SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THEIR CURRENT ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

A Dissertation

by

LIODOLEE SALINAS GARCIA

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

August 2012

Major Subject: Educational Administration

Superintendents' Perceptions Toward Their Current Role as Instructional Leaders

SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THEIR CURRENT ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

A Dissertation

by

LIODOLEE SALINAS GARCIA

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

Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee,	Jean Madsen
	Mario Torres
Committee Members,	Fredrick M. Nafukho
	Alvin Larke, Jr.
Head of Department,	Fredrick M. Nafukho

August 2012

Major Subject: Educational Administration

ABSTRACT

Superintendents' Perceptions Toward Their Current Role as

Instructional Leaders. (August 2012)

Liodolee Salinas Garcia, B.S., Texas A&I University;

M.Ed., Tarleton State University

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Jean Madsen
Dr. Mario Torres

This study was conducted to identify the self-perceptions of superintendents regarding their instructional leadership practices. The focus of the research was to explore the linkages that exist between these perceptions and factors such as superintendent characteristics and district demographics. In their role as district instructional leaders, superintendents are increasingly held accountable for instruction and the expectation for increased test scores.

The data used to explore the research questions were acquired through a survey, the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey (SILS). This instrument was developed by Gwen Boyter and had previously been used to survey superintendent behavior as perceived and self-reported by the superintendents themselves. The questionnaire contained 42 task statements that were intertwined into five task areas relevant to Instruction and Human Resource Development.

This study used a Multiple Logistical Regression to explore the relationship between the superintendents' self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role and

variables that may significantly influence the superintendents' perceptions. Variables included: school district rating for student performance on the state assessment; percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student groups; and superintendent characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience. The SILS was sent as an online survey through Qualtrics.com. Superintendents rated their instructional leadership behaviors on a Likert scale that ranged from "Constant Emphasis" to "No Emphasis." Forty-nine respondents completed a survey, which was 16% of those surveyed.

Practical significance was found in the relationship between the superintendents' self-perceptions and two of the variables: (a) the superintendents' age and (b) the district rating. Statistical significance was found on two variables: (a) the percentage of economically disadvantaged students and (b) the percentage of at-risk students.

Research findings suggest that it is imperative that superintendents devote specific time to focus on instruction, curriculum, and assessment practices. They must involve stakeholders to collaboratively focus on the instruction goals in order to meet the learning needs of all students. As a result of this study, instructional leadership should be given much consideration in the selection of superintendents. Superintendent preparation programs can use data from the study to better prepare individuals to serve in the capacity of district instructional leaders.

DEDICATION

To my husband and our children, A.M., Yvette, Alyssa – thank you for your never-ending support and your belief that my goal could be accomplished. I am so glad that you encouraged me to follow my dream to fruition. You are a special blessing in my life and I love you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, I am so grateful for the spiritual inheritance that they shared and instilled in my siblings and me. They modeled a life of faith in God that saw them through every situation in life. Nothing compares to the promise of knowing that we can trust Him with everything! God's faithfulness has brought me thus far, and I am so thankful that I can count on Him every day and with everything that comes my way.

Among God's special blessings are the encouragers that He has placed in my life. I am thankful for them: Ken and Bridget Cavey, Tom and Rhonda Shelley, Brad and Lisa Hyde, Ed and Gladys Swindle, Lloyd and Nettie Boales, Jane Apodaca, Dr. Barbara Carpenter, Bobby Davis, Beth Matkin, Sharon Miller, and Dr. Arthur Trujillo. Not only did they encourage me, but they prayerfully supported me each step of the way.

To my sister Noelia and my friend Lisa – thank you for always being there to listen, encourage, laugh, and cry with me. You are always a phone call away and an open door for a visit! God has truly blessed me through you both!

Dr. Torres and Dr. Madsen, I am thankful that you did not give up on me even when I was ready to give up. God placed you in my path and has used this experience to enrich who I am. You challenged me to extend my learning and my skills during this process, and I believe that these skills will serve me well in the future. Thank you to Dr. Kracht, Dr. Nafukho, and Dr. Larke for your feedback and support during this endeavor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER Page

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The role of the school district superintendent in Texas and across the nation has undergone significant changes since the inception of the position, but none as substantial as those that have occurred in the past three decades. The superintendent's role has evolved back to that of an instructional leader at the inception of the position. However, changes in demographics, unpredictable school finances, and standards-based reform with greater accountability of increased student performance, along with the complexities and challenges of political pressures at all levels of governance (local, state, and national) have caused the role of the superintendent to become increasingly complex and more challenging than ever before (Bredeson & Kose, 2007). Expanded expectations of reform initiatives at all levels of government have forced superintendents to become more involved in the instructional leadership responsibilities in their role as district leaders (Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, & Koschoreck, 2001).

The increasing demands on educational leaders have caused school leadership to shift from the traditional role as a manager to playing an active role in providing students many opportunities that foster learning in an equitable manner (Seashore-Louis, 2006). Reform movements and accountability measures, such as those put in place through the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) legislation, have had a major impact on school leadership. The expectation of improvement in the effectiveness of

---

This dissertation follows the style of the *American Educational Research Journal*.

educating our nation's children has led to renewed interest in the role of the superintendent. Not only have the specifics of the job changed, but the role itself has become more complex as public interest and awareness is heightened and the focus on student accountability is brought to the forefront with the passage of the NCLB legislation. With greater state and national accountability, superintendents need the characteristics and skills to meet these complex issues (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). Accountability measures and standards-based expectations have clearly set more emphasis on the instructional role of the superintendent. According to Spillane and Camburn (2006), "The standards movement and high stakes accountability have all contributed to the foregrounding matter of teaching and learning" (p. 9) and their impact on school improvement. Strong leadership is needed for large-scale improvement since there is mounting evidence suggesting that schools are most likely to succeed in districts with strong systemic guidance (Lashaway, 2002).

Role expectations for district superintendents continue evolving, never seemingly to simplify but to become more complex. The demands and pressures inherent in the role of the superintendent are highly impacted by the expectations set for superintendents to effectively guide improvement in instruction and student achievement (Wirt, 1990). Their role is both personal and political. Their work is personal as leaders cultivate human connections with colleagues, potential allies, and others; it is political when as leaders they need to mobilize allies to support the learning agenda and concurrently create coalitions even in the midst of significant conflict (Copland & Knapp, 2006).

Learning-focused leaders seek to understand and use these environments and, as necessary, protect or buffer teaching and learning from environmental influences.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined superintendents' perceptions about how their roles may have shifted from managerial to more emphasis as instructional leaders. The expectation for current school leaders at all administrative levels is that continuous gains be made in measureable academic achievement. In their role as district instructional leaders, superintendents are increasingly held accountable for instruction and the expectation for increases on test scores. The demands on their time often have their focus on other, sometimes more immediate, areas of concern. The purpose of this study was to identify the self-perceptions of superintendents and their instructional leadership practices, and the focus of the research was to explore the linkages that exist between these perceptions and factors, such as superintendent characteristics and district demographics. Superintendent characteristics included age, gender, ethnicity, and experience. District demographics included district locale as derived from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) and Common Core Data, low socioeconomic and at-risk student populations, and student achievement as measured by performance on state assessments and accountability ratings designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the self-reported perceptions of instructional leadership behaviors by superintendents in selected Texas school districts and factors such as superintendent characteristics and the

organizational characteristics of the school districts they serve. The study explored how superintendents' perceptions are influenced by multiple variables, such as district size, the percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations, and demographic data of selected superintendents, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience in education. The quantitative data of this study were used to explore the linkage between the results of the survey of selected superintendents in Texas and campus accountability ratings from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). Continued research pertaining to the instructional leadership role of superintendents is essential as accountability measures drive the need to focus on district practices and characteristics associated with academic success or on factors that promote instructionally effective districts (Murphy & Hallinger, 1998).

Conceptual Framework

The factors that impact and drive instructional leadership continue to be difficult to pinpoint. Leadership at every level is important. Various definitions of instructional leadership have been developed with different scopes of influence. Kelley and Shaw (2009) defined educational leadership as "the ability to build school or district organizations that produce learning environments in which all students can experience the highest levels of academic success and the school community strives to continuously improve and meet the needs of all learners" (p. xii-xiii). Blasé and Blasé (1998) found that instructional leaders promote teaching and learning through a blend of supervision, staff development, and curriculum development. They believe that successful instructional leaders know that the interaction between the professional staff is critical

since the range of expertise can be expanded through carefully designed experiences that support and assist professional development. Hallinger (2003) developed a model of instructional leadership that delineates three dimensions: (a) defining the school's mission, (b) managing the instructional program, and (c) factoring in the impact of a positive school-learning community. The concept of instructional leadership continues to evolve as it is impacted by different factors, such as accountability and assessment. Testing and the impact of the results of testing continue to change the role of the instructional leader.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 legislation played a significant role in the changes. Whether one is for or against this legislation, it was originally seen as a means of radically reinventing American schooling through testing and accountability, choice, competition, and sanctions. O'Day (2002) concluded that this accountability approach sought to influence schools through external forces on the assumption that they could change the internal workings of a school. Leithwood headed one of the subsequent studies that have shown the impact of internal factors on student success. In the book, *Leading School Turnaround*, Leithwood, Harris, and Strauss (2010) recognized that there is not a quick fix to sustainable school turnaround but that there is a requirement for a deep understanding of the factors and the combinations thereof that contribute to the failure or success of a school and/or a district. In a recent study of external factors that impact schools, Murphy and Myers (2008) highlighted urban settings, minority student populations, and the low socioeconomic status of students as factors that negatively impact schools and student achievement.

Although the current role of superintendent emphasizes the instructional leadership role, there is also the managerial aspect of the job. The response to educational needs arising from social and economic problems is only a small part of their responsibilities. More fundamental is their involvement in promoting, facilitating, and maintaining organizational relationships and policies that advance the technical core of curriculum and instruction (Elmore, 1999; Morgan & Petersen, 2002). Educational reform has heightened the awareness on the importance of the instructional leadership role of the superintendent and how their role impacts student success at the district level. Because the role of the superintendent is critical in providing the leadership for implementing and sustaining viable systemic reform in instructional practices, it also highlights the importance of the preparation, selection, and retention of current and future superintendents in their role as district instructional leaders (Bjork, 2000).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine relationships between the self-reported perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors by superintendents in selected Texas school districts and factors such as the superintendent characteristics and the organizational characteristics of the school districts they serve. The study explored how the superintendents' perceptions were influenced by multiple organizational variables, such as district locale, the percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations, and student performance as determined by the Texas Education Agency through designated accountability ratings. Demographic data of selected superintendents was examined for factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and administrative experience.

The research questions addressed in this quantitative study are discussed in the following sections.

Research Question 1

What instructional leadership behaviors designated as task statements on the survey do superintendents perceive are emphasized the most in their daily work?

Research Question 2

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role linked to student performance as determined by the Texas Education Agency's accountability ratings?

Research Question 3

Are the superintendents' perceptions of their instructional leadership role linked to the percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations?

Research Question 4

Do the superintendents' self-perceptions on instructional leadership behaviors vary based on their district locale as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core Data?

Research Question 5

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on the five instructional leadership task areas (Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development, and Evaluating Instruction) identified on the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey (SILS) instrument linked to the superintendents' characteristics: gender, age, ethnicity, and experience?

Overview of the Methodology

The intent of this study was to identify the self-perceptions of superintendents and their instructional leadership practices, and the focus of the research was to explore the linkages that exist between these perceptions and factors such as superintendent characteristics and district demographics. A major goal of this research was to investigate how superintendents in selected Texas school districts perceived their own instructional leadership behaviors as determined by their responses to a survey on how each task statement was emphasized in their current job on a regular basis. Analysis of the data also focused on the results of the superintendents' perceptions on the survey instrument and how those perceptions were impacted by demographic contexts. The analysis of the data investigated whether patterns existed between demographic data provided by superintendents and the district data where they serve to the self-perceptions of superintendents of their instructional leadership behaviors. These data increased the understanding of the link that exists between these factors and the instructional leadership behaviors.

This research aligned with other studies relating to the instructional leadership role of the superintendent, such as that of Watts (1992) and Davidson (2005), in which both utilized the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey. Clore's (1991) previous work used the same survey. It sets the foundation for the current study that used statistical methods to analyze the data derived from the survey. Many analyses presented in the literature use both qualitative and quantitative methods to study the instructional leadership behaviors of superintendents. Quantitative methods lend themselves to survey

a larger group of respondents. The quantitative perspective of this research will add to the literature the current views of individuals who serve as instructional leaders in Texas school districts and the factors that may influence their leadership. It also provides a current perspective on the perceptions of superintendents in their role as instructional leaders.

The purpose of this quantitative investigation was to profile the instructional leadership behaviors perceived by superintendents to be most emphasized in their current district leadership role. The data used to explore the research questions were acquired through the use of the SILS. This instrument was developed by Boyter (1988) and had previously been used to survey superintendent behavior as rated by the superintendents themselves. The questionnaire contained 42 task statements that were intertwined into five task areas: (a) Instructional Planning, (b) Staffing for Instruction, (c) Organizing for Instruction, (d) Human Resource Development, and (e) Evaluating Instruction (see Appendix A).

Validity and reliability for the SILS was established in 1988 by faculty members of The University of Texas Department of Educational Administration. For validity, the inter-rater process was utilized. The instrument was administered to 15 doctoral-level education administration students who were Fellows in the Eighth Cycle of the Cooperative Superintendency Program of The University of Texas. The SILS was also mailed to 30 practicing Texas superintendents who were asked to identify any area of concern in regard to the readability and clarity of the instrument in its entirety including

the demographic survey items and the scoring procedures. Changes based on the recommendations were made.

Reliability for the 42 task statements and each task area in the questionnaire was derived using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for Reliability Estimates (Cronbach, 1951). Correlations among all 42 tasks ranged from 0.52 for task statement number 1 to 0.84 for task statement 39. The alpha reliability for all 42 task statements was 0.98. The alpha coefficients for five individual task areas ranged from 0.87 for the task area Evaluating Instruction to 0.93 for the task area Human Resource Development.

A systemic sampling procedure was used to study the self-perceptions of superintendents in the state of Texas on their current role as instructional leader at the district level, and a logistical regression analysis was used to determine how independent variables, such as district size, the percentage of economically disadvantaged, and at-risk student populations, and the gender, age, ethnicity, and experience of individual superintendents influence their perceptions. The results from the survey were compared to determine similarities and differences on the five instructional leadership task areas of the SILS instrument.

The data source for respondents in this study was the Common Core Data from the National Center for Education Statistics that developed the Locale, Urban-Centric (2006-2007). The Locale, Urban-Centric provided an indication of a school's location relative to a populous area. The locales assigned to each school district are based on the locale code of their schools, weighted by the size of the school's membership. The

district's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report was used for district accountability ratings.

The following process was used in the selection of district superintendents to participate in the survey. There were 12 categories in the Locale, Urban-Centric district size designations. Nine of the categories ranging from City, Midsize to Rural, and Fringe were included in the study. There were a total of 455 public school districts in that range. A systemic sampling procedure was used in the selection of superintendents from each category. In each category, 35% of the sample respondents were randomly selected with a total of 300 surveys sent out electronically through Qualtrics.com.

Definition of Terms

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) – AEIS is a comprehensive student performance accountability system for the state of Texas. AEIS reports include extensive data about student performance indicators, staffing details, finances, and student demographics (Texas Education Agency, 2008c).

Accountability Rating System – The accountability Rating System notes district and campus ratings assigned by the state accountability system in Texas. The accountability ratings include Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable (Texas Education Agency, 2008c).

Common Core Data (CCD) – CCD is a program of the National Center for Education Statistics that annually collects fiscal and non-fiscal data about all public school districts in the United States. The data are supplied by state education agency officials and include information that describes schools and school districts and provides

descriptive information about students and staff including demographics (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2010).

Demographic Variables – District size.

Economically Disadvantaged – Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the national School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program established by 42 U.S.C. 1751 and Texas education Code 5.0011 (4) based on being from a family with an annual income at or below the official poverty line (Texas Education Agency, 2008d) are considered economically disadvantaged.

Instructional Leadership – This model of leadership places an emphasis upon the development of the school through the development of teaching and learning (Harris, 2005).

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) – NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education.

Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey (SILS) – The SILS was developed and utilized in a study conducted by Gwen Boyter in her study of instructional leadership tasks of superintendents in five task areas: Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development, and Evaluating Instruction.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) – Statewide comprehensive assessments in reading/English/language arts, math, social studies, and science for students in Grades 3-11 measure achievement of the essential knowledge and skills of the state-mandated curriculum (Texas Education Agency, 2008c).

Texas Education Agency (TEA) – TEA refers to the state department of education in Texas that is responsible for the public education of all students. TEA works with local school districts to ensure that all public education laws, rules, and regulations are followed. TEA is the administrative unit for primary and secondary public education and rates school districts under the statewide accountability system.

The Common Core Data Chart and District Glossary is shown in Table 1. This assignment code system has been used starting in 2006-2007.

Table 1. Common Core Data School and District Glossary

Locale Code, Urban-Centric	Code Name	Definition	Total Number
11	City, Large	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.	26
12	City, Midsize	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.	18
13	City, Small	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000.	19
21	Suburb, Large	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of less than 250,000 or more.	58
22	Suburb, Midsize	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.	11
23	Suburb, Small	Territory outside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles of an urbanized area.	9
31	Town, Fringe	Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area.	16
32	Town, Distant	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.	98
33	Town, Remote	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles of an urbanized area.	93
41	Rural, Fringe	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal 5 from an urbanized area, as well, as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.	135
42	Rural, Distant	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.	320
43	Rural, Remote	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.	225

Summary

Research has suggested that even in the high-stakes testing environment in which student performance results of schools and districts are scrutinized closely, it is still evident that some school districts make continuous improvement at or above state or national norms (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003).

The state of Texas has established accountability standards for meeting a set of basic academic standards for all students. Since schools experience continuous changes at all levels including in the superintendent position (Leithwood et al., 2010) and such changes impact instructional leadership perceptions and practices, continuous study of superintendents' perceptions can show how different factors influence the manner in which superintendents directly or indirectly respond to external initiatives and still address local needs and priorities. The purpose of this study was to identify the self-perceptions of superintendents and their instructional leadership practices, and the focus of the research was to explore the linkages that exist between these perceptions and factors such as superintendent characteristics and district demographics.

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes an introduction of the study. It also provides the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Additionally, the theoretical framework and research questions are established. An overview of the methodology is also provided along with key terms and a summary. Chapter II contains literature and research related to instructional leadership and the role of a superintendent. Chapter III addresses the research design and methodology, including a description of participant selection, sampling procedures, instrumentation,

data collection and analysis methods, and the statistical analyses employed. Chapter IV reviews the results of the study and the statistical analyses. Chapter V is a summarization of the findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of related literature was guided by the intent of this study to identify the self-perceptions of superintendents and their instructional leadership practices, and the focus of the research was to explore the linkages that exist between these perceptions and factors such as superintendent characteristics and district demographics at the district level and accountability in Texas public schools. To contextualize the instructional role of the superintendent, this literature review examined the history of the superintendent's role, past to present, specifically the expansion of the role to encompass student academic growth and achievement. Additionally, the following review explored the formation of the federal and state accountability systems and the increased pressure placed on schools and administrators at all levels to demonstrate academic success.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in the quantitative portion of the study are outlined in the following sections:

Research Question 1

What instructional leadership behaviors designated as task statements on the survey do superintendents perceive are emphasized the most in their daily work?

Research Question 2

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role linked to student performance as determined by the Texas Education Agency's accountability ratings?

Research Question 3

Are the superintendents' perceptions of their instructional leadership role linked to the percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations?

Research Question 4

Do the superintendents' self-perceptions on instructional leadership behaviors vary based on their district locale as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core Data?

Research Question 5

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on the five instructional leadership task areas (Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development, and Evaluating Instruction) identified on the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey instrument linked to the superintendents' characteristics: gender, age, ethnicity and experience?

This review of literature included articles and books written about instructional leadership at the district level, the role of the superintendent past and present, and the factors that can impact student academic success. It explored qualitative and quantitative studies on the instructional leadership role and its impact on the overall percentage of student meeting academic standards based on results of TAKS, on which the

accountability for each district is based. The review also examined the development of the federal and state accountability systems and how they impact Texas school districts. These accountability systems set the benchmarks in determining student academic success and serve as a basis for exploring the impact of district-level instructional leadership on academic achievement. It also examines the available literature on the five task areas identified on the SILS and how they contribute to the instructional leadership role. Given that this study explored the instructional leadership role of the superintendent, this chapter will provide a historical context on the development of that role.

Historical Perspective of the Superintendency

The role of superintendents has greatly evolved from its inception in the American public school system. Over the past 150 years, normative role expectations for local district superintendents have incrementally become more extensive, complex, and demanding (Kowalski, 2006). The evolution of the role is described by Kowalski as five role conceptualizations: (a) teacher-scholar, (b) manager, (c) democratic leader, (d) applied social scientist, and (e) communicator. Historians concur that during the early 1900s, management became the primary role expectation for superintendents since budget development and administration, standardization of operation, personnel, and facility management were their primary tasks (Callahan, 1962). During the 1930s, their role was more of a democratic leader anchored in philosophical and political foundations since school officials were forced to be more directly involved in political activities, such as lobbying state legislatures, because fiscal resources were not readily available

during this time. Social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and criminology, were developing rapidly in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and many scholars believed that the social sciences were very much a part of the administrative work in public school districts and schools. Superintendents were expected to conduct and utilize research in dealing with social and institutional ills, such as poverty, racism, crime, violence, and gender discrimination. Several movements occurred that impacted the development of the instructional leadership role of the superintendent that are at the foundation of this study: Effective Schools, *A Nation at Risk* Report, and the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The Effective Schools movement that had significant impact on public schools in the last part of the twentieth century began with the report *Equality of Educational Opportunity Report,* provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Welfare, on the status of educational equity as mandated by civil rights legislation in the early 1960s (Coleman et al., 1966). One of the findings of this report was that facilities, curriculum, and staff had little effect on the academic achievement of poor and minority children. The “effective schools movement” began as a reaction to counter the findings of the Coleman report, and the research found the connection between control over school environment and student achievement was highly correlated. Characteristics of identified schools comprised of low-income and/or minority students who demonstrated acceptable academic achievement were noted and widely disseminated with the belief that such characteristics would produce similar results in other settings.

Most of these efforts were directed at campus-level operations and little of the research addressed leadership roles at the district level (Bickel, 1983). Many school boards and superintendents, however, embraced the mission to improve schools believing that the actions of teachers and administrators could make a difference by putting in place the conditions suggested in the effective school literature: (a) goal setting, (b) targeting academic aims, (c) high expectations, (d) frequent monitoring, etc. (Cuban, 1983). One study by Purkey and Smith (1985) highlighted school improvement in their synthesis of effective schools research findings. Their review of the findings contained questions about the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and school board in effecting school improvement at the district level. They believed that it was the role of the superintendent and school board to identify the direction for schools within the district with the expectation that it meet local, state, and federal regulations. Purkey and Smith's (1985) work identified four critical areas in the implementation of the effective schools model:

1. The superintendent and board would set guidelines that facilitate the school improvement process and result in an effective school culture that promotes campus responsibility;
2. The superintendent and school board would set district goals that would drive efforts at the campus level;
3. They would hold central level administrators and school personnel accountable for reaching district goals; and
4. They would set timelines to ensure commitment to implementation.

This research created consensus among superintendents and school boards that eventually was reflected in district policies as goals, school plans, revision of curriculum, and assessment. Effective school policies were implemented with the expectation that outcomes would meet the needs of students and that results would be satisfying to the professionals and community members (Cuban, 1983).

In the post-World War II era, education reformers became very critical of public schools for failing to prepare students to keep up with the scientific and military developments in the Soviet Union in light of the Soviet's launch of Sputnik in 1957 (Mazzeo, 2001). However, increased poverty in the United States shifted the attention away from competition with the Soviet Union to the equality of opportunity in U.S. public schools. In response to the concerns on the effects of poverty and for individual civil rights, funding for education by the federal government increased dramatically during the 1970s through costly federal programs.

Again, critics perceived shortcomings in the federal programs for education and blamed schools for their contribution to a poorly prepared workforce (Cuban, 2001). America began to focus on mathematics and science, triggering the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA). President Lyndon Johnson signed the ESEA into law with an authorization level of $1 billion, which indicated that change was ahead for education and federal involvement (Spring, 2005). In the late 1960s, the federal government developed the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to evaluate and ensure the quality of the U.S. educational system. The NAEP test was administered to students ages 9, 13, and 17 annually, and over the years, assessment

results indicated that U.S. students lagged behind students from other industrialized nations.

A second movement began in 1981 when the U.S. Secretary of Education created the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE, 1983) and charged the commission to report on the quality of education in America. The report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, was delivered by the NCEE in April 1983 and sounded an alarm that faulted public schools for not being performance-driven with respect to the preparation of the student population in order to be competitive in a global economy. This alarm was a wake-up call that led to reform initiatives dealing with curriculum, graduation requirements, and the testing of students and teachers (Murphy, 1991).

During the next two decades, public schools across the board experienced even greater levels of public scrutiny. School administrators, both at the campus and district levels, began to feel the burden of responsibility to make changes and improvements that would impact instruction and student learning. The national commission reports resulted in reform efforts that have paved the way to greater exposure and accountability at the campus level and for the superintendent at the district level (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). According to Murphy (1995), the views of those calling for the restructuring of schools during this period of reform reflected the belief that:

1. The shortcomings of public schools were due to the system as a whole, not individual teachers;

2. The empowerment of teachers and parents was better than specific programs or strategies; and
3. Campus-based solutions would bear better results than those mandated by central office personnel, namely the superintendent (Murphy, 1995).

By the year 2000, accountability legislation was firmly established as a part of the political schema. There were many factors that influenced the superintendents' perceptions about their roles. However, the next movement probably had a greater effect on the superintendent accountability.

A third movement came about as members of congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which was signed into law on January 8, 2002, by President George W. Bush. The NCLB promised to increase federal expenditures in education by 20% over the previous year and had three major goals:

1. closing the achievement gap for disadvantaged students;
2. improving the preparation of teachers and staffing every classroom with a "highly qualified" teacher by the end of the 2005-2006 school year; and
3. instituting closely monitored systems of accountability for students, teachers, and schools (Owens, 2004).

Accountability requirements of the NCLB were intended to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority groups, between high- and low-performing students, and between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. Targets in reading and mathematics were established to hold schools accountable for

meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward these intended targets by 2013-2014. Schools failing to do so would face a prescriptive series of sanctions established under NCLB (Champagne, 2008).

Accountability and Superintendents' Perceptions

Reform movements and accountability measures such as those put in place through the passage of NCLB had an impact on school leadership. The expectation for improvement in the effectiveness of educating our nation's children has led to renewed interest in the role of the superintendent. As public interest and awareness heightened on accountability issues, some specific expectations in the role of the superintendent changed. Although the role of district superintendents has evolved from its inception, the increasing demands have caused their roles to become more complex. The demands and pressures inherent in the role of the superintendent have changed considerably by the expectations set for superintendents to effectively impact instruction and student achievement (Wirt, 1990).

The increasing demands on educational leaders has caused school leadership to shift from the traditional role as a manager to playing an active role in providing students many opportunities that foster learning in an equitable manner (Seashore-Louis, 2006). Their role is both personal and political. Their work as leaders is personal as they cultivate human connections with colleagues, potential allies, and others. It is also political when as leaders they need to mobilize allies to support the learning agenda and concurrently create coalitions in the midst of significant conflict (Copland & Knapp,

2006). Learning-focused leaders seek to understand and use these environments to protect or buffer the teaching and learning process from environmental influences.

Houston (2001) suggested that the role of the superintendent has become impossible to accomplish because expectations are unrealistic, taking into consideration challenges beyond their control, such as changing demographics, diversity of students, and disparity among affluent and poor children attending public schools. Parents, as well as educators, realize that effective schooling is not just measured by results on standardized tests, but there are other outcomes of schooling that are just as important in defining academic success. Other outcomes such as sharing decision-making skills, building self-esteem, and using higher-order thinking skills are critical to student success but are not easily measured on an achievement test (Cuban, 1983).

Leithwood's (1995) stance on political leadership in the superintendent's role involved transforming politics into education by "proactively transforming the values, aspirations, and interests of the increasingly diverse constituents served by today's schools into a set of sophisticated educational services that address those values, aspirations, and interests" (p. 5). The politics associated with the role of the superintendent and the managerial aspect of the superintendency can be so time-consuming that they divert from the focus on the instructional leadership role (Wirt, 1990). Standards-based accountability has made reform in education not just the goal of progressive superintendents but minimum expectations for any superintendent's job (Glasman & Heck, 1992). Based on the changing role of the superintendent, these

changes have had an impact on what is considered effective characteristics of a superintendent.

In today's educational landscape, there is an expectation for effective instruction that supports student learning, and school districts must strive to meet the needs of all students. According to Copland and Knapp (2006), meeting the needs of just some of the students is not good enough. Research shows that student achievement in districts where the superintendents demonstrate consistent attention and participation in decisions relating to instruction and learning tends to show improvement. Continued focus on these factors supports a high degree of learning for every student (Petersen, 1999, 2002).

Originally, Callahan (1962) had described the evolution of the superintendent's role in four distinct conceptualizations: (a) teacher-scholar, (b) manager, (c) democratic leader, and (d) applied social scientist. Kowalski (2001) added a fifth conceptualization to Callahan's four that demonstrates how the district-level position of the superintendent has evolved: the superintendent as communicator. These conceptualizations often overlap and are virtually impossible to separate.

Almost all major school improvement initiatives and strategies encourage superintendents to work collaboratively with principals, teachers, parents and community members. Tannenbaum, Weschler, and Massarik (1961) defined leadership as: "Interpersonal influence directed through the communication process toward the attainment of some goal or goals" (p. 24). Open communication positively impacts the culture of the school district since human interaction/communication is foundational to the nature of successful public schools (Keedy & Bjork, 2002). Examples of district

superintendents as effective communicators include engaging others in political dialogue, working with groups to develop a shared vision, creating a positive school district image, gaining community support for new ideas, maintaining a framework for managing district information and, as much as possible, keeping the public informed about the educational issues at hand (Kowalski, 2005). Communication is key and is reflected in the study of their perceptions on their instructional leadership role.

Although there are many variations for defining leadership, the process for producing effective leaders has been a dilemma, and most contemporary researchers have found it more constructive to study what leaders actually do rather than focus on traits such as intelligence, etc. (McEwan, 2003). Not only do effective leaders possess many common traits and characteristics, but often they are able to exercise flexibility as they match their leadership style to the unique needs of a given situation or adjust their leadership behaviors to work with the characteristics of the organization and meet the complexity of the goals of the organization (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1985). Regardless of the setting, leaders need basic planning and organizational skills including time management to coordinate the activities of any organization. Effective leaders support members of the organization through encouragement, building consensus, and effective use of interpersonal communication. These qualities are essential in leading successful schools, districts, or any type of organization (McEwan, 2003).

Ethics are critical in all aspects. Duffy (2004) stated that “leadership during times of extraordinary change is particularly challenging. Thus you must learn to use power effectively, exercise positive political behavior, and act from a firm code of ethics” (p.

3). Leaders must know that power has to be used with skill and within the bounds of ethical decision-making. Effective leadership in a school district often results from the skillful and balanced use of power, politics, and ethics (Duffy, 2004). This was indicated in the study by Bennis and Nanus (1985) that defined leadership as:

> 1) capacity to create a compelling picture of the desired state of affairs that inspires performance; 2) ability to portray the vision clearly and in a way that enlists the support of followers; 3) the ability to persistently move ahead regardless of obstacles; 4) ability to create a structure that effectively uses others' talents to achieve objectives; 5) capacity to monitor followers, learn from mistakes, and improve performance. (p. 179)

Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, and Fullan (2004a) stated, "the two essential objectives critical to any organization's effectiveness: helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions. Leadership is both this simple and this complex" (p. 63). In order to achieve an effective organization, leaders bring together a group of individuals with opposing viewpoints and help them learn individually and collectively as they seek find solutions to problems and unite those individuals into a cohesive organization (Fullan, 2003). Effective leadership moves an organization from its present state to its future possibilities by creating a vision that draws the members of the organization to extend their commitment to make the necessary changes to achieve the goals that makes those possibilities a reality (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Instructional Leadership Role

The instructional leader role has received increased attention during the past two decades as concern for quality in the public school system became a focus for a variety of stakeholders, such as legislators, school boards, parents, and community members

(Schaff, 2008). Instructional leadership seems to be as difficult to define as the concept of leadership itself. The challenge of defining instructional leadership requires a different leadership paradigm. According to Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) in their book, *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results,* the most prominent definition of instructional leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989) identified four dimensions of instructional leadership: (a) resource provider, (b) instructional resource, (c) communicator, and (d) visible presence. Hallinger (2003) described three dimensions that are critical in defining instructional leadership: "defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school – learning climate" (p. 332).

Extensive research has been conducted that examines the instructional leader aspect of the campus principal, both at the elementary and secondary levels (Andrews & Soder, 1987). Much of the research on instructional leadership has focused on how the leadership role of the school principal impacts instruction through teachers and ultimately affects the learning of all students. Most research studies have focused on the importance of the campus administrator, but there has not been much research that addresses the leadership function at the district level (Lashaway, 2002). Although the research on the superintendent's instructional role has not been as comprehensive as that of the principal, the research continues to grow and the superintendent role is now viewed as key in the providing students with a quality education in an era of educational reform and accountability (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005). The intent of this study was to add to the continuation of research for the superintendent role at the district level.

Leadership from a superintendent that is supportive and constructive is perceived much more favorably by principals and teachers than leadership from a superintendent who is demanding or directive (Lawton, Scane, & Wang, 1995). Constructive leadership in a school district setting infuses meaning and purpose to the work for members of the instructional team (Davidson, 2005). According to Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004b) at the Learning from Leadership Project, leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors that most impact student learning, as evidenced by the group's research. High-quality leaders achieved this level of impact by setting directions that included a clear course of action and high expectations and the use of data to track progress and performance. Leithwood et al. (2004b) believed that developing people's abilities through professional development opportunities and providing active support set the conditions to ensure that organizational structures support the learning organization. They also assert that effective education leadership can make a difference in the improvement of student learning by influencing teaching aspects (Leithwood et al., 2004b).

Even after several decades of school renewal efforts, the "how" of excellent school leadership or the essential ingredients of successful leadership are not clear nor is how important those efforts are in promoting the learning of all children. Cuban (1984a) shared four points on the role of the superintendent as the instructional leader based on his experience as a superintendent. First, a superintendent cannot "secretly improve a school district" (Cuban, 1984a, p. 147). The superintendent's basis for authority comes from the school board and any initiative requires public support from the board. Second,

the superintendent makes critical decisions on new ideas or initiatives by lending or denying support to the implementation of those initiatives. Thirdly, the superintendent's influence plays an important role and shapes the district's climate, which determines if said climate is supportive of improving the instructional programs. Fourth, resource allocation and staffing decisions made by the superintendent will affect the implementation and advancement of the instructional program through the district's efforts to monitor and assess progress (Cuban, 1984a). These factors affect the perceptions of each superintendent and their perceptions are reflected in this study.

After studying research patterns of school administrators, Bridges (1982) stated that

> The superintendent stands at the apex of the organizational pyramid in education and manages a multi-million dollar enterprise charged with the moral and technical socialization of youth, aged 6-18. Despite the importance of this administrative role to education and society, less than a handful of studies analyzed in this review investigated the impact of the chief executive officer. (p. 23)

The research has shown that there are several variables that can become roadblocks to effective instructional leadership by superintendents. The job of the superintendent encompasses a wide range of school district responsibilities in the administration of human resources, business/financial matters, and technology and facilities management. It is their responsibility to manage internal and external conflicts for the district and represent the interests of the school district by representing and communicating with community and state representatives. The superintendent's role also involves active participation in local civic organizations and community activities (Fusarelli, 2002).

According to Duffy (2004), redesigning an educational system within a larger educational system is an enormous task that requires a special type of leader. Two essential pillars in this daunting task of effecting systemic school improvement are "courage-passion-vision and power-politics-ethics" (Duffy, 2004, p. 3). Systemic change that can transform school districts or any school system into a high-performing organization is dependent on the clear and strong leadership of the district's superintendent that is rooted in a culture of trust, commitment, and collaboration that permeates all levels and every aspect of the school system (Duffy, 2004). One of the areas impacted by the superintendent's role as the instructional leader is the relationship with the head of instruction at each campus level, the principal. Peterson's (1984) research of superintendent's control over principals found that the overall supervision of principals by the superintendents is light and much of the control exhibited is through constraints of resources to individual schools and in the recruitment, selection, and socialization with said principals.

Although the concentration of research has been at the campus level and the principal's leadership, this focus fails to take into account the pivotal role that the superintendents and school boards play in mobilizing resources, which at times can be limited, providing a support base for reform initiatives that can make a major difference between success and failure during the implementation process. Regardless of the lack in focus, current research has found that school boards have supported superintendents in their efforts to implement effective school programs.

The superintendent's role depends on verbal and interpersonal interaction and requires an investment of time "choreographing" the activities for members of the school system and community members by transmitting information in a persuasive manner with an excellent sense of timing to bring about the desired changes (Pitner & Ogawa, 1981). According to Youngs and King (2002), building school capacity is essential and professional development is critical to the process. Despite much research on campus leadership, little research has focused on the connections among principal leadership, professional development, and school organizational conditions and their influence on the quality of instruction. Youngs and King (2002) define organizational school capacity as "the collective power of an entire faculty to strengthen student performance throughout their school" (p. 646).

Until recently, research on school administrators had focused on the precursors of their administrative behavior instead of focusing on the behaviors themselves or the results of such behaviors (Bridges, 1982). For the most part, leadership literature addresses administrator characteristics, general leadership principles, and practices that are usually intended for application across diverse contexts (Kelley & Shaw, 2009). According to Cuban (1984b), success of public schools, especially the instructional leadership aspect, was directly linked to the influence of the superintendent. While specifics of the superintendent's role have changed, a leadership role is constant but continues to grow increasingly complex. Decisions made by superintendents in their role as the instructional leader surrounding student academic achievement amid the complexity of the position represent only one of many often equally demanding tasks.

Duffy (2004) parallels what Bennis and Nanus (1985) stated in their book *Leaders* about how leaders “do the right things” while managers “do things right.” Superintendents with the passion required to “do the right things” lead systemic reform with the purpose and desire to do whatever is right for students and teachers, individually and collectively within the school system.

Instructional leaders powerfully influence the academic success of students through their choices that impact instruction from elementary to high school (Kelley & Shaw, 2009). The expert in educational leadership is redefined by using common themes on decision-making, methods for motivating, and engaging everyone including staff members, students, parents, and community members. Strong foundations set clear and concise goals that establish high expectations for all students, collaboration that impacts learning for staff, and creates a synergy for their work that ultimately impacts learning outcomes for students as well (Kelley & Shaw, 2009).

Contextual factors in educational leadership play an important role in the development of each leader. Actions of a leader are shaped within the context of the learning environment. Hallinger’s (2003) model of instructional leadership delineates three dimensions: (a) defining the school’s mission, (b) managing the instructional program, and (c) the impact of a positive school-learning community. Kelley and Shaw (2009) defined educational leadership as “the ability to build school or district organizations that produce learning environments in which all students can experience the highest levels of academic success and the school community strives to continuously improve and meet the needs of all learners” (p. xii-xiii). Leadership holds the key to

making a difference and influencing the motivation factor that impacts the quality of the teaching in each classroom (Sergiovanni, 2001). Leadership research often focuses on characteristics and principles without consideration of the educational context. According to Kelley and Shaw (2009), the instructional focus in many schools often takes a backseat to other important things such as:

> Student motivation and preparation for learning, family and community support for education, resource levels, teacher motivation and skill, contractual obligations, time constraints, and a host of competing goals and values around areas such as citizenship, health and wellness, safety, tradition, and investment in gifted and talented learners. (p. 4)

Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) believed that the results of their study link instructional leadership to student learning suggesting that

> District leaders are most likely to build the confidence and sense of efficacy among principals by emphasizing the priority they attach to achievement and instruction, providing targeted and phased focus for school improvement efforts and by building cooperative working relationships with schools. (p. 1)

According to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001), the role of instructional leadership is to improve instruction and lead individual schools to success by improving academic achievement at all levels. In *The Micropolitics of Instructional Supervision: A Call to Research,* Blasé and Blasé (2002) called for a refocus on how instructional leadership or supervision in one curriculum area is transferable to other areas and how instructional leadership at different levels impacts student outcomes.

Research indicates the need to study different perspectives that emphasize the various aspects of the school administrator's role such as attitudes, behaviors, and decisions associated with school effectiveness and its impact on student achievement even if the linkage is indirect (Glasman & Heck, 1992). Duffy's (2004) stance was that

there is a direct link and stated that “it takes a courageous, passionate, and visionary leader to allow collaboration to happen because when you increase opportunities for genuine collaboration; you decrease centralized authority and power” (p. 24). Instructional leadership involves all leadership activities that affect student learning. Leithwood and others assume that the critical focus for school leaders is the “how” to ensure that teachers implement instructional strategies that engage students in activities that directly impact their academic achievement (Leithwood et al., 2010). Bredeson and Kose (2007) defined instructional leadership as district and school conditions set by superintendents that improve curricular, instructional, and assessment practices that ultimately positively affect student learning and assessment outcomes.

With greater state and national accountability, superintendents need the characteristics and skills to meet these complex issues (Hoyle et al., 2005). Accountability measures and standards-based expectations have clearly set more emphasis on the instructional role of the superintendent. According to Spillane and Camburn (2006), “The standards movement and high stakes accountability have all contributed to the foregrounding matter of teaching and learning” (p. 3) and their impact on school improvement. Although effective school research has focused on teachers and campus principals, research at the district and superintendent level has been sparse, with only few studies focused on district practices and characteristics associated with academic success or to factors that promote instructionally effective districts. These expectations have impacted the district leadership especially the role of the

superintendent and their characteristics that provide leadership in achieving the standards and accountability that have been set.

Standards and Accountability in Education

According to Irons and Harris (2006), over the last two decades a major shift in political ideology has refocused educational politics from equality issues to issues relating to excellence, accountability, and choice. Early attempts at school reform focused on school inputs and processes, such as funding levels, curriculum offerings, and resources. The educational system of the United States showed wide disparities in the achievement levels of students. Indicators such as ethnicity, economic status, parental education, and geography drastically affected the quality of education that students were receiving.

Standards and accountability have changed, and this study shows how the superintendents' perceptions have changed to meet the new standards. To help close the "achievement gap," states began looking for more accountability in their schools. After decades of concentrating on inputs, policymakers were now highlighting student learning and achievement outcomes as the means for gauging an educational system. Ravitch (2002) noted that the shift from inputs to student outcomes was facilitated by the ability to retrieve statewide test data and the creation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, n.d.) in 1970. States began adopting standards and tools to assess student performance with the expectation that all children can achieve at a certain level. Beginning in the 1990s, the standards-based accountability system set goals in the forms of standards, assigned responsibility for meeting those goals, and held the systems

accountable for their performance. Standards-based accountability systems emphasize student achievement by setting goals prescribed as standards designed to measure achievement, graduation rates, attendance, and other measures of student outcomes (Champagne, 2008). Because this study was conducted in the state of Texas, it is important to know the Texas accountability legislation and how it affected the findings of this study.

Texas Accountability System

Comprehensive educational reform in Texas focuses on four components:

1. Declaring what should be learned (curriculum),
2. Measuring what is learned (assessment),
3. Creating a system of public reporting and accountability, and
4. Doing what is necessary to improve student learning (Nelson, McGhee, Meno, & Slater, 2007).

These four components that include curriculum, assessment, accountability and public reporting were factors that affected the superintendents' perceptions of this study. The Texas Education Agency has developed a comprehensive accountability system to help monitor the progress of districts and schools.

Curriculum

The first statewide curriculum, referred to as the Essential Elements (EEs), was created in 1984-1985. Prior to its development, individual school districts wrote their own curricula, which created great variations in course expectations and content. As part of the reform, the statewide curriculum was updated to include what students should be

able to do as a result of their learning and to have students engage in more rigorous tasks, such as analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing. The Texas Education Agency solicited teachers, supervisors, content specialists, administrators, business representatives, and parents to write a new, comprehensive curriculum. The Division of Curriculum oversees the development and implementation of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in public schools. The goal of the Division of Curriculum is to provide information and resources to ensure the academic success of all students in Texas public schools (Texas Education Agency, 2008b).

Assessment

A statewide assessment system to measure schools' and districts' progress toward meeting the goals of each student has been in place since the mid-1980s. Managed by the Texas Education Agency, the Student Assessment Division oversees the development, administration, scoring, and analysis of the statewide assessment program, which includes the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills; the State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA), which ended in 2007; Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE); and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) (Texas Education Agency, 2008a).

In 1980, the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) was created as a measure of basic skill competencies in reading, math, and writing, testing students in Grades 3, 5, and 9. The high-stakes accountability movement in Texas had begun. In 1985, the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) measured minimum skills rather than basic skills for students in Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. The eleventh-grade exam

was considered an “exit level” exam that required proficiency before a student was allowed to receive a diploma.

In 1990, TAAS was created as a criterion-referenced exam designed to shift the focus to measuring mastery of higher-level skills rather than measuring minimum or basic skills. TAAS provided information specific to students, campuses, and districts. In 1993, a new statewide accountability system, which included TAAS performance, was utilized to assign school and district accountability ratings.

In 2003, TAKS assessed student proficiency of the new statewide curriculum called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Students were assessed in reading at Grades 3-9; in writing at Grades 4 and 7; in English/Language Arts at Grades 10 and 11; in mathematics at Grades 3-11; in science at Grades 5, 10, and 11; and in social studies at Grades 8, 10, and 11. The Texas legislature also passed into law the requirement that students demonstrate proficiency on state assessments in order to be promoted in Grade 3 (reading), Grades 5 and 8 (reading and mathematics), and Grade 11 (reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies).

Public Reporting

Since 1991, Texas has implemented a statewide accountability for student achievement, the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), which is a comprehensive reporting system that generates campus and district reports published annually. There is a process in place for disseminating these annual reports including distribution and public hearings. All indicators used for accountability purposes are included in the AEIS report including grade-level performance and specific subgroup

performance for each grade level. It includes student and staff demographic information as well as program and financial information. Human resource information provided by the AEIS report includes the number of professional staff, educational aides, and auxiliary staff per school district along with the number of minority staff, teachers by gender and ethnicity, highest degree held, years of experience, student-to-teacher ratio, average teacher salary by years of experience, and teacher turnover rates.

School data, collected through the state's data repository called the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), encompasses all data requested and received by TEA about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information (Texas Education Agency, 2008d). The public reporting of data has brought accountability to the forefront and impacts superintendents' perceptions and the results of this study.

The Texas Accountability Rating System was created as a subset of AEIS. The 2010 Accountability Rating System used four base indicators: the 2009-2010 TAKS test results (Grades 3-11); the 2009 TAKS (Accommodated) included for all grades and subjects; the Completion Rate (Class of 2008); and the Drop-out Rate (Grades 7 and 8). Ratings were first issued in 2004 under the new accountability system. Districts and campuses receive one of the following ratings based on meeting the performance standards associated with each rating:

1. Exemplary – At least 90% of students passing for each subject for all students and each student group that meets minimum size requirements or meets standard with TPM:

- TAKS (Accommodated) included for all grades and subjects.
- Completion rate meets 95% standard.
- Annual Dropout Rate meets 1.8% standard or meets Required Improvement.

2. Recognized - At least 80% of students passing for every subject for All students and each student group that meets minimum size requirements OR meets 75% floor and Required Improvement OR meets standard with TPM:
    - TAKS (Accommodated) included for all grades and subjects.
    - Completion rate meets 85% standard or meets floor of 75% Required Improvement, and Annual Dropout Rate meet 1.8% standard or meets Required Improvement.
3. Academically Acceptable – Varies by Subject:
    - Reading/ELA – At least 70% of students tested passed for all students and each student group that meets the minimum size requirement.
    - Writing - At least 70% of students tested passed for all students and each student group that meets the minimum size requirement.
    - Social Studies - At least 70% of students tested passed for all students and each student group that meets the minimum size requirement.
    - Mathematics - At least 60% of students tested passed for all students and each student group that meets the minimum size requirement.
    - Science - At least 55% of students tested passed for all students and each student group that meets the minimum size requirement.

OR

- Meets Required Improvement.

OR

- Meets standard with TPM.
- TAKS (Accommodated) included for all grades and subjects.
- Completion rate meets 75% standard or meets Required Improvement, and Annual Dropout Rate meets 1.8 % standard or meets Required Improvement.

4. Academically Unacceptable.

Survey Instrumentation

Based on the literature on the characteristics of the instructional leader, a survey instrument that measured the superintendents' perceptions on their role as the district instructional leader was used in this study. The Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey was the instrument used to explore the research questions in this study. It was developed by Boyter (1988) and used with her expressed permission. The questionnaire contained 42 questions that addressed five task areas of instructional leadership:

1. Instructional Planning,
2. Staffing for Instruction,
3. Organizing for Instruction,
4. Human Resource Development, and
5. Evaluating Instruction.

Sections 1, 3, and 5 of this instrument were all related to instruction. Sections 2 and 4 of the instrument were related to the Human Resource Development (HRD) leadership function.

A research study by Clore (1991) also used the SILS questionnaire. The findings in that study showed that superintendents emphasize a variety of leadership behaviors as described in the five task areas of the instrument. Eleven of the 42 tasks were identified as the behaviors given the most emphasis. The analysis of the relationship between the instructional leadership behaviors and demographics revealed a significant positive correlation between student performance on standardized testing and the demographics of students and the superintendents as well. Another finding was that there were significant moderate correlations between the superintendent instructional leadership behaviors and the number of years as superintendents. Their self-ratings on instructional leadership behaviors varied on three task areas as the size categories of districts also varied.

Two studies by Watts (1992) and Davidson (2005) investigated and analyzed instructional practices of school superintendents. These practices include (a) collaboratively developing goals, (b) evaluating instructional effectiveness, (c) facilitating instruction through budget, (d) planning for instruction, (e) supervising instruction, (f) monitoring instructional programs, (g) developing principals as instructional leaders, (h) developing instructional policies, (i) reviewing research, (j) selecting personnel, (k) facilitating staff development, and (l) communicating district expectations. Data were analyzed in relation to district improvement, size of district, and

gender of the superintendent. Although there were seven additional categories, all 12 categories in the study corresponded to instruction and human resource development and correlated the superintendents' practices and self-perceptions in relation to the academic performance of the school districts studied.

Human resource development is one of two areas that was a focus of the SILS used in this study and a major component of the research conducted by Watts (1992) and Davidson (2005). According to Kennedy (2006), teacher quality goes hand-in-hand with the conditions of teaching in improving instruction in a school and in the classroom. School districts can influence the quality of teaching by improving hiring practices, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, and improving campus standard operating procedures, such as minimizing interruptions to classroom instruction.

Professional development for teachers is an essential component to improving our schools (Borko, 2004). Kedzior and Fifield (2004) of the Delaware Education Research and Development Center jointly wrote a Policy Brief on Teacher Professional Development. Their findings described the characteristics of high quality teacher professional development as follows: (a) content-focused teacher professional development; (b) extended professional development experiences; (c) professional development activities that include active collective participation in active learning (Birman, Desimone, Garet, & Porter, 2000); (d) job-embedded professional development opportunities; (e) ongoing opportunities for professional development; (f) coherent and integrated experiences that align with standards, assessments, and other reform

initiatives; (g) inquiry-based reflection through active learning opportunities; (h) teacher-driven activities to incorporate self-identified needs and interests; (i) activities driven by student performance, and (j) professional development that includes self-evaluation for ongoing learning.

