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SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER PERCEPTIONS REGARDING PREFERRED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA

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**SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER PERCEPTIONS
REGARDING PREFERRED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS FOR
SUPERINTENDENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA**

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Doctor of Education
in
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ABSTRACT

Superintendent and Board of Education Member Perceptions Regarding Preferred Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of West Virginia school superintendents and West Virginia district school board of education members regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia. A review of the literature provided a list of 11 leadership behaviors: (a) leadership for vision and organizational culture; (b) leadership for policy and governance; (c) leadership for organizational management; (d) leadership for the instructional program; (e) leadership for system improvement; (f) leadership for budgeting and finance; (g) leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; (h) leadership that demonstrates effective communication; (i) leadership for improving community relations; (j) leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and (k) leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior.

The survey instrument used in this study, the *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia*, consisted of 26 questions in four parts. Participants of this study consisted of current public school district superintendents and members of boards of education in West Virginia. Data were generated regarding the respondent's perceptions of leadership behaviors for superintendents.

Major findings of this study suggest that, while the 11 leadership behaviors identified in this study are seen as important to be an effective superintendent in West Virginia, the three leadership behaviors of communication, vision, and ethics were viewed by both superintendents and board of education members as essential to the success of superintendents in West Virginia, regardless of district characteristics. Superintendents should devote time and attention to establishing a clear and guiding vision for the school district, establishing effective and ongoing communication systems regarding their role in leading the district, and in being a model for moral and ethical decision-making in leading the school district.

Superintendents participating in this study view system improvement, community relations and political acuity significantly more important than do board of education members. These three areas are increasing in importance due to the increased accountability for student performance and resulting stakeholder concern and involvement in the operation of the school district. Certification and training programs for current and aspiring superintendents should prepare candidates for leading system improvement, improving community involvement and relations and developing political acuity.

Participants in this study perceive that effective superintendents are able to create and build strong central office leadership teams. As the responsibilities of leading a school system become increasingly complex, it is essential for superintendents to develop the collaborative leadership skills needed to create central office leadership teams that model effective distributive leadership. Finally, participants in this study perceive that it is essential for superintendents to develop and maintain relationships of trust with board of education members.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, wife and children for their support of my educational journey. Their encouragement and support inspired me to reach new levels of understanding and achievement. I was fortunate to grow up in a home where life-long education was valued and expected. The dedication demonstrated by my parents, Rush and Ruby Butcher, in overcoming great obstacles to reach their educational goals fueled my desire to continue my own education. The sacrifice and support of my wife, Pam, and my children Erin, Andrew, and Samuel enabled the completion of this step in my journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Since the establishment of public education as early as 1640, both the importance of education and the size of school districts have grown (Kowalski, 2013). Effective leadership, provided by superintendents, assures the economic, political, and democratic success of our country (Callan & Levinson, 2011). Because public education systems have grown to be complex organizