, and effective school board relations as the most critical attributes to superintendent leadership (See Table 13). The lowest ranked mean scores show that superintendents of small schools place the lowest value on the focus on professional development, political astuteness, and intelligence (See Table 12) while school board presidents of small schools value political astuteness, the focus on professional development, and the understanding of school law the least when it comes to superintendent leadership (See Table 13).

Using the data from part one and part two of the research instrument, Mann-Whitney Tests suggest that superintendents of small schools may value instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and effective school board relations (See Table 14) significantly higher than school board presidents. School board presidents of

small schools also appear to place significantly higher value on the focus on professional development than do superintendents of small schools. In both cases, the limited participation in the study cannot be ruled out as a factor in the results.

The data also shows that there may be similarities and evidence suggesting that there are significant differences in the perceptions of superintendents of large schools and school board presidents of large schools on the importance of leadership characteristics of superintendents. The highest mean scores in part one of the research instrument show that superintendents of large schools ranked effective communication, comfort with managing media relations and politics, and instructional leadership as the three most critical areas of superintendent leadership (See Table 15) while school board presidents of large schools ranked effective communications, development and management of instructional resources, and establishing a clear vision as the three most important leadership characteristics of the superintendency (See Table 16). The lowest mean scores show that superintendents of large schools identified school board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4B”s as having the least impact on superintendent leadership (See Table 15) while school board presidents of large schools identified school board turnover as a cause of superintendent effectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4B”s as having the least impact on superintendent leadership (See Table 16).

The highest ranked mean scores in part two of the research instrument shows that superintendents of large schools favored effective school board relations, visionary

leadership, and team building as the three most important superintendent leadership characteristics (See Table 17) while school board presidents of large schools identified visionary leadership, effective school board relations, and team building as the most critical attributes to superintendent leadership (See Table 18). The lowest ranked mean scores show that superintendents of large schools place the lowest value on the focus on professional development, the understanding of school law, and intellect (See Table 17) while school board presidents of large schools value the focus on professional development, political astuteness, and the understanding of school law the least when it comes to superintendent leadership (See Table 18).

Using the data from part one and part two of the research instrument, Mann-Whitney Tests suggest that superintendents of large schools may value instructional leadership, comfort with media relations and politics, and effective school board relations (See Table 19) significantly higher than school board presidents of large schools. Although exact two-tailed significance was used, the limited participation in the study cannot be ruled out as a factor in the results.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

The major purpose of this study was to examine the likenesses and differences in the perceptions of Texas Public School Superintendents and School Board Presidents of superintendent leadership characteristics. The research questions were designed to assess these perceptions using the *Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey* with minimal modifications. As shown in the following tables, the populations used in this study were acting superintendents and school board presidents in Texas Public School Districts. See Tables 20 and 21.

**Table 20. Distribution and rate of return of superintendent surveys (N=153)**

Group	n returned	Percentage of Population
Large Districts	20	21.1%
Small Districts	133	14.2%
Overall Totals	153	14.8%

**Table 21. Distribution and rate of return of school board president surveys (N=45)**

Group	n returned	Percentage of Population
Large Districts	10	10.5%
Small Districts	35	3.7%
Overall Totals	45	4.4%

Questionnaires were electronically mailed to all Texas Public School Superintendents and School Board Presidents. In the first section of the survey participants were asked to numerically identify the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics using a Likert scale. Section two of the research instrument asked the respondents to rank ten selected superintendent leadership characteristics from one through ten. The third part of the research instrument gathered demographic data of the responders. The results of this study are discussed in this chapter. A significant difference in the findings was an alpha level of  $< .05$ . The results of the data analysis pertaining to the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the differences in perceptions between school superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?
2. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?
3. What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?



## Findings

Research question one asked “What are the differences in perceptions between school superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?” The data shows that there may be similarities and evidence suggesting that significant differences exist between the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents on the importance of leadership characteristics of superintendents. However, the small amount of participation in the study and the absence of geographical analysis limit the strength of the study. The highest mean scores in part one of the research instrument show that both superintendents and school board presidents ranked the following characteristics as the most important to superintendent leadership:

1. Effective communication
2. Establishing a clear vision
3. The development and management of instructional resources

The lowest mean scores in part one of the research instrument show that both superintendents and school board presidents identified the following as being the least critical to successful superintendent leadership:

1. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness
2. The power of persuasion
3. The management of the “4B”s

The highest ranked mean scores in part two of the research instrument show that superintendents perceive the following attributes as most critical to superintendent leadership:

1. Effective school board relations
2. Visionary leadership
3. Team building

School board presidents identified the following characteristics as most critical to superintendent leadership:

1. Visionary leadership
2. Team building
3. Effective school board relations

The lowest ranked mean scores on part two of the research instrument show that superintendents place the lowest value on the following concepts of superintendent leadership:

1. The focus on professional development
2. Political astuteness
3. The understanding of school law

School board presidents placed the least value on the following characteristics:

1. Political astuteness
2. The focus on professional development
3. The understanding of school law

Mann-Whitney Tests performed on the data from part one and part two of the research instrument suggests that superintendents may value the following superintendent leadership characteristics significantly higher than school board presidents:

1. Instructional leadership
2. Prior work experience in education
3. Effective school board relations

Although exact two-tailed significance was used, the limited participation in the study cannot be ruled out as a factor in the results.

Research question two asked “What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?” The data shows that there may be similarities and evidence suggesting that there are significant differences in the perceptions of superintendents of small schools and school board presidents of small schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics, however, the limited scope of returned samples decreases the strength of significance.

The highest mean scores in part one of the research instrument show that superintendents of small schools ranked the following as the most important leadership characteristics of the superintendency:

1. Effective communication
2. Establishing a clear vision
3. The development and management of instructional resources

School board presidents of small schools placed the most value on the following superintendent leadership characteristics:

1. Effective communications
2. Establishing expectations
3. Establishing a clear vision

The lowest ranked mean scores on part one of the research instrument show that both superintendents and school board presidents of small schools identified the following choices as the least important to superintendent leadership:

1. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness
2. The power of persuasion
3. The management of the “4B”s

The highest ranked mean scores on part two of the research instrument shows that superintendents of small schools place the highest value on the following leadership characteristics of superintendents:

1. Visionary leadership
2. Effective school board relations
3. Team building

School board presidents of small schools identified the following superintendent leadership characteristics as most critical to the superintendency:

1. Team building
2. Visionary leadership
3. Effective school board relations

The lowest ranked mean scores on the second part of the survey show that superintendents of small schools place the lowest value on the following leadership characteristics:

1. The focus on professional development
2. Political astuteness
3. Intelligence

School board presidents of small schools value the following leadership characteristics the least when it comes to superintendent leadership:

1. Political astuteness
2. The focus on professional development
3. The understanding of school law

Using the data from part one and part two of the research instrument, Mann-Whitney Tests suggest that superintendents of small schools may value the following leadership characteristics significantly higher than school board presidents of small schools:

1. Instructional leadership
2. Prior work experience in education
3. Effective school board relations

School board presidents of small schools also appear to place significantly higher value on the focus on professional development than do superintendents of small schools. In all four cases, the limited participation in the study cannot be ruled out as a factor in the results.

Research question three asked “What are the differences in perceptions between superintendents and school board presidents in large schools on the importance of superintendent leadership characteristics?” The data shows that there may be similarities and evidence suggesting that there are significant differences in the perceptions of superintendents of large schools and school board presidents of large schools on the importance of leadership characteristics of superintendents. However the limited response to the survey lessens the impact of these findings.

The highest mean scores on part one of the research instrument show that superintendents of large schools ranked the following superintendent leadership characteristics as most critical to the superintendency:

1. Effective communication
2. Comfort with managing media relations and politics
3. Instructional leadership

School board presidents of large schools ranked the following leadership characteristics as most important to superintendent leadership:

1. Effective communications
2. The development and management of instructional resources
3. Establishing a clear vision

The lowest mean scores on part one of the test instrument shows that both superintendents of large schools and school board presidents of large schools identified the following as having the least impact on superintendent leadership:

1. School board turnover as a cause of superintendent ineffectiveness
2. The power of persuasion
3. The management of the “4B”s

The highest ranked mean scores on part two of the research instrument shows that superintendents of large schools perceived the following superintendent leadership characteristics as most critical to the superintendency:

1. Effective school board relations
2. Visionary leadership
3. Team building

School board presidents of large schools identified the following characteristics as most desirable in their superintendents:

1. Visionary leadership
2. Effective school board relations
3. Team building

The lowest ranked mean scores on part two of the research instrument show that superintendents of large schools place the lowest value on the following leadership characteristics:

1. The focus on professional development
2. The understanding of school law
3. Intellect

School board presidents of large schools valued the following choices as the least important characteristics of superintendent leadership:

1. The focus on professional development
2. Political astuteness
3. The understanding of school law

Using the data from part one and part two of the research instrument, Mann-Whitney Tests suggest that superintendents of large schools may value the following superintendent leadership characteristics significantly higher than do school board presidents of large schools:

1. Instructional leadership
2. Comfort with media relations and politics
3. Effective school board relations

Although exact two-tailed significance was used, the limited participation in the study cannot be ruled out as a factor in the results.



## Conclusions

The analysis of the data led to several conclusions regarding the perceptions of leadership characteristics of school superintendents.

First, Texas school superintendents may possibly perceive the importance of instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and effective school board relations significantly higher than the perceptions of Texas school board presidents (See Table 9). Superintendents and school board presidents who participated in the study appear to be in agreement that effective communication, establishing a clear vision, effective school board relations, visionary leadership, team building, and the development and management of instructional resources are the most desirable leadership characteristics of superintendents (See Table 5 through Table 8).

Superintendents and school board presidents appear to also agree that school board turnover as a cause of superintendent effectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” have the least importance to the office of superintendent (See Table 5 through Table 8). Today, school executives need vision, skill, and knowledge to run the day to day operations of their districts (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). This study supports the research and suggests several possible superintendent leadership characteristics that are similarly valued by superintendents and school board presidents in Texas schools as well as characteristics that valued at different levels of importance.

Second, superintendents of small schools may possibly perceive the importance of instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and effective school board relations significantly higher than school board presidents of small schools (See

Table 14). Conversely, school board presidents of small schools may possibly perceive the value of the focus on professional development significantly higher than superintendents of small schools (See Table 14). Superintendents and school board presidents of small schools who participated in the study appear to agree that effective communication, visionary leadership, establishing a clear vision, effective school board relations, and team building are the most important characteristics of superintendent leadership (See Table 10 through Table 13). Superintendents and school board presidents of small schools appear to also agree that school board turnover as a cause of superintendent effectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” have the least importance to the office of superintendent (See Table 10 through Table 13). Working with the school board president, not being able to get decisions made at the board level, and superintendent-school board relations have been cited as significant factors in the instability of the superintendency (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006). This study supports the research and suggests possible areas of leadership that can serve as common ground for the team of eight as well as possible leadership characteristics which are viewed at different levels.

Third, superintendents of large schools may possibly perceive the importance of instructional leadership, comfort with media relations and politics, and effective school board relations significantly higher than school board presidents of large schools (See Table 19). Superintendents and school board presidents of large schools who participated in the study appear to agree that effective communication, effective school board relations, visionary leadership, and team building are the most important

leadership characteristics of superintendent leadership (See Table 15 through Table 18). Superintendents and school board presidents of large schools also appear to agree that school board turnover as a cause of superintendent effectiveness, the power of persuasion, and the management of the “4Bs” have the least importance to the office of the superintendent (See Table 15 through Table 18). The public school superintendent is a job that is complex, demanding, stressful, and controversial because of the educational and political balance of the job (Kowalski, 2005; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Hoyle, 2002). This study supports the research and suggests possible views of leadership where superintendents and school board presidents are in accord as well views of leadership where there appears to be a disconnection.

### Recommendations

#### *Recommendations for Application of Research*

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations for practice are identified for consideration:

1. Superintendent preparation programs and providers of superintendent/school board training can use the data from this research to point out the importance of perceptions as it relates to an effective superintendent-school board relationship and more importantly an effective superintendent-school board president relationship. Both sides of the leadership team could participate in activities that could help turn assumptions into awareness resulting in mutual expectations concerning the appraisal of the superintendent.

2. Executive search firms and school boards can utilize the data to better prepare and focus their efforts toward identifying quality candidates to interview for the position of superintendent. Matching the qualities of the candidate with the desired characteristics of the district may result in a deeper pool of candidates to interview for the position of superintendent.

*Recommendations for Improvement of Current Research and Further Studies*

Upon analysis of the data in this study, the researcher offers the following:

1. The researcher recommends that if this study is duplicated, the population of the study should be reduced to be more reflective of demographic variables such as geographic area, more precise subpopulations, and school accountability ratings. The researcher aimed to effectively compare data from a state-wide point of view, however given the size of the State of Texas, results of this study cannot be assumed as a true representation of the state.
2. Further study would be enhanced by concentrating on fewer leadership characteristics. By reducing the number of leadership characteristics studied, one will be able to focus more on positive and negative relationships between populations.
3. Further studies could also include testing for significant correlations and similarities across the United States. Leadership is very broad and significant likenesses can contribute to the literature related to school governance and leadership for the American educational system.

All of these potential studies could provide data to further improve the relationship of the district leadership team and guide the search process for school districts to find the best candidates for the office of superintendent. School boards and superintendents must be aware of each other's needs and understand each other's philosophies to provide quality leadership and governance.

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APPENDIX A  
COVER LETTER AND INFORMATION SHEET  
SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Dear Texas Public School Superintendent or Governing Board President:

The study of school leadership and its relationship with school governance is an integral part of school success and improvement. All Texas public school superintendents and governing board presidents are being asked to contribute to further study this relationship. With the unavailability of school board email addresses all superintendents are asked to forward the access to this survey to their respective board president. The survey is designed to be easy to use and all data collected will be anonymous for research purposes only. Please take five-ten minutes to complete the **quick** online survey, available below and at the end of this message to be a contributor to educational research in Texas public schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. John R. Hoyle and K.L. Groholski, M.Ed.

Texas A&M University

## **INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Perceptions of District Superintendents and School Board Presidents regarding Leadership Characteristics for Superintendents of Texas Public Schools**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this form is to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research.

You have been asked to participate in a research study regarding the perceptions of leadership characteristics of the school superintendency. The purpose of this study is to fulfill the dissertation requirement of my doctoral studies and to evaluate the differences in the perceptions of superintendents and school governing board presidents regarding leadership characteristics of the superintendency. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a current superintendent or school board president of a Texas public school district.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a very brief online survey pertaining to your perceptions of various school leadership criteria. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

**What are the risks involved in this study?**

The risks associated with this study are minimal and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

**What are the possible benefits of this study?**

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, this research will make a contribution to school leadership and the literature thereof.

**Do I have to participate?**

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University or other educational entity being affected.

**Who will know about my participation in this research study?**

This study is anonymous. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. All Research records will be stored securely and only the principal investigator will have access to the records.

**Whom do I contact with questions about the research?**

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Kenneth L. Groholski at 979-255-8823 (or [klgroholski@calvertisd.com](mailto:klgroholski@calvertisd.com)) or Dr. John R. Hoyle (979-845-2748; [jhoyle@tamu.edu](mailto:jhoyle@tamu.edu))

**Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?**

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu).

**Participation**

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. If you would like to be in the study, continue to the online survey.

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT  
SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

## Superintendent/Governing Board President Leadership Survey

### Instructions

Utilizing a Likert Scale 1-5, where one (1) represents Strongly Disagree, two (2) represents Disagree, three (3) represents neither, four (4) represents Agree, and five (5) represents Strongly Agree, please respond to the following questions:

1. In the current educational environment, a public school superintendent must be an instructional leader.
2. Public school superintendents must have work experience in public education to be effective.
3. Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, students, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness.
4. Developing and managing resources necessary to support the instructional system must be a priority for superintendents at all times.
5. Establishing a clear vision for teaching and learning is critical to superintendent success.
6. The successful superintendent's ability to articulate an instructional vision has a significant relationship to the district's academic success.
7. Persuasion is the ultimate tool for a superintendent of education.
8. Superintendents must effectively manage "buildings, buses, books, and bonds" to be successful.
9. School board turnover is a root cause of superintendent ineffectiveness.
10. Superintendents are perceived to be leaders of the community as opposed to being led by the community.
11. Curriculum, finance, professional development, school board relations, and vision are the areas of responsibility inherent in successful superintendents
12. Successful superintendents inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision.



13. Successful superintendents ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning.
14. Successful superintendents apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity and that of others.
15. Successful superintendents ensure the integration of technology to support productive systems for learning and administration.
16. Successful superintendents must be able to establish expectations or norms of teaching and learning for administrators and teachers alike.
17. Successful superintendents must be comfortable with managing media relations, public meetings, politically inspired pressures, and they must be adept at developing both permanent and temporary coalitions with often disparate community groups.

Please rank order the essential characteristics you believe to be necessary for superintendent success.

Instructional Leadership  
 Understanding of School Finance  
 Focus on Professional Development  
 Effective School Board Relations  
 Visionary Leader  
 Understanding of School Law  
 Effective at Building Community  
 Politically Astute  
 Team Builder  
 Intellect

Demographic Questions:

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
 Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_ Governing Board President \_\_\_\_\_

Type of District You Represent:

Large (30,001 +) \_\_\_\_\_

Medium (10,000-30,000) \_\_\_\_\_

Small (<10,000) \_\_\_\_\_

## VITA

KENNETH LEE GROHOLSKI  
 6050 Hearne Road  
 Bryan, TX 77808

## EDUCATION

2009                    Doctor of Philosophy, Educational Administration  
 Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

2005                    Master of Education, Educational Administration  
 Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas

1992                    Bachelor of Science, Kinesiology  
 Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

## CERTIFICATIONS

Superintendent PK-12  
 Principal PK-12  
 Secondary Physical Education 6-12  
 Secondary Business Administration 6-12  
 Secondary Life-Earth Science 6-12  
 Secondary Social Studies Composite 6-12  
 Secondary Health Education 6-12  
 Secondary Basic Business 6-12

## EXPERIENCE

2006-Present	Superintendent (Principal 2006)	Calvert I.S.D.
2005-2006	Middle School Principal	Bremond I.S.D.
2004-2005	Asst. H.S. Principal	Bruceville-Eddy I.S.D.
1999-2004	Teacher/Coach/Admin. Intern	Bremond I.S.D.
1998-1999	Teacher/Coach	Bangs I.S.D.
1995-1998	Teacher/Coach	Calvert I.S.D.
1993-1995	Teacher/Coach	Canton I.S.D.