In mapping the terrain for teacher professional development, Borko (2004) referred to how educational reform movements in general are setting ambitious goals for student learning. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, in particular, requires the availability of "high-quality" professional development for teachers but does not specify what high-quality would look like or how it should be provided. According to Borko (2004), other reports by scholars and policymakers make demands for professional development opportunities in the teaching profession but again lack the "what" and "how" about professional development and its content and character. In order to foster the students' conceptual understanding, teachers must have rich and flexible knowledge of the subjects they teach, knowing central facts, concepts of discipline, and the ability to make the connections and establish the process for new learning (Borko & Putnam, 1996).

In the framework on teacher recruitment and retention by Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006), overall compensation included salaries, bonuses, and any other forms of compensation and benefits including other types of rewards derived from teaching, such as good working conditions or personal satisfaction. The basic principle of supply and demand applies: An individual will become and remain a teacher if teaching represents the most attractive endeavor available to them. The demand for teachers

varies due to one or more factors, such as student enrollments, budgetary constraints, class-size targets, and teaching-load assignments. Recruitment policies should mirror or exceed those of competing occupations that might attract the types of people they wish to employ (Guarino et al., 2006). Schelechty (2001) challenged central office personnel in their supporting role of the mission of the educational organization:

> Understand that your most important job is to create and manage systems that will enable principals and teachers to concentrate on the core business of schools, the creation of intellectual activity that students find engaging and from which they learn. (p. 213)

Another focus area in the SILS instrument used to survey superintendents for this study was instruction. In 1996, Seyfarth reported that most personnel decisions have either a direct or indirect impact on the quality of instruction. When a decision is made to employ a teacher, counselor, or aide; when a new personnel evaluation procedure is implemented; or when a compensation plan is adopted there are likely to be implications for the quality of instruction. The potential impact of personnel decisions on instruction should be taken into account at the time these decisions are made. A logical step for school districts that are seeking to improve student academic performance, as designed by the accountability systems set in place by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, is the improvement of teacher quality (Heneman & Milanowski, 2004). It has also impacted the area of public school personnel management with the standard set for highly qualified instructional personnel. In order to be considered highly qualified, teachers must hold a bachelor's degree, be fully certified, and demonstrate competency in the core academic subject area they are teaching. Districts must ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects hired after the first day of the 2002-2003 school year

and teaching in a program supported by federal funds are highly qualified when hired. In the consideration of highly qualified teachers, the immediate focus usually begins with making changes in the instructional program to improve teaching, such as curriculum, scheduling, and pedagogical techniques. Often overlooked are human resource management practices that facilitate acquiring, developing, and retaining a high-quality teacher workforce that can implement instructional programs that have a positive effect on student achievement (Heneman & Milanowski, 2004). An example of the considerations in determining teacher performance competency is represented in the *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* developed by Danielson (1996) that addresses eight components: (a) recruitment, (b) selection, (c) induction, (d) mentoring, (e) professional development, (f) compensation, (g) performance management, and (h) instructional leaders.

The states' responses to expectations set forth by NCLB have been varied. In Texas, the legislature created specific guidelines for student/teacher ratios in early elementary grades. Classrooms could have no more than 22 students assigned through Grade 4, emphasizing the importance of early learning experiences. The Texas reform model called for support of teacher quality through professional development. In most districts, the number of contract days for teachers was extended to include paid professional development in the area of increased accountability. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has had a major impact on the way states and districts do business, and research continues to explore how to successfully influence instructional practices, which in turn, can impact student learning.

Summary

The intent of this study was to examine superintendents' perceptions about how their roles have shifted from managerial to more emphasis as instructional leaders. The expectation for current school leaders at all administrative levels is that continuous gains be made in measureable academic achievement. This review of literature revealed a common premise that instructional leadership, although relative to different factors, is an important factor in the academic success for students. Many of the quantitative studies described results on how instructional leadership perceptions or behaviors impact student achievement. While many of the studies presented evidence on the impact of instructional leadership at the district level, researchers recommended that further quantitative and/or qualitative studies be conducted regarding the relationship between instructional leadership and district accountability ratings and its measure of student overall performance.

This quantitative study was designed to contribute to the body of literature that exists on the instructional leadership of district superintendents and its effect on student achievement. The data used to explore the research questions were acquired through the use of the SILS. This instrument contained 42 task statements that were intertwined into five task areas: (a) Instructional Planning, (b) Staffing for Instruction, (c) Organizing for Instruction, (d) Human Resource Development, and (e) Evaluating Instruction. This study examined the influence of demographic data, such as socioeconomic status and at-risk student populations on instructional leadership and the achievement levels of all students and student groups.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The intent of this study was to examine the relationship between the self-reported perceptions of instructional leadership behaviors by superintendents in selected Texas school districts and factors such as superintendent characteristics and the organizational characteristics of the school districts they serve. The analysis explored the influence of such variables as district locale as determined by the National Center of Education Statistics in Common Core Data, percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations, and demographic data of selected superintendents, such as gender, age, ethnicity, and administrative experience on these things. The study also explored the influence of student performance results on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills and district accountability ratings according to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS).

Research Questions

Research Question 1

What instructional leadership behaviors designated as task statements on the survey do superintendents perceive are emphasized the most in their daily work?

Research Question 2

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role linked to student performance as determined by the Texas Education Agency's accountability ratings?

Research Question 3

Are the superintendents' perceptions of their instructional leadership role linked to the percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations?

Research Question 4

Do the superintendents' self-perceptions on instructional leadership behaviors vary based on their district locale as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core Data?

Research Question 5

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on the five instructional leadership task areas (Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development, and Evaluating Instruction) identified on the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey instrument linked to the superintendents' characteristics: gender, age, ethnicity, and experience?

Data Sources

The data source for the selection of the superintendents for this study was the National Center for Education Statistics supported by the U.S. Department of Education. According to the information provided on the website, the NCES (n.d.) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. The Common Core of Data (CCD) warehouses school district data obtained through a Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey that is found under "Surveys & Programs." Listed on that webpage is the Elementary/Secondary Information System (ELSi), which

provides public/private school data or allows the creation of custom tables of information from the Common Core of Data.

Beginning with expressTables and after agreeing to the terms specified for the use of the data, “District” is the choice for Select a Level and “School District Characteristics” is the choice for Select a Table. The most current data obtained were for the 2009-2010 school year for the state of Texas. The chart and data for this survey and study were generated on October 26, 2011.

The chart lists the school district name, the type of school, the urban-centric locale and the lowest/highest grade offered. The ELSi chart was exported to an Excel® spreadsheet. For the purpose of this study, all the charter school agencies and the state-operated institutions were eliminated. The school districts and district locales were copied and pasted into a separate Excel spreadsheet and sorted by District locale: 11-City: Large; 12-City: Mid-size; 13-City: Small; 21-Suburb: Large; 21-Suburb: Large; 22-Suburb: Mid-size; 23-Suburb: Small; 31-Town: Fringe; 32-Town: Distant; 33-Town: Remote; 41-Rural: Fringe; 42-Rural: Distant; 43-Rural: Remote. The Local, Urban-Centric information chart provides an indication of a school’s location relative to a populous area. The locales assigned to each school district are based on the locale code of their schools, weighted by the size of the school’s membership.

The pool of participants for this study included superintendents from public school districts in Texas (N=1037) for the 2009-2010 school year. For the purpose of this study, charter school agencies and state-operated institutions were excluded from the pool of participants. Also excluded were three district locale groups: 11-City: Large; 42-

Rural: Distant; 43-Rural: Remote. Much research has been conducted in urban school districts, and the focus for this study was to study district in locales ranging from Midsize: City to Rural: Fringe resulting in a sample size of (N=455).

District ratings for the 2009-2010 school year were accessed from the AEIS report for each district and were added to the Excel spreadsheet. Each district locale category was then re-sorted by district rating (Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, and Unacceptable) to ensure a balance in the selection of performance categories. A systematic sample procedure was used in the selection of superintendents from each category. In a systematic sampling the researcher chooses every "nth" site in the population until the desired sample size is achieved (Creswell, 2008). Every third district was eliminated (i.e., #1, #4, #7, etc.) from each category followed by every fifth district from the overall list, for the total number of districts to be included in this study (N=300).

District enrollment totals were obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, n.d.) through an ELSi export of School District Enrollment/Teacher Counts and added to the Data Spreadsheet. District performance ratings are based on overall student performance on the state assessment. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) was the instrumentation used to measure student achievement in this study. Student performances are reported by TEA as percentage passing (district unit of analysis), commended performance (district unit of analysis), and scale scores (student unit of analysis). Based on student performance, each district earns one of four performance ratings: Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, and Not

Acceptable. The TAKS test is designed to measure the extent to which a student has learned and is able to apply the knowledge and skills at each tested grade level.

The Texas Education Agency considers reliability as the most technical characteristic of any measurement system and as an expression of how well an assessment measures actual learning. Reliability for TAKS tests is based on internal consistency measures, in particular the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR20) (Texas Education Agency, 2008e). Most internal consistency reliabilities are in the high 0.80s to low 0.90s range (1.0 being perfectly reliable). TAKS assessment reliabilities range from 0.81 to 0.93, which is considered acceptable by psychometric standards (McIntire & Miller, 2000).

Each TAKS test is directly aligned with the state curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). When TAKS was designed as the standards-referenced assessment for the TEKS, advisory committees were organized for each subject area at each grade level. The stages of item development and item review provide opportunities for suggestions to improve or eliminate test items. The advisory committee believed that the nature and specificity of these various review procedures provided strong evidence for the content validity of the TAKS test (Texas Education Agency, 2008f).

Superintendent names and email addresses were obtained from the Texas Education Agency (2010) from the District Directory under the District Locator tab and downloaded from the School and District File. Column D (District Name) on the downloaded spreadsheet was sorted alphabetically to facilitate the process.

Superintendent emails not available on the spreadsheet were obtained on the individual district websites. If not available, a district email contact was substituted.

The At-Risk and Economically Disadvantaged student population information and School District rating were obtained on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website by selecting the Lonestar Education Reports under the District Locator tab. On the Lonestar Education Reports site and under Education at a Glance, the School District Summary was selected followed by the selection of a specific school district in a portable document format (PDF) file. The data provided were based on the 2009-2010 AEIS report. The district's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report was used for data about student performance and district accountability ratings.

Instrumentation

Data collection explored the research questions acquired through the use of the SILS. This instrument was developed by Boyter (1988) and had previously been used to survey superintendent behavior as rated by the superintendents themselves. The questionnaire contained 42 task statements that were intertwined into five task areas: (a) Instructional Planning, (b) Staffing for Instruction, (c) Organizing for Instruction, (d) Human Resource Development, and (e) Evaluating Instruction. Participants were asked to select the degree of emphasis that best described their practice for each task statement. The choice selection for the degree of emphasis was as follows: (a) Constant Emphasis, (b) Frequent Emphasis, (c) Average Emphasis, (d) Infrequent Emphasis, and (e) No Emphasis.

Data Collection

After receiving IRB approval on January 20, 2012, the survey was posted online between February 1, 2012, and February 20, 2012. All participants were volunteers and were not compensated for their time. The email sent out through Qualtrics.com provided each participant with a description of the study (Appendix B). Qualtrics is a web-based data collection application that is available to all faculty, staff, and students in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University. The Qualtrics survey software is designed to offer high-end solutions to clients at every level of expertise. Qualtrics is comprised of a survey construction tool, a comprehensive distribution tool, several results/analysis tools, and a panel management tool.

Superintendents were invited to complete the web-based survey questionnaire. The information provided clearly stated that participation in the research project was purely voluntary and the participant could stop at any time prior to clicking the "Submit" button upon completion of the survey and survey participation acknowledged consent. Participants were also informed that their identity and survey responses would be kept completely confidential through number assignment. Those who were interested in receiving a summary of the findings were given the option to leave an electronic mailing address where the principal investigator could send the summary.

Treatment of Data

Coding and Recoding

The variables of interest were divided into two separate blocks. Superintendent characteristics were assembled in one block. The variables assembled together in that

one block were the superintendent's age, gender, ethnicity, and the total number of years of experience. A second block was comprised of organizational characteristics that included student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and the Texas Education Agency district rating designation, the percentage of low socioeconomic and at-risk student populations in the district, and the district locale as designated by the National Center of Education Statistics' Common Core of Data. Table 2 shows the variables in their individual blocks and collectively combined in the third block.

Table 2. Variables of Interest

Blocks	Independent Variables
Organizational	Percentage of Low Socioeconomic Student Population (SES) Percentage of At-Risk Student Population (AR) Texas Education Agency District Rating
Superintendent Characteristics	Age Gender Ethnicity Experience
Combination of All Variables	Percentage of Low Socioeconomic Student Population (SES) Percentage of At-Risk Students Population (AR) Texas Education Agency District Rating Age of Superintendent Gender of Superintendent Ethnicity of Superintendent Total Number of Years' Experience in Education

Following the process used by Torres (2003), “the variables consisted of both binary and interval-ratio levels of measurement. In several instances however, dependent variables were collapsed into binary variables to facilitate the logistic analysis” (p. 99). The independent variables were the Likert scale answer choices provided for each of the task statements in the survey. These variables were recoded in binary form to distinguish the higher level of emphasis to average emphasis and below. As shown on Table 3, the variables Constant Emphasis and Frequent Emphasis were combined and coded (=1); Average Emphasis, Infrequent Emphasis, and No Emphasis were combined and coded (=0).

Table 3. Independent Variables

Variable Name	Level of Measurement
Survey Answer Responses: Constant Emphasis-5 Frequent Emphasis-4 Average Emphasis-3 Infrequent Emphasis-2 No Emphasis-1	Nominal: Binary Variable 1: Variable 4,5 0: Variable 1,2,3

The variables in the superintendent characteristic block that were recoded in binary form were gender and ethnicity. In the Organizational block, the variable that was recoded was the district rating. During the 2009-2010 school year, a major factor in determining district/campus ratings was the Texas Projection Measure. It was defined as the estimate of whether a student is likely to pass the TAKS test in a future grade. Depending on the percentage of students estimated to pass a future state assessment, a

district could be awarded a better rating. This process was identified as “gateup” to the next rating. Consequently, this projection measure “gated up” many districts based on the projection of students passing the state assessment in the future. More districts received higher ratings than usual. For this reason, the district ratings were recoded in binary form. In Table 4, on the Organizational capacity block, the Texas Education Agency Performance Ratings were combined: Exemplary and Recognized ratings were combined and coded (=1); Acceptable and Not Acceptable were combined and coded (=0).

Table 4. Dependent Variables

Variable Name	Level of Measurement
Organizational	
Texas Education Agency Performance Ratings	Nominal Binary Variable 1: Exemplary, Recognized 0: Acceptable, Not Acceptable
Percentage of At-Risk Student Population	Interval-Ratio
Percentage of SES Student Population	Interval-Ratio
Superintendent Characteristics	
Age	Interval-Ratio
Gender	Nominal Binary Variable 1=Male 0=Female
Experience	Interval-Ratio
Ethnicity	Nominal Binary Variable 1=White 0=Black, Hispanic, Other

In some instances, the dependent variables were also combined. A contributing factor in combining these variables was the low response rate to the survey. In the Superintendent characteristics block, the Ethnicity designations were combined: the ethnicity White was coded (=1) and the other three Ethnicity designations, Black, Hispanic, and other, were combined and coded (=0). The dependent variable gender was coded as follows: Male superintendents were coded (=1) and females were coded (=2).

All other dependent variables were categorized by an interval-ratio. This included the percentage of low socioeconomic status (SES) student population and percentage of at-risk student population in the Organizational block. In the Superintendent characteristic block, the superintendents' age and the total number of years of experience in education were also categorized by an interval-ratio. Table 4 includes the dependent variables within the superintendents' characteristics block and the organizational block and the level of measurement for each variable.

Due to the low response rate to the survey, the district locale as a dependent variable was unable to be utilized to provide any substantial data for this study. District locale totals of superintendents who responded to the survey were as follows: From districts in City category, only 2 superintendents completed the survey; from the Suburb category, 10 superintendents responded; and from the Town and Rural categories, 49 responded to the survey.

Data Validity

The Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey was developed by Boyter (1988) at The University of Texas. The instrument was revised through the use of inter-rater reliability testing employed before this instrument was used for data collection. For validity, the instrument was administered to 15 doctoral-level education administration students who were Fellows in the Eighth Cycle of the Cooperative Superintendency Program of The University of Texas. The SILS was mailed to 30 practicing Texas superintendents who were asked to identify any area of concern in regard to the readability and clarity of the instrument in its entirety, including the demographic survey items and the scoring procedures. Changes based on the recommendations were made.

One of the factors that impacted this study was the limited number of responses and there are limitations inherent to a small sampling. However, Kerlinger (as cited in Torres, 2003) argues that such sampling methods are often "necessary and unavoidable" (p. 118) but can be profitable in drawing inferences about the general population and can nonetheless provide needed insight.

Data Reliability

Data reliability may be impacted by a limited number of responses. Reliability for the 42 task statements and each task area in the questionnaire was derived using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for Reliability Estimates (Cronbach, 1951). Correlations among all 42 tasks ranged from 0.52 for task statement number 1 to 0.84 for task statement 39. The alpha reliability for all 42 task statements was 0.98. The alpha

coefficients for five individual task areas ranged from 0.87 for the task area Evaluating Instruction to 0.93 for the task area Human Resource Development.

Data Analysis

Many of the variables in this study were categorical or nominal. Tables 3 and 4 identify the independent and dependent variables and their classification of measurement. Discrete data analysis techniques were used in this study.

Data Techniques and Procedure of Analysis

This study used inferential statistics to study how the independent and dependent variables impact the instructional leadership behaviors of district-level superintendents. The research explored the relationship between these variables and the interaction between the Superintendent Characteristics block and the Organizational capacity block. Youngs and King (2002) identified four areas that impact instruction: (a) teachers' knowledge and skills, (b) professional learning communities, (c) program coherence, and (d) technical resources. The 12 focus statements selected from the SILS highlighted these four areas. Instructional leaders at all levels, including the superintendent at the district level and the principal at the campus level, strive to build school capacity in these four areas.

This study used a multiple logistic regression as a method of analysis. Multiple logistic regression procedures were utilized to examine the effects of multiple variables and interactions among the variables and the likelihood of an event, in this case, the superintendents' responses to survey statements. This method uses a statistical procedure for examining the combined relationship of multiple variables. In regression, an attempt

is made to determine the differences in the dependent variables and how they explain the variance of the independent variables. This method transforms binary dependent variables into non-linear models that can predict probabilities more accurately (Torres, 2003). According to Torres (2003), “In its most basic form, this link-function transformation, known as logit, transforms probabilities into odds according to the following model:

> Logit (p) = $\alpha + \beta x$
> Where
> α = intercept
> βx = slope; change in units in logit at every unit change of x.” (p. 108)

Following the same procedure in this study used by Torres in his Multiple Regression study, “The analysis … was conducted in block format. All independent and dependent variables were classified into three separate variable blocks” (Hull & Hie, as cited in Torres, 2003, p. 108). He also employed “the backward Liklihood Ratio stepwise logistic regression procedure” (Agresti, as cited in Torres, 2003, p. 109), where each block was investigated in succession to locate the most explanatory variables ($p<.05$) within each subset. All significant predictors identified in each subset were added to the predictor set in the subsequent stepwise analysis for each block until a satisfactory model had been reached. Goodness-of-fit methods (i.e., Hosmer and Lemeshow test) were used to arrive at a parsimonious model using the values on the log-likelihood statistic.

In situations where grounded theory is relatively sparse, the Likelihood Ratio stepwise procedure provides a means to building models for explanatory purposes alone

(Agresti & Finlay, 1986). Such methods have their limitations, however. Agresti (as cited in Torres, 2003) warns that

> variables found to be significant in the stepwise process may result from chance rather than true explanatory power. Also, in relation to the block format, variables assigned to blocks are unable to interact with variables from other blocks during the reduction process. Despite these shortcomings, the heuristic qualities of this study provide groundwork for subsequent hypothetical testing. (p. 109)

Torres (2003) also used a second data technique that "allows for the analysis of observed frequencies in relation to expected frequencies using factors to distinguish the varying influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable" (p. 112).

The techniques were applied to the 12 focus questions and the three blocks of dependent variables. The three blocks include: (a) organizational, (b) superintendent characteristics, and (c) all combined factors. Table 2 details the three blocks and the variables that are connected with each block.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to determine general tendencies in any of the data, such as the mean and the spread of scores, such as the standard deviation and range. These data would help identify factors of influence and errors that may have occurred in the data-entry phase. Statistical analyses were completed on the questions from the survey to determine the level of emphasis on instructional leadership behaviors based on the superintendents' own perceptions and the relationship between their perceived instructional leadership behaviors and student performance. Analyses were also completed between the perceived level of emphasis on instructional leadership behaviors and factors such as district size, percentage of economically disadvantaged

and at-risk student groups, and between the perceived behaviors and superintendent demographic information that included the age, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience.

Limitations

Survey results were limiting in the amount of information they provided. However, the use of inferential statistical processes assisted in establishing forecasts and projections of significance (Torres, 2003). Some data were excluded due to incomplete information, such as surveys that were not completed or specific questions in the survey not answered. District locales were to be explored as a variable of influence on the superintendents' self-perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors, but an equitable number of responses from all district locales surveyed was not forthcoming.

The Texas Projected Measure that was used by the Texas Education Agency in determining the accountability ratings during the 2009-2010 school year resulted in a higher percentage of schools in Texas to receive a Recognized or Exemplary rating. These ratings were used as a measure of student success in this study, and schools/districts may have received higher than normal accountability ratings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Administrators at all levels of a school district are challenged to meet demands to improve schools and close achievement gaps by providing a learning environment that meets the learning needs of all students. This study sought input from superintendents in Texas districts in exploring the factors that impact instructional leadership behaviors through the superintendents' self-perceptions.

Participants

A total of 49 superintendents in Texas responded to the Superintendent's Instructional Leader Survey sent out through Qualtrics.com (Appendix A). This sample represents 16% of the surveys sent out electronically. Forty of the participants were men and nine were women. Table 5 shows the gender information including numbers and percentages. The numbers are reflective of the superintendent population in general. A large percentage of superintendents are male.

Table 5. Gender Information

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	40	82
Female	9	18

Table 6 provides information on the age of the participants. The participants' mean age was 52. Participants' ages ranged from being in their 40s to those in their 60s, with most being in the 40s and 50s category. The table shows the total number in each

category by male and female and the percentages for each category. It also shows the mean age for males and females.

Table 6. Age Information

Age	40+	50+	60+	Mean
Male	18	15	7	51.6
Female	2	4	3	54
All	20/41%	19/39%	10/20%	52

Other data about the participants include the ethnicity of the participants. Eighty-four percent of respondents were White superintendents with 6% each of both Black and Hispanic superintendents. Two percent of the superintendents selected “other” as their ethnicity. This data are also reflective of the ethnicity of superintendents in general. Table 7 show numbers and percentages for the ethnicity of participants.

Table 7. Ethnicity Information

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White	41	84
Black	3	6
Hispanic	3	6
Other	2	4

Information for the number of years of experience that each superintendent has in the education field was also provided through the survey. The average number of years was 27.8. Table 8 provides the average number of years and percentages for male and female superintendents. The data for the number of years in education were consistent across the board. The average number of years was at 27+ years for males and females

with a higher average in the 20 to 29 number of years category for both males and females.

Table 8. Total Number of Years of Experience in Education

Experience	10+ years	20+ years	30+ years	40+ years	Average
Males	5	19	13	3	27.8
Females	1	5	2	1	27.6
Percentage	12	49	31	8	27.9

Table 9 lists the district locales that were used for this study. State total indicates the total number of districts in each locale in Texas. A stratified random sampling resulted in 300 superintendents who received the electronic survey and are listed under the survey total. It also details the number of district superintendents in each locale who responded to the survey. Sixteen percent of the superintendents surveyed responded to the survey. Although the district locale data information was sparse because of the low response rate, it was the basis of selection of districts for this study.

Table 9. Survey Totals by Locale

Locale	State Total	Survey Total	Survey Response
12-City: Midsize	12	9	1
13-City: Small	19	13	1
21-Suburb: Large	58	39	8
22-Suburb: Mid-size	11	7	1
23-Suburb: Small	9	9	1
31-Town: Fringe	16	11	4
32-Town: Distant	98	62	8
33-Town: Remote	93	60	16
41-Rural: Fringe	135	90	21
Total/Percentage	451	300	49 (16)

Table 10 provides district information on the Texas Education Agency ratings for the 2009-2010 school year. The data are shown in two categories – one for surveys that were sent to district superintendents and the second column for the number of district superintendents who responded to the survey. The largest number of survey recipients and survey participants were in the Recognized category. One of the reasons for the large number in that category was due to the Texas Projected Measure (TPM) criteria used in the 2010 state accountability. It was the only year that the TPM was used and resulted in a higher number of Exemplary and Recognized campuses and districts across the state.

Table 10. TEA Ratings for Survey Recipients and Participants

District Ratings	Survey Recipients	Survey Participants
Exemplary	35	7
Recognized	168	21
Acceptable	91	19
Unacceptable	6	2

Procedure

A systematic sample of superintendents was selected to participate in the online Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey. There are 42 statements on the SILS and each item was rated with a 5-point emphasis scale: 5=Constant Emphasis, 4=Frequent Emphasis, 3=Average Emphasis, 2=Infrequent Emphasis, and 1=No Emphasis. Answers were recoded as noted on Table 2 in Chapter III. Constant Emphasis and Frequent Emphasis were combined and coded '1.' Average Emphasis, Infrequent Emphasis, and No Emphasis were combined and coded '0.' Collapsing the variables

served two purposes: (a) it made it easier to distinguish between average and below emphasis and above-average to constant emphasis and (b) also facilitated the analysis process.

A step-wise multiple logistical regression was employed to explore the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This type of statistics is used to predict a future event based on available data. In this case, it is used to predict how superintendents will respond to the task statements based on multiple predictor variables. Researchers used regression analysis to determine what impact the multiple variables had on an outcome (Creswell, 2008).

The step-wise multiple logistic regression analysis was used to explore individual blocks such as the Superintendent Characteristics block or the Organizational block. The Superintendent Characteristics block contained the variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and the number of years of experience in education. The Organizational block contained the following variables: the percentage of economically disadvantaged student group (SES), the percentage of At-Risk student group and the district rating, which was based on student performance on the state assessment. All variables were entered into the step-wise procedure to find how these variables in combination predict superintendent responses to the survey statements. The beta weight (β) is a coefficient that indicates the magnitude of prediction for a variable after removing the effects of other predictors or variables. The coefficient of a beta weight identifies the strength of the relationship of a predictor variable of the outcomes and enables the researcher to compare the strength of one predictor variable with the strength of the other predictors.

Regression coefficients are normally used for purposes, such as choosing variables and assessing their relative importance (Bring, 1994).

The 12 task statements that were selected as the independent variables are listed in Table 11.

Table 11. Twelve Focus Statements

Statement #	Focus Statement
1	I understand instructional design.
2	I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction.
3	I define local instructional priorities by relating them to state and national trends.
4	I oversee a thorough system of recruitment procedures that lead to the identification of qualified candidates for job openings.
5	I keep the district's staff development and procedures current with trends in the theory of productive staff development and in-service design.
6	I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.
7	I provide a systematic program of diagnostic evaluation for all instructional personnel.
8	I supervise and continuously update the district's goals and objectives to ensure that the curricular philosophy of the district is being met.
9	I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents.
10	I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program.
11	I understand principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process.
12	I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population.

The step-wise multiple logistic regression analysis was completed with each focus statement and with both the Superintendent Characteristic block and with the Organizational block. Each analysis followed these steps:

For example,

Focus Statement 1 – "I understand instructional design."

First step – Analysis is conducted with Focus Statement 1 and Block 1 (Superintendent Characteristic block).

#1 I understand instructional design. And

I understand instructional design.	Ethnicity
Step 1	Age
	Years of Experience
	Gender
Step 2	Ethnicity
	Years of Experience
	Gender
Step 3	Ethnicity
	Gender
Step 4	Gender

If $p < 0.05$ at any step, statistical significance for each factor is noted.

Second step – Analysis is conducted with Focus Statement 1 and Block 2 (Organizational block). The characteristic(s) from the last step of Block 1 are included in the analysis of the variables of Block 2.

I understand instructional design.	SES
Step 1	AR
	District Rating
Step 2	AR
	District Rating
Step 3	District Rating

If $p < 0.05$ for any variable, statistical significance for that variable is noted. Focus Statement 1 did not have statistical significance for any block or any variable. If statistical significance had been found, it would have been noted as to whether it occurred in Block 1 or 2 and whether it occurred in Step 1, 2, etc. and which variable was found to be statistical significant.

The same process was conducted with each of the 12 focus statements and each block (Superintendent Characteristics block and Organizational block). The 12 questions reflected the instructional and human resource components that impact student achievement. The multiple logistic regression process was used to find predictive variables that influence the superintendents' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors.

As noted above, statistical significance is achieved when $p < 0.05$. However, in the social sciences, practical significance is noted when $p < 0.10$ is achieved. In some cases, researchers are forced to deal with data coming from a survey that consists of only a portion of the original sample due to non-response and subsequently forms a subpopulation of the original population that has to be studied as such (Steyn, 2000). Kirk (1996) stated that "Statistical significance is concerned with whether a research result is due to chance or sampling variability; practical significance is concerned with whether the result is useful in the real world" (p. 746).

Results

The multiple logistic regression process was used with the 12 focus statements that are listed on Table 11 and the blocks with variables of interest (Table 2). The two

blocks of variables were the Superintendent Characteristics block and the Organizational characteristic block. The Superintendent Characteristics block included the superintendents' age, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience in education. The variables in the Organizational block were the districts' percentage of economically disadvantaged (SES) student group, the percentage of at-risk students, and the district's rating as determined by student performance on the state assessment test.

Twelve Focus Statements

Results of the multiple logistic regression and the statements where variables were found to have significance are presented in this section. There were seven focus statements where the variables reflected any statistical or practical significance. These statements were as follows and are denoted by task area in parentheses:

> Focus Statement 2 – I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction. (Staffing for Instruction)
>
> Focus Statement 6 – I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established. (Instructional Planning)
>
> Focus Statement 7 – I provide a systematic program of diagnostic evaluation for all instructional personnel. (Staffing for Instruction)
>
> Focus Statement 9 –I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents. (Human Resource Development)

Focus Statement 10 – I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program. (Evaluating Instruction)

Focus Statement 11 – I understand principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process. (Instructional Planning)

Focus Statement 12 – I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population. (Staffing for Instruction)

Of these seven focus statements, three were under the Staffing for Instruction task area. Two were under the Instructional Planning task area, and one was under the Human Resource Development task area.

Five of the focus statements did not reflect any statistical or practical significance. Those five statements are as follows:

Focus Statement 1 – I understand instructional design.(Instructional Planning)

Focus Statement 3 – I define local instructional priorities by relating them to state and national trends. (Organizing for Instruction)

Focus Statement 4 – I oversee a thorough system of recruitment procedures that lead to the identification of qualified candidates for job openings. (Human Resource Development)

Focus Statement 5 – I keep the district's staff development and procedures current with trends in the theory of productive staff development. (Evaluating Instruction)

Focus Statement 8 – I supervise and continuously update the district's goals and objectives to ensure that the curricular philosophy of the district is being met. (Organizing for Instruction)

Variables of Significance

The Superintendent Characteristics block included the age, gender, ethnicity, and the years of experience. The research on these characteristics reflected the following results. There was practical significance in the influence age variable of the superintendent on Focus Statement 2, but gender ethnicity and the number of years of experience did not have statistical significance.

Except for Focus Statement 2, the Superintendent Characteristics variables were not found to significantly explain the responses to the survey questions. However, when step-wise regression was conducted with both blocks for Focus Statement 2: "I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction," the variable Age was found to have practical significance in predicting responses to survey question 2 (see Table 12).

($x^2=2.76$, $p< .10$) on Step 3 of Block 2, Focus Statement 2

Almost 60% of the participants in the survey were over the age of 50 and the rest of the participants were in the 40 to 50 age group (see Table 6). Focus Statement 2 is part of the Evaluating Instruction task area.

Table 12. Summary of Blockwise Analysis for Variables Predicting Organizational Influence

	Block	Step	Variable	β (logit)	S.E.	Wald	Exp (β)
Focus Statement #2 (Unified framework for improvement of instruction)	1	3	Age	.174	.105	2.76	1.19
Focus Question 2 (Unified framework for improvement of instruction)	2	3	At-Risk	.089	.040	4.83	1.09
Focus Question 6 (Goals that satisfy the needs of the local community)	2	3	District Rating	1.73	.938	3.39	5.63
Focus Question 7 (Systemic diagnostic evaluation for instructional personnel)	2	2	District Rating	1.45	.821	3.09	4.24
Focus Statement # 7 Systemic diagnostic evaluation for instructional personnel	2	2	SES	.073	.023	9.73	1.08
Focus Statement # 9 (Placement system for personnel for best use of talents.)	2	3	SES	.046	.018	6.49	1.05
Focus Statement #10 (Instructional evaluation program to accurately monitor instruction)	2	3	At-Risk	.072	.030	5.57	1.08
Focus Statement #11 (Ensure that principles of drop-out prevention are part of the curriculum)	2	3	At-Risk	.063	.026	5.94	1.07
Focus Statement #12 (Instructional methodologies to meet needs of multi-racial student population)	2	3	At-Risk	.052	.030	2.97	1.05

Note. Coding of dependent variables-a. p<.15. † p<.10. * p<.05.

The Organizational block had three variables: (a) the percentage of economically disadvantaged student group (SES), (b) the percentage of the at-risk students, and (c) the district rating based on student performance on the state assessment. The district rating was shown to be a variable that had practical significance in two of the statements, Focus Statements 6 and 7. The At-Risk factor was shown to have practical significance in Focus Statement 12. There was statistical significance for two variables: (a) the low SES variable on Focus Statements 7 and 9 and (b) the At-Risk variable on Focus Statements 10 and 11. The Organizational block had more variables that influenced how superintendents responded on the Likert scale from "No Emphasis" to "Constant Emphasis" to the focus statements. More specific details are provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

Also on Focus Statement 2, the Organizational block had statistical significance on the At-Risk variable (see Table 12).

($x^2 = 4.83$, $<.05$) on Step 3 of Block 2, Focus Statement 2

The percentage of the at-risk student population played an important role in the responses provided by superintendents who participated in the survey.

Although there was not statistical significance on Focus Statement 6, a significance of 0.06 carries practical significance (Kirk, 1996; Steyn, 2000) for application on the District Rating variable. Focus Statement 6, which stated: "I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established," falls under the Instructional Planning task area.

($x^2=3.39$, $p<.10$) on Step 2, Block 2, Focus Statement 6

As a superintendent builds community with those he/she serves, goals such as student success as measured by the TAKS, the state assessment, can be impacted.

On Focus Statement 7: “I provide a systemic program of diagnostic evaluation for instructional personnel,” there was practical significance on the variable District Rating.

(x^2=3.09; p<.10). on Block 2, Step 2, Focus Statement 7

This focus statement is found in the Human Resource Development task area. In essence, when instruction is systematically evaluated and results in improved instruction, academic achievement can be impacted.

Statistical significance on the variable SES for the Focus Statement 7.

(x^2=9.73, p<.05) on Block 2, Step 2, Focus Statement 7

Both variables for Focus Statement 7 have β above one, which results in a positive relationship with the odds. As superintendents focus on the academic achievement for all students, it would be important to know how to help students from an economically disadvantaged student population.

Another finding of significance occurred on Focus Statement 9: “I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents.” Results showed that the variable SES also had statistical significance.

(x^2 =6.49, p<.05) on Block 2, Step 3, Focus Statement 9

This focus statement is part of the Staffing for Instruction task area and again, knowing the student population, superintendents are able and willing to make staffing changes as needed to ensure student success.

Focus Statement 10: “I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program” showed statistical significance with the At-Risk variable on Block 2, Step 3.

(x^2=5.57, $p < .05$) on Block 2, Step 3, Focus Statement 10

The At-Risk variable also showed statistical significance on Focus Statement 11, Block 2, Step 3. Superintendents rated their emphasis on how they ensure that the principles of drop-out prevention are included as part of the curriculum.

(x^2=5.94, $p < .05$) on Block 2, Step 3, Focus Statement 11

Focus Statement 10 is in the Staffing for Instruction task area and Focus Statement 11 is in the Instructional Planning task area but in both Focus Statements 10 and 11, the At-Risk variable showed statistical significance.

In Focus Question 12: “I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population,” the At-Risk variable was found to have practical significance (Kirk, 1996; Steyn, 2000).

This focus statement is in the Organizing for Instruction task area. Since the at-risk student population learning opportunities may be limited, there is a need for a wide range of learning styles that align with the needs of the students.

Table 12 provides a summary of the variables detailed above. It shows the focus statement, the block, and step where significance was found, and the variable that was found to have significance. It also provides more detailed statistical information.

Research Question 1

What instructional leadership behaviors designated as task statements on the survey do superintendents perceive are emphasized the most in their daily work?

In order to determine which instructional leadership behaviors superintendents emphasize most in their role as instructional leaders in their districts, a frequency distribution was developed for each response on the SILS. The means along with the standard deviations were calculated. The means were analyzed to identify the tasks that were emphasized the most by superintendents in their instructional leadership role. The standard deviations represent the spread of scores around the mean scores for each instructional leadership task.

The task items were rated on a 5-point emphasis scale: Constant Emphasis=5, Frequent Emphasis=4, Average Emphasis=3, Infrequent Emphasis=2, and No Emphasis=1. Table 13 shows the mean scores and standard deviations derived from the scores obtained through the survey. Mean scores ranged from 4.65 (SD= 0.515) for task statement number 4 to a low of 3.73 on task statements number 30 and 40 (SD= 0.869, 0.730 respectively). The survey items in this table are presented in the order that they appear on the survey instrument.

Twenty-four of the task statements had a mean score of 4.0 or higher. Each of the five task areas, Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development and Evaluating Instruction, were represented in the top 24 task statements.

Table 13. Statistical Information for Survey Statements

Survey Item	N=	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
1. I identify federal and state curriculum mandates related to the local district.	61	4.02	.866	3
2. I maintain adequate staffing levels while anticipating future changes in staffing needs.	60	4.40	.694	2
3. I understand instructional design.	61	4.28	.662	2
4. I exhibit a positive attitude toward staff development.	60	4.65	.515	2
5. I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction.	58	4.21	.614	2
6. I define local instructional priorities by relating them to state and national trends.	60	4.02	.725	2
7. I oversee a thorough system of recruitment procedures that lead to the identification of qualified candidates for job openings.	59	4.24	.678	3
8. I establish priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives.	60	4.42	.671	2
9. I keep the district's staff development and procedures current with trends in the theory of productive staff development and in-service design.	59	4.24	.678	3
10. I develop a formative personnel evaluation system.	59	3.75	.958	4
11. I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.	59	4.17	.673	2
12. I provide for a screening process that designates the most qualified applicants prior to final selection.	60	4.13	.700	2
13. I adopt instructional methodologies facilitate the efficient delivery of the district's curriculum.	53	4.15	.744	3
14. I provide a systematic program of diagnostic evaluation for all instructional personnel.	52	3.77	.757	3
15. I direct a summative evaluation system for personnel to assure that crucial personnel decisions are sound and legally defensible.	52	4.15	.724	2
16. I supervise and continuously update the district's goals and objectives to ensure that the curricular philosophy of the district is being met.	53	4.00	.855	3
17. I provide a process for selecting the most qualified candidates for each instructional position.	53	4.15	.744	2
18. I develop an instructional and resource management system that implements the district's instructional philosophy.	53	4.13	.590	2
19. I design and administer staff development programs that enhance professional	52	3.96	.685	2

Survey Item	N=	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
capabilities and overcome identified deficiencies in district personnel.				
20. I coordinate a system of evaluation of instructional programs to provide detailed information regarding their current status and to establish a basis for determining the continuation or termination of programs.	53	3.89	.725	3
21. I promote the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy.	52	4.46	.609	2
22. I provide staff orientation and induction programs that assure new personnel the information and support needed to function in new surroundings.	53	3.91	.815	3
23. I develop goals and objectives that will guide the district's philosophy	53	4.38	.713	3
24. I ensure that all personnel have access to professional growth opportunities through the design of a master plan to coordinate the in-service activities of the district.	53	4.13	.761	3
25. I study information from evaluation reports to identify and prioritize recommendations for instructional improvement.	48	3.88	.733	2
26. I provide for theory and research- based curriculum planning, development, and design procedures.	50	3.88	.799	3
27. I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents.	50	3.92	.922	4
28. I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program.	50	3.94	.793	4
29. I formulate an evaluation process to determine whether the district's in-service needs are being met.	48	3.75	.838	4
30. I understand principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process.	48	3.73	.869	3
31. I develop strategies for implementing new or revised curricula on a district-wide basis.	49	3.98	.661	3
32. I direct the personnel operation to assure a stable yet improving and well-balanced work force.	48	4.02	.668	2
33. I monitor student achievement through feedback from the instructional evaluation program.	49	4.24	.630	2
34. I use evaluation data to redesign district staff development.	50	3.96	.807	3
35. I maintain a system of instructional improvement that seeks to upgrade the process of student learning.	49	4.24	.630	2

Survey Item	N=	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
36. I use systematic methods for monitoring new and/or existing programs on an on-going basis.	49	3.86	.677	2
37. I maintain a system for instructional change.	49	4.14	.791	3
38. I coordinate staff development programs with program evaluation and staff evaluations to facilitate instructional improvement.	49	3.96	.735	3
39. I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population.	48	4.00	.684	3
40. I provide for developmental differences within the district's personnel when implementing human resource procedures.	49	3.73	.730	3
41. I stipulate that homogeneous ability groupings within classrooms do not segregate students into racial or other inappropriate groupings.	49	3.90	1.026	4

Table 14 includes the task statements by mean scores from highest mean score to the lowest mean score. A column was added to denote the task areas each of the task statements represented, also prioritized from high to low mean score. Listed below are each of the task areas and the number of task statement in each area in the top 24 task statements in the study:

Organizing for Instruction had 8 task statements in the top 24;

Instructional Planning had 6 task statements in the top 24;

Staffing for instruction had 5 task statements in the top 24;

Human Resource Development had 3 task statements in the top 24;

Evaluating Instruction had 2 task statements in the top 24.

Table 14. Statistical Information for Survey Statements – Rank Order

Focus Statement	N=	Mean	SD	Task Area
4. I exhibit a positive attitude toward staff development.	60	4.65	.515	Human Resource Development
21. I promote the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy.	52	4.46	.609	Instructional Planning
8. I establish priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives.	60	4.42	.671	Organizing for Instruction
2. I maintain adequate staffing levels while anticipating future changes in staffing needs.	60	4.40	.694	Staffing for Instruction
23. I develop goals and objectives that will guide the district's philosophy.	53	4.38	.713	Organizing for Instruction
3. I understand instructional design.	61	4.28	.662	Organizing for Instruction
9. I keep the district's staff development and procedures current with trends in the theory of productive staff development and in-service design.	59	4.24	.678	Human Resource Development
33. I monitor student achievement through feedback from the instructional evaluation program.	49	4.24	.630	Organizing for Instruction
35. I maintain a system of instructional improvement that seeks to upgrade the process of student learning.	49	4.24	.630	Organizing for Instruction
5. I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction.	58	4.21	.614	Evaluating Instruction
11. I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.	59	4.17	.673	Instructional Planning
13. I adopt instructional methodologies facilitate the efficient delivery of the district's curriculum.	53	4.15	.744	Organizing for Instruction
17. I provide a process for selecting the most qualified candidates for each instructional position.	53	4.15	.744	Staffing for Instruction
15. I direct a summative evaluation system for personnel to assure that crucial personnel decisions are sound and legally defensible.	52	4.15	.724	Evaluating for Instruction
37. I maintain a system for instructional change.	49	4.14	.791	Instructional Planning
24. I ensure that all personnel have access to professional growth opportunities through the design of a master plan to coordinate the in-service activities of the district.	53	4.13	.761	Human Resource Development
12. I provide for a screening process that designates the most qualified applicants prior to final selection.	60	4.13	.700	Staffing for Instruction
18. I develop an instructional and resource management system that implements the district's instructional philosophy.	53	4.13	.590	Organizing for Instruction

Focus Statement	N=	Mean	SD	Task Area
7. I oversee a thorough system of recruitment procedures that lead to the identification of qualified candidates for job openings.	59	4.12	.853	Staffing for Instruction
1. I identify federal and state curriculum mandates related to the local district.	61	4.02	.866	Instructional Planning
32. I direct the personnel operation to assure a stable yet improving and well-balanced work force.	48	4.02	.668	Staffing for Instruction
6. I define local instructional priorities by relating them to state and national trends.	60	4.02	.725	Instructional Planning
16. I supervise and continuously update the district's goals and objectives to ensure that the curricular philosophy of the district is being met.	53	4.00	.855	Instructional Planning
39. I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population.	48	4.00	.684	Organizing for Instruction
31. I develop strategies for implementing new or revised curricula on a district-wide basis.	49	3.98	.661	Instructional Planning
34. I use evaluation data to redesign district staff development.	50	3.96	.807	Human Resource Development
38. I coordinate staff development programs with program evaluation and staff evaluations to facilitate instructional improvement.	49	3.96	.735	Human Resource Development
19. I design and administer staff development programs that enhance professional capabilities and overcome identified deficiencies in district personnel.	52	3.96	.685	Human Resource Development
28. I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program.	50	3.94	.793	Organizing for Instruction
27. I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents.	50	3.92	.922	Staffing for Instruction
22. I provide staff orientation and induction programs that assure new personnel the information and support needed to function in new surroundings.	53	3.91	.815	Staffing for Instruction
41. I stipulate that homogeneous ability groupings within classrooms do not segregate students into racial or other inappropriate groupings.	49	3.90	1.026	Organizing for Instruction
20. I coordinate a system of evaluation of instructional programs to provide detailed information regarding their current status and to establish a basis for determining the continuation or termination of programs.	53	3.89	.725	Evaluating Instruction
26. I provide for theory and research- based curriculum planning, development, and design procedures.	50	3.88	.799	Instructional Planning

Focus Statement	N=	Mean	SD	Task Area
25. I study information from evaluation reports to identify and prioritize recommendations for instructional improvement.	48	3.88	.733	Evaluating Instruction
36. I use systematic methods for monitoring new and/or existing programs on an on-going basis.	49	3.86	.677	Instructional Planning
14. I provide a systematic program of diagnostic evaluation for all instructional personnel.	52	3.77	.757	Human Resource Development
40. I provide for developmental differences within the district's personnel when implementing human resource procedures.	49	3.73	.730	Human Resource Development
10. I develop a formative personnel evaluation system.	59	3.75	.958	Evaluating Instruction
29. I formulate an evaluation process to determine whether the district's in-service needs are being met.	48	3.75	.838	Human Resource Development
30. I understand principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process.	48	3.73	.869	Instructional Planning

Research Question 2

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role linked to student performance as determined by the Texas Education Agency's accountability ratings?

Overall, there was statistical significance found in the relationship between the superintendents' self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role and student performance in Texas school districts as determined by the district ratings set by the Texas Education Agency based on student performance on the state assessment (TAKS). Survey participants' numbers were closely aligned. There were 28 participants from Exemplary and Recognized districts and 21 participants from Acceptable and Unacceptable districts.

There were two focus statements that showed practical significance (Kirk, 1996; Steyn, 2000) in relation to the District Rating variable. Focus Statement 6 dealt with "goals that satisfy the needs of the local community" (x^2=3.39, p<.10) at the third step. Although there was not statistical significance on question 6, a significance of 0.06 carries practical significance. Knowing the local community and being part of the community can help the superintendent bring them aboard in providing resources that impact student achievement. On Focus Statement 7 about "Systemic diagnostic evaluation for instructional personnel," there was practical significance on Block 2, Step 2 on the variable District Rating (x^2=3.09; p< .10). Human Resource Development that provides systemic support for instructional personnel can also impact the District Rating variable.

Research Question 3

Are the superintendents' perceptions of their instructional leadership role linked to the percentage of economically disadvantaged and at-risk student populations?

There was a link between the percentage of the low socioeconomic status (SES) student group and superintendents' perceptions of their instructional role. There was statistical significance found in relation to the low socioeconomic status variable in relation to the Focus Statements 7 and 9 (see Table 12). Focus Statement 7 states: "I provide a systemic program of diagnostic evaluation for instructional personnel" and was found to have statistical significance (x^2=9.73, p<.05) on the SES variable, Block 2, Step 2. Another finding of significance occurred on Focus Statement 9 concerning the "placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best

use of talents." Results showed that the variable SES had statistical significance ($x^2 = 6.49$, $p < .05$) on Block 2, Step 3. Student population groups that are economically disadvantaged bring educational needs that influence decisions for placement of personnel and evaluation that can help target the needs of individual students.

The At-Risk variable had statistical significance for three of the focus statements, the most for any of the variables (see Table 12). Significance applied to Focus Statement 2: "I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction," and Focus Statement 10: "I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program." Significance also applied to Focus Statement 11: "I understand the principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process." Focus Statement 2 is in task area Evaluating Instruction, Focus Statement 10 is in the Organizing for Instruction task area, and Focus Statement 11 is in the Instructional Planning task area.

Practical significance (Kirk, 1996; Steyn, 2000) was found in Focus Statement 12: "I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population." Focus Statement 2 is in the Organizing for Instruction task area.

There are programs in place in public schools that are geared to help the at-risk student group and may contribute this finding in the study. An At-Risk student group list is provided to teachers at the beginning of the year. The teachers document the

interventions that are used to assist students to be successful academically. The information is placed in the student's cumulative folder.

Research Question 4

Do the superintendents' self-perceptions on instructional leadership behaviors vary based on their district locale as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core Data?

There was no statistically significant relationship found between the superintendents' self-perceptions on instructional leadership behaviors and the district locale as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core Data. The factor that impacted the data was the limited number of surveys completed. Out of the 300 surveys sent out, only 49 surveys were completed. Based on the information in Table 9, there was a response rate of 16%. District locale totals were as follows:

City (Mid-size, Small) – 2 responses;

Suburb (Large, Mid-size, Small) – 10 responses;

Town (Fringe, Distant, Remote) – 16 responses;

Rural (Fringe) – 21 responses.

Research Question 5

Are the superintendents' self-perceptions on the five instructional leadership task areas (Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development, and Evaluating Instruction) identified on the Superintendent's

Instructional Leadership Survey instrument linked to the superintendents' characteristics: gender, age, ethnicity, and experience?

For the most part, the Superintendent characteristics variables were not found to significantly explain the responses to the survey questions. However, in the stepwise process on the variables of question 2 that addressed a "unified framework for improvement of instruction," the variable Age was found to significantly predict responses to survey question 2 on Block 2, Step 3 of the question 2 ($x^2=2.76$, $p< .10$). There was no practical or statistically significant relationship between the variables from the demographic information of superintendents and their self-perceptions on the five instructional leadership task areas except for the Age variable.

Focus Statements and the Nagelkerke R^2 Factor

Table 15 shows the rank order of the 12 focus statements based on the Nagelkerke R^2 factor. Regression tables show the overall variance explained by a dependent variable on the independent variables. In this study, a regression coefficient for each variable was calculated in order to assess the combined influence of all variables (Creswell, 2008). The beta (β) is a coefficient indicating the magnitude of prediction for a variable after removing the effects of all other predictors. It identifies the strength of the relationship of a predictor variable on the outcomes and enables a researcher to compare the strength of one predictor variable with the strength of the other predictors (Bring, 1994).

Table 15. Rank Order of the 12 Focus Statements Based on the Nagelkerke R^2

St. Number	Focus Statement	Nagelkerke R^2
2	I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction.	.578
6	I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.	.444
10	I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program.	.410
7	I provide a systematic program of diagnostic evaluation for all instructional personnel.	.399
12	I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population.	.394
9	I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents.	.322
8	I supervise and continuously update the district's goals and objectives to ensure that the curricular philosophy of the district is being met.	.321
3	I define local instructional priorities by relating them to state and national trends.	.284
1	I understand instructional design.	.266
11	I understand principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process.	.264
5	I keep the district's staff development and procedures current with trends in the theory of productive staff development and in-service design.	.249
4	I oversee a thorough system of recruitment procedures that lead to the identification of qualified candidates for job openings.	.098

The Nagelkerke R^2 factor, which represents the proportion of variability explained in the dependent variables, was taken into consideration on the 12 focus statements. Items were rank ordered with those closest to 1 at the top of the list. Focus Statement 2 was at the top of the list: “I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction.” In second place on the list was Focus Statement 6: “I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.” Third on the Nagelkerke R^2 list was Focus Statement 10: “I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program.” Focus statements with a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.322 or higher showed statistical significance or at least practical significance on one or more characteristics within the Organizational influence block and one in the Superintendent Characteristics block.

Summary

Employing a multiple logistic regression analysis using the stepwise process showed statistical significance with the following variables: at-risk and low SES student populations. The variables that showed practical significance were: superintendents’ age and district rating. Significance was found in the following focus statements (see Table 12) by task areas:

- Evaluating Instruction – Focus Statement 2
- Human Resource Development – Focus Statement 7
- Staffing for Instruction – Focus Statement 9
- Instructional Planning – Focus Statements 6 and 11

- Organizing for Instruction – Focus Statements 10 and 12

When comparing the 24 task statements that had a mean 4.00 or higher (see Table 14), only 8 of the 12 focus statements were part of the top 24 task statements. Only the following three focus statements were found to have statistical or practical significance: Focus Statement 2, which provides for a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction. Professional development and active support can support policy and design. Evaluation can help to ensure that organizational structures support the district's staff, students, and community.

In Focus Statement 6, the superintendent ensures that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established. A culture of trust, commitment, and collaboration can bring both the school and community to work together to achieve a culture of high academic performance for all students. Focus Statement 12 states that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population. Improving curriculum and instruction by incorporating diverse methodologies can make a difference for all students and can also make a difference in assessment outcomes.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Changes in the educational landscape have brought many changes to the role of the superintendent. Although there has been much research on the instructional leadership role of campus administrators, research on the instructional role of superintendents continues to grow. With standard-based reform and high-stakes testing, more emphasis is being placed on building capacity for instructional skills. Building capacity at the campus level can only be achieved through systemic support at the district level (Youngs & King, 2002). The role of the superintendent continues to be a challenge but a critical role to the systemic support needed.

Because it is such a central role, it is important to study what a superintendent does or can do to impact student achievement so that educators can learn from each other. Educators strive to help our students become lifelong learners, and as such, educators must also model lifelong learning. There are many indicators that strong leadership is needed for large-scale improvement and such leadership is needed in order for continued student achievement. Mounting evidence suggests that schools are most likely to succeed in districts with strong systemic guidance (Lashaway, 2002). Learning-focused leaders seek to understand environmental influences that impact teaching and learning and are willing to do what it takes to protect and buffer the learning of teachers and students (Copland & Knapp, 2006).

Clore (1991) used the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey in 1990-1991. The following information compares some of the findings from Clore's study and the current study (Table 16). Table 14 shows the top 13 statements that were selected as the most frequently emphasized by superintendents. In both studies, statements 4 and 5 were the most frequently emphasized task statement in both studies. Statement 4 reads: "I exhibit a positive attitude toward staff development," and statement 21 reads: "I promote the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy." Other statements that made the top 13 statements in both studies were 17, 8, 23, 11, 2, 35, and 5. Table 17 includes the 9 statements that made the top 13 list in both studies.

Table 16. Comparison of Two Studies

Clore's Study	Current Study
4	4
21	21
17	8
12	2
8	23
36	3
23	9
11	33
2	35
32	5
35	11
42	17
5	15

The task areas reflected by the task statements compared in the two studies include the following:

- Instructional Planning – Focus Statements 11, 35, 21
- Staffing for Instruction – Focus Statements 2, 17

- Organizing for Instruction – Focus Statements 3, 8, 23, 33
- Human Resource Development – Focus Statements 4, 9
- Evaluating Instruction – Focus Statements 5, 15

Table 17. Common Statements Most Frequently Emphasized

#	Common Statements Most Frequently Emphasized
4	I exhibit a positive attitude toward staff development.
21	I promote the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy.
17	I provide a process for selecting the most qualified candidates for each instructional position.
8	I establish priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives.
23	I develop goals and objectives that will guide the district's philosophy.
11	I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.
2	I maintain adequate staffing levels while anticipating future changes in staffing needs.
35	I maintain a system of instructional improvement that seeks to upgrade the process of student learning.
5	I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction.

Statements that appeared in the top 13 statements in this study but did not appear in the top 13 statements of Clore's study were statements 3, 5, 33, and 15. Statement 3 states: "I understand instructional design." Statement 5 states: "I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction." Statement 33 reads: "I monitor student achievement through feedback from the instructional evaluation program," and statement 15 reads: "I direct a summative evaluation system for personnel to assure that crucial personnel decisions are sound and legally defensible." Statement 3 and statement

33 are both in task area Organizing for Instruction; statements 5 and 15 are in task area Evaluating Instruction.

Three statements that appeared in the Clore study that did not in this study were statements 12, 32, and 36. Statement 12 states: “I provide for a screening process that designates the most qualified applicants prior to final selection,” and statement 32 states: “I direct the personnel operation to assure a stable yet improving and well-balanced work force.” Task statement 36 reads: “I direct the personnel operation to assure a stable yet improving and well-balanced work force.” Task statements 12 and 32 fall under the Staffing for Instruction category and statement 36 is in the Organizing for Instruction task area. There seems to be a slight move toward the focus on instruction in this study compared to the study conducted by Clore (1991). The standards and accountability era was just beginning when Clore’s study conducted. Assessment and accountability drive instruction more at the present time than it did then. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 legislation brought forth changes that shifted the focus to instruction.

Results, Summary, and Interpretation

This study used multiple logistical regression to explore the relationship between the superintendent’s self-perceptions on their instructional leadership role and variables that may significantly influence the superintendents’ perceptions. The variables were blocked for the purpose of analysis. The Organizational block included the following variables: (a) district rating that reflected student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), (b) SES that reflected the percentage of students in the economically disadvantaged student group, and (c) the district’s at-risk student group

population. A relationship was explored between those perceptions and the Superintendent Characteristics. That block included variables such as age, gender, experience in education, and ethnicity. The Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey was used in an online survey through Qualtrics.com. Superintendents rated their instructional leadership behaviors on a Likert scale that ranged from "Constant Emphasis" to "No Emphasis." Forty-nine respondents completed a survey, which was 16% of those surveyed.

The survey items most frequently emphasized covered all five task areas of the Superintendent's Instructional Leadership Survey: Instructional Planning, Staffing for Instruction, Organizing for Instruction, Human Resource Development, and Evaluating Instruction. Practical significance was found in the relationship between the superintendents' self-perceptions and two of the variables: (a) the superintendents' age and (b) the district rating. Statistical significance was found with two of the variables that impacted the superintendents' self-perceptions of their instructional leadership role: (a) the percentage of low socioeconomic student group and (b) the percentage of the at-risk student group in the district.

According to the literature reviewed in Chapter II, a high-performing district is dependent on clear and strong leadership that is rooted in a culture of trust, commitment, and collaboration that permeates all levels and all aspects of the school system (Duffy, 2004). One of the focus statements that had statistical significance and a mean above 4.00 was related to ensuring that the goals and objectives satisfy the needs of the local community. A culture of trust, commitment, and collaboration can bring the school and

community to work together to achieve a culture of high academic performance for all students. According to Kelley and Shaw (2009), educational leadership can make a difference by (a) building districts that produce learning environments in which all students can experience the highest levels of academic success and (b) developing a school community that strives to continuously improve and meet the needs of all learners.

Leithwood et al.'s (2004a) research supported a clear course of action to develop through professional development and active support to ensure that organizational structures support the learning organization. Focus Statement 2 supported a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction. Professional development and active support can support policy and design. Evaluation can help to ensure that organizational structures support the district's staff, students and community.

Instructional leaders can powerfully influence the academic success of all students. According to Bredeson and Kose (2007), instructional leaders influence district and school conditions that improve curricular, instructional, and assessment practices that ultimately positively affect student learning and assessment outcomes. Focus Statement 12 deals with how districts incorporate diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population. Improving curriculum and instruction by incorporating diverse methodologies can make a difference for all students and can also make a difference in assessment outcomes.

In the review of literature on the characteristics of effective superintendents, Copland and Knapp (2006) expressed that in the current system of accountability, meeting the needs of just some of the students is not good enough anymore. Murphy and Myers (2008) highlighted how minority student populations and the low socioeconomic status of students are factors that negatively impact schools and student achievement. For district superintendents, the response to educational needs arising from social and economic problems is only a small part of their responsibilities. Research shows that student achievement in districts where the superintendents demonstrate consistent attention and participation in decisions related to instruction and learning tends to show improvement. In this study, the variable on the percentage of the economically disadvantaged student group and the percentage of the at-risk student group showed statistical significance in the superintendents' self-perceptions of their instructional leadership. These findings support that the focus of the district instructional leader should be on all students, but especially on students who may need additional support.

Another variable that was found to influence the superintendents' self-perceptions was the district rating. Irons and Harris (2006) held that over the last two decades, political ideology has refocused educational politics from equality issues to issues relating to excellence and accountability. Policymakers have highlighted student learning and achievement outcomes through standards-based accountability that held the school districts accountable for student performance in all student groups. Standards-based accountability has emphasized student achievement, graduation rates, attendance, and other measures of student outcomes.

In the Superintendent Characteristic block that included age, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience, only the age characteristic had practical significance. However, there was nothing in the review of literature that even surmised that age played a significant part in the instructional leadership role of the superintendent. In this study, the ages of the superintendent ranged from 40s to 60s. Their success in their roles as superintendents is more dependent on what they do rather than on their age. Superintendents need basic planning and organizational skills, including time management, to coordinate the activities of the district. They support staff members in the district through encouragement, building consensus, and the effective use of interpersonal skills (McEwan, 2003). Also, with greater state and national accountability, superintendents need the characteristics to meet the complex issues that they will encounter as the district instructional leader (Hoyle et al., 2005).

The results of this study have noted the importance of the role of the instructional leader. Fundamental to the superintendents' role is their involvement in promoting relationships and policies that advance the technical core of curriculum and instruction (Morgan & Petersen, 2002). Although not all of the variables were shown to be statistically significant, the Organizational block that dealt with the accountability aspect was shown to have impact on the superintendents' self-perceptions in their role as instructional leaders. Findings from the survey did support the five different task areas of the survey that support Instruction and the Human Resource components.

According to Kennedy (2006), teacher quality directly impacts the improvement of instruction, so school districts can influence the quality of teaching by improving

hiring practices and providing ongoing professional development. Borko (2004) also contended that professional development for teachers is an essential component to improving our schools. Blasé and Blasé (1998) found that instructional leaders promote teaching and learning through a blend of professional development and curriculum development. Research findings suggest that it is imperative that superintendents devote specific time to focus on instruction, curriculum, and assessment practices. They must involve stakeholders to collaboratively focus on the instruction goals in order to meet the learning needs of all students. As a result of this study, instructional leadership should be given much consideration in the selection of superintendents. Also, superintendent preparation programs can use data from the study to better prepare individuals to serve in the capacity of the district instructional leader.

Future Research

Further study could be done on the role and impact of the superintendent as instructional leader. A mixed-method approach would provide a more in-depth look at relationships and how superintendents' perceptions translate into practice. A mixed-method approach of both qualitative and quantitative research would not only highlight current changes but could provide the "how" of what is working. Qualitative research data would be helpful for those starting in the role of the superintendent and those aspiring to become superintendents.

Another study could take a more in-depth look at the superintendents' role for individuals who became a district leader when the role was a more traditional, managerial role. Their leadership style may be a reflection on when they were trained

and who trained them. Future research could study how superintendents learn and adapt in their roles as changes, such as standards and accountability come about. Data of the more traditional superintendents could be compared to the data of those who are relatively new in the position.

Although some differences in the results between this study and Clore's (1991) study were already noted, Clore's study could be replicated to find the extent of changes that have occurred through this new standards and accountability era. Since information from this survey did not produce enough data to cement the impact of district locale on the superintendents' self-perceptions, perhaps another study could find the key that supports the acquisition of that pertinent data. Perhaps the fact that there was more response from the small town, rural areas was telling enough on the time constraints of those in more urban areas. Other studies may be able to make that determination.

Self-reported perceptions on instructional leadership behaviors were limiting to the study. Future studies could employ a method that could study if the self-reported perceptions match the responses of others that follow the superintendents' instructional leadership.

REFERENCES

Andrews, R., & Soder, R. (1987). Principal instructional leadership and school achievement. *Instructional Leadership, 44*, 9-11.

Agresti, A., & Finlay, B. (1986). *Statistical methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). London, England: Collier Macmillan.

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Bickel, W. E. (1983). Effective schools: Knowledge, dissemination, inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 12*(4), 3-5.

Birman, B. F., Desimone, L., Garet, M. S., & Porter, A. C. (2000). Designing professional development that works. *Educational Leadership, 57*(8), 28-33.

Bjork, L. G. (2000). Professional preparation and training. In T. Glass, L. Bjork, & C. Brunner (Eds.), *The study of the American school superintendency, 2000* (pp. 127-166). Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Bjork, L. G., & Kowalski, T. J. (2005). *Contemporary superintendent.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Blanchard, K., Zigarmi, P., & Zigarmi, D. (1985). *Leadership and the one-minute manager: Increasing effectiveness through situational leadership.* New York, NY: Morrow.

Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (1998). *Instructional leadership: How really good principals promote teaching and learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (2002). The micropolitics of instructional supervision: A call to research. *Education Administration Quarterly, 38,* 6-44.

Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher, 33*(8), 3-15. Retrieved from http://www.er.aera.net

Borko, H., & Putnam, R. (1996). Learning to teach. In D. Berliner & R. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 673-708). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Boyter, G. (1988). *Superintendent's instructional leadership survey: A data collection instrument for research.* Austin, TX: The University of Texas, Department of Educational Administration.

Bredeson, P. V., & Kose, B. W. (2007). Responding to the education reform agenda: A study of school superintendents' instructional leadership. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 15*(5). Retrieved from http://www.epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v15n5/

Bridges, E. M. (1982). Research on the school administrator: The state of the art, 1967-1980. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*(3), 12-33.

Bring, J. (1994). How to standardize regression coefficients. *American Statistician, 48*(3), 209-213.

Callahan, R. E. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency: A study of the social forces that have shaped the administration of public schools.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Champagne, R. A. (2008). *The impact of student mobility on Texas public school accountability ratings.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Tarleton State University, Fort Worth, TX.

Clore, W. P. (1991). *The relationship of superintendent instructional leadership behavior and school district demographics to student achievement*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Texas, Austin, TX.

Coleman, J. S., Sampbell, E. O., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfeld, F. D., & York, R. L. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity.* Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Copland, M. A., & Knapp, M. S. (2006). *Connecting leadership with learning*. Washington, DC: Association of Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Upper Saddle Creek, NJ: Pearson Education.

Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psycholetrica, 16,* 297-334.

Cuban, L. (1983). Effective schools: A friendly but cautionary note. *Phi Delta Kappan, 64,* 695-696.

Cuban, L. (1984a). *How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms*. New York, NY: Longman.

Cuban, L. (1984b). Transforming the frog into a prince: Effective schools research, policy, and practice at the district level. *Harvard Educational Review, 54*(2), 129-150.

Cuban, L. (2001). *How can I fix it?* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Davidson, F. D. (2005). *Superintendent and principal perceptions of superintendent instructional leadership practices in improving school districts*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona, Department of Educational Leadership.

Duffy, F. M. (2004). *Courage, passion, and vision: A guide to leading systemic school improvement*. Washington, DC: American Association of School Administrators.

Elmore, R. F. (1999). Building a new structure for school leadership. *American Educator, 23*(4), 6-13.

Fullan, M. (2003). *Change forces with a vengeance.* New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Fusarelli, L. D. (2002). Tightly coupled policy in loosely coupled systems: Institutional capacity and organizational change. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(6), 561-575.

Glasman, N. S., & Heck, R. H. (1992). The changing leadership role of the principal: Implications for principal assessment. *Peabody Journal of Education, 68*(1), 5-24.

Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2001). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Guarino, C. M., Santibanez, L., & Daley, G. A. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research, 72*(2), 173-208. Retrieved from http://www.rer.aera.net

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 33*(3), 329-351.

Harris, A. (2005). Leading from the chalk-face: An overview of school leadership. *Leadership, 1*, 73-87.

Heneman, H. G., III., & Milanowski, A. T. (2004). Alignment of human resource practices and teacher performance competency. *Peabody Journal of Education, 79*(4), 108-125.

Houston, P. (2001). Superintendents for the 21st century: It's not just a job, it's a calling. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(6), 429-433.

Hoyle, J., Bjork, L., Collier, V., & Glass, T. (2005). *The superintendent as CEO*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Irons, E. J., & Harris, S. (2006). *The challenges of No Child Left Behind: Understanding the issues of excellence, accountability, and choice*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Rowman & Littlefield Education. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED493734)

Kedzior, M., & Fifield, S. (2004). Teacher professional development. *Education Policy Brief* (Vol. 15). Newark, DE: University of Delaware, Education Research and Development Center.

Keedy, J. L., & Björk, L. G. (2002). Superintendents and local boards and the potential for community polarization: The call for use of political strategist skills. In B. S. Cooper & L. D. Fusarelli (Eds.), *The promises and perils facing today's school superintendent* (pp. 103-128). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Kelley, C. J., & Shaw, J. J. (2009). *Learning first! A school leader's guide to closing achievement gaps.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, Sage Publications.

Kennedy, M. (2006). From teacher quality to quality teaching. *Educational Leadership, 63*(6), 14-19.

Kirk, R. E. (1996). Practical significance: A concept whose time has come. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 56*(5), 746-759. Retrieved from http://www.epm.sagepub.com

Kowalski, T. J. (2001). The future of local school governance: Implications for board members and superintendents. In C. Brunner & L. G. Björk (Eds.), *The new superintendency* (pp. 183-201). Oxford, UK: JAI, Elsevier Science.

Kowalski, T. J. (2005). Evolution of the school district superintendent. In L. G. Björk & T. J. Kowalski (Eds.), *The contemporary superintendent: Preparation, practice and development* (pp. 1-18). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kowalski, T. J. (2006). *The school superintendent: Theory, practice and cases.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lashaway, L. (2002). The superintendent in an age of accountability. *ERIC Digest, 161*, 1-6.

Lawton, S. B., Scane, J., & Wang, S. (1995). Toward improving the structures for school system leadership. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), *Effective school district leadership* (pp. 281-313). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Leithwood, K. (1995). *Effective school district leadership: Transforming politics into education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: How successful leaders transform low-performing schools*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributions of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 496-528.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., Earl, L., Watson, N., & Fullan, M. (2004a). Strategic leadership on a large scale: The case of England's national literacy and numeracy strategies. *Journal of School Management and Leadership, 24*(1), 57-79.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004b). *How leadership influences student learning*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mazzeo, C. (2001). Frameworks of state: Assessment policy in historical perspective. *Teachers College Record, 103*(3), 367-397.

McEwan, E. K. (2003). *Seven steps to effective instructional leadership.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

McIntire, S. A., & Miller, L. A. (2000). *Foundations of psychological testing*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Morgan, C. L., & Petersen, G. J. (2002). The role of the district superintendent in leading academically successful school districts. In B. S. Cooper & L. D. Fusarelli (Eds.), *The promises and perils facing today's school superintendent* (pp. 175-196). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Murphy, J. T. (1991). Superintendents as saviors: From the Terminator to Pogo. *Phi Delta Kappa, 72*(7), 507-513.

Murphy, J. T. (1995). The knowledge base in school administration: Historical footings and emerging trends. In R. Donmoyer, M. Imber, & J. J. Scheurich (Eds.), *Educational administration: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 62-68). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Murphy, J. T., & Hallinger, P. (1998). Characteristics of instructionally effective school districts. *Journal of Educational Research, 81,* 175-181.

Murphy, J. T., & Meyers, C. V. (2008). *Turning around failing schools: Leadership lessons from the organizational sciences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). (n.d.). *What is NAEP?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (n.d.). *Welcome to NCES*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www.nces.ed.gov/

National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html

Nelson, S. W., McGhee, M. W., Meno, L. R., & Slater, C. L. (2007). Fulfilling the promise of educational accountability. *Phi Delta Kappan, 88*, 702-709.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425. (2002).

O'Day, J. A. (2002). Complexity, accountability, and school improvement. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(3), 293-329.

Owens, R. G. (2004). *Organizational behavior in education: Adaptive leadership and school reform*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Petersen, G. J. (1999). Demonstrated actions of instructional leaders: An examination of five California superintendents. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 7*(18). Retrieved from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n18.html

Petersen, G. J. (2002). Singing the same tune: Principals' and school board members' perceptions of the superintendent's role as instructional leader. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(2), 158-171.

Peterson, K. D. (1984). Mechanisms of administrative control over managers in educational organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 29*, 573-597.

Pitner, N. J., & Ogawa, R. T. (1981). Organizational leadership: The case of the school superintendent. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 17*(2), 45-65.

Purkey, S. C., & Smith, M. S. (1985). School reform: The district policy implications of effective schools literature. *Elementary School Journal, 85*(3), 353-389.

Ravitch, D. (2002). Testing and accountability, historically considered. In W. Evers & H. Walberg (Eds.), *School accountability: An assessment by the Koret task force* (pp. 9-21). Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.

Schelechty, P. (2001). *Inventing better schools: An action plan for education reform.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Scheurich, J. J., & Skrla, L. (2003). *Leadership for equity and excellence: Creating high-achievement classrooms, schools, and districts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Seashore-Louis, K. (2006). Change over time? An introduction? A reflection? *Educational Administration Quarterly, 2*(1), 165-173. Retrieved from http://www.eaq.sagepub.com

Sergiovanni, T. J. (2001). *Leadership: What's in it for schools?* New York, NY: Falmer.

Seyfarth, J. T. (1996). *Personnel management for effective schools* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Johnson, J. F., & Koschoreck, J. W. (2001). Accountability for equity: Can state policy leverage social justice? *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 4*, 237-260.

Smith, W. F., & Andrews, R. L. (1989). *Instructional leadership: How principals make a difference.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Spillane, J. P., & Camburn, E. (2006, April 7-11). *The practice of leading and managing: The distribution of responsibility for leadership and management in the schoolhouse.* Draft paper for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Spring, J. (2005). *Conflict of interests: The politics of American education*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Steyn, H. S. (2000). Practical significance of the difference in means. *Journal of Industrial Psychology, 26*(3), 1-3.

Tannenbaum, R., Weschler, I. R., & Massarik, F. (1961). *Leadership and organization*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Texas Education Agency. (2008a). *Assessment and testing*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/assessment.html

Texas Education Agency. (2008b). *Division of curriculum*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/

Texas Education Agency. (2008c). *Glossary for the Academic Excellence Indicator System*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2008/glossary.html

Texas Education Agency. (2008d). *PEIMS division.* Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/0607

Texas Education Agency. (2008e). *Reliability*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/techdig08/Chapter14_Reliability.pdf

Texas Education Agency. (2008f). *Validity*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/techdig08/Chapter15_Validity.pdf

Texas Education Agency. (2010). *District directory*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/

Torres, M. S. (2003). *The impact of demographics and the political environment of the implementation and interpretation of fourth amendment law in schools.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg, PA.

Tyrack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward Utopia: A century of public school reform.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). (2010). *Common core data*. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov

Watts, G. W. (1992). *The role of the superintendent in instructional leadership*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Wirt, F. M. (1990). *The missing link in instructional leadership: The superintendent, conflict, and maintenance*. Urbana, IL: Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED327945)

Youngs, P., & King, M. B. (2002). Principal leadership for professional development to build school capacity. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38*, 643-670.

APPENDIX A

SUPERINTENDENT'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

SUPERINTENDENT'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Developed by
Gwyn Boyter
for the
Meadows Executive Leadership Program

A Data Collection Instrument for Research
Conducted by
Paul Clore
Cooperative Superintendency Program

Department of
Educational Administration, EDB 310
Austin, Texas 78712-1291

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to test hypotheses about the instructional leadership behavior exhibited by superintendents in Texas school districts. The study will produce data that will be used to describe instructional leadership behaviors of superintendents and the relationship of the behavior to student performance on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS). In addition, the study will explore the relationships between superintendent instructional leadership behavior, student performance, and school district demographics.

SUPERINTENDENT'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Confidentiality: Your answers to this survey will always be combined with the answers of other superintendents for research purposes and will be held in strict confidence. Reports on this research will provide only results by groups. To maintain confidentiality, a unique number has been assigned to each district. That number is noted on the last page of the survey. The code sheet for these numbers will be destroyed upon completion of the research project.

Copy of Results: If you would like a copy of the summary of the research findings, please indicate below:

_____ Send me a copy of the summary of the research findings.

SECTION I:
For each task listed, place a number from the scale noted below which most accurately reflects your degree of emphasis for that task. For the purpose of this survey, emphasis is defined as special consideration, stress or insistence placed on something.
The numbers on the emphasis scale are representative of the following:

5 . . . Constant Emphasis
4 . . . Frequent Emphasis
3 . . . Average Emphasis
2 . . . Infrequent Emphasis
1 . . . No Emphasis

The scale is also noted throughout the instrument for your convenience. Completing this questionnaire should take less than 30 minutes. Thank you for this time.

5 . . . Constant Emphasis
4 . . . Frequent Emphasis
3 . . . Average Emphasis
2 . . . Infrequent Emphasis
1 . . . No Emphasis

For each task statement, indicate the degree of emphasis which you place on the accomplishment of that task in the day-to-day conduct of your job.

1. I identify federal and state curriculum mandates related to the local district. _____
2. I maintain adequate staffing levels while anticipating future changes in staffing needs. _____
3. I understand instructional design. _____
4. I exhibit a positive attitude toward staff development. _____

5. I structure and apply a unified framework that provides policy and design for program and personnel evaluation directed toward improvement of instruction. _____
6. I define local instructional priorities by relating them to state and national trends. _____
7. I oversee a thorough system of recruitment procedures that lead to the identification of qualified candidates for job openings. _____
8. I establish priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives. _____
9. I keep the district's staff development and procedures current with trends in the theory of productive staff development and in-service design. _____
10. I develop a formative personnel evaluation system. _____
11. I ensure that goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established. _____
12. I provide for a screening process that designates the most qualified applicants prior to final selection. _____
13. I adopt instructional methodologies that facilitate the efficient delivery of the district's curriculum. _____
14. I provide a systematic program of diagnostic evaluation for all instructional personnel. _____
15. I direct a summative evaluation system for personnel to assure that crucial personnel decisions are sound and legally defensible. _____
16. I supervise and continuously update the district's goals and objectives to ensure that the curricular philosophy of the district is being met. _____
17. I provide a process for selecting the most qualified candidates for each instructional position. _____
18. I develop an instructional and resource management system that implements the district's instructional philosophy. _____

19. I design and administer staff development programs that enhance professional capabilities and overcome identified deficiencies in district personnel. _____
20. I coordinate a system of evaluation of instructional programs to provide detailed information regarding their current status and to establish a basis for determining the continuation or termination of programs. _____
21. I promote the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy. _____
22. I provide staff orientation and induction programs that assure new personnel the information and support needed to function in new surroundings. _____
23. I develop goals and objectives that will guide the district's philosophy. _____
24. I ensure that all personnel have access to professional growth opportunities through the design of a master plan to coordinate the in-service activities of the district. _____
25. I study information from evaluation reports to identify and prioritize recommendations for instructional improvement. _____
26. I provide for theory and research-based curriculum planning, development, and design procedures. _____
27. I implement a placement system that assigns and reassigns personnel in positions that make the best use of talents. _____
28. I provide an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program. _____
29. I formulate an evaluation process to determine whether the district's in-service needs are being met. _____

30. I understand principles of drop-out prevention, and ensure that they are incorporated into the curriculum development process. _____
31. I develop strategies for implementing new or revised curricula on a district- wide basis. _____
32. I direct the personnel operation to assure assure a stable yet improving and well-balanced workforce. _____
33. I monitor student achievement through feedback from the instructional evaluation program. _____
34. I use evaluation data to redesign district staff development. _____
35. I ensure that the curricular needs of all of all student populations are met in the district. _____
36. I maintain a system of instructional improvement that seeks to upgrade the process of student learning. _____
37. I use systematic methods for monitoring new and/or existing programs on an ongoing basis. _____
38. I maintain a system for instructional change. _____
39. I coordinate staff development programs with program evaluation and staff evaluations to facilitate instructional improvement. _____
40. I ensure that the district incorporates varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multi-racial student population. _____
41. I provide for developmental differences within the district's personnel when implementing human resource procedures. _____
42. I stipulate that homogeneous ability groupings within classrooms do not segregate students into racial or other inappropriate groupings. _____

SECTION II:

Please provide the following demographic information which is essential to the study.

A. Age _____
B. Gender _____Male _____Female
C. Ethnicity _____White _____Hispanic _____Black _____Other
D. Years in the education profession at the end of this school year _____
E. Years of experience as a classroom teacher _____
F. Years of experience as a building principal _____
G. Years of experience as an administrator in a central office position other than superintendent _____
H. Years of experience as a superintendent at the end of this school year _____
I. Highest degree earned _____
J. Area of major for highest degree attained
_____
_____
K. Areas of major for bachelor's degree (If more than one major, please indicate both areas and note the primary with a "1" and the secondary major with a "2".)
   1. _____
   2. _____
L. Date assumed current position _____(Month and Year)
M. Administrative certificates (Please check all that apply.)
_____supervisor _____mid-management
_____principal _____superintendent
N. Please attach any comments you may have.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND SUPPORT

APPENDIX B

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM

Informed consent for distribution of web surveys will be sent via e-mail to individual superintendents. Completed surveys will acknowledge consent.

Project Title: *Superintendents Perceptions Toward Their Current Role as Instructional Leaders*

Principal Investigator: Liodolee (Lolly) Garcia

Date: January 31, 2012

Dear District Superintendent:

As school districts across the state continue to search for new ways to meet the increasing demands of state and federal accountability measures, research continues on the role of the superintendent as the instructional leader. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the importance of the instructional leadership behaviors as perceived by superintendents and how they impact student achievement.

As a current researcher interested in learning how superintendents can be supported in their role as the district instructional leader and aspiring superintendents can be better prepared to meet the learning needs of all students, I am turning to you, as district instructional leaders, for assistance in determining how your perceptions are impacted by different variables.

In order to participate in the study, you would complete the attached Superintendent Instructional Leader web survey composed of 42 items and demographic information designed to evaluate the degree of emphasis on which you are able to place on the accomplishment of that task in the day-to-day operations of your job. This survey is brief and should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete. Once submitted, the results from the superintendent surveys will be sent back to the researcher anonymously via Qualtrics software. The Qualtrics system used to administer the surveys has passed the highest level of scrutiny from human subjects and maintains data behind a firewall and all data is accessed only by the owner of the survey who must provide password and user identification.

Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to discontinue participation in the study at any time prior to clicking the “Submit” button upon completion of the survey. All surveys will be kept anonymous. The only persons who will have access to data are the investigators named in this letter. No individual school or superintendent will be identified in this study. All data obtained in this study will be reported as school level group data.

We want to encourage the participation of as many superintendents as possible so you will be receiving a reminder e-mail approximately 10 days after you receive this initial consent letter and attached survey.

You may contact us with any questions at 254.702.3788 or by email (liodolee-salinas-garcia@neo.tamu.edu; mstorres@neo.tamu.edu; jamadsen@tamu.edu). Thank you for considering participation in this study. Though the surveys are voluntary, it is imperative for superintendents to voice opinions regarding their perceptions as the instructional leader in their individual schools district.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 979.458.4067 or by email to irb@tamu.edu.

Participants who are interested in receiving a summary of the findings may leave an electronic mailing address where the principal investigator can send the summary.

Sincerely,
Liodolee (Lolly) Garcia,
Principal Investigator
Principal, Nolan Middle School
Killeen ISD

Committee Co-Chairs:

Jean Madsen, Ph.D.
Professor
Texas A&M University
jamadsen@tamu.edu
979-862-2421

Mario S. Torres Jr., Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Program Chair
Texas A&M University
mstorres@neo.tamu.edu
979-458-3016

Texas A&M University IRB Approval
IRB Exempt
IRB Protocol # 2011-0871 Authorized by: GW

VITA

Liodolee Salinas Garcia
Principal, Nolan Middle School
Killeen Independent School District
505 E. Jasper Road
Killeen, Texas 76541
liodolee.garcia@killeenisd.org

Lolly Garcia has been serving the Killeen Independent School since 1992. Beginning her employment as a public school teacher, she has performed other duties including campus instructional specialist, assistant principal, and elementary principal. She currently serves as a middle school principal. She has been employed in school administration since January 1999. Liodolee Garcia's educational experiences include:

August 2012	Doctor of Philosophy Educational Administration Texas A&M University College Station, Texas
December 2004	Superintendent Certification Texas A&M University College Station, Texas
August 1997	Master of Education Educational Administration Mid-Management Certification Tarleton State University Stephenville, Texas
May 1988	Bachelor of Science Education Texas A&I University Kingsville, Texas

This dissertation was typed and edited by Marilyn M. Oliva at Action Ink, Inc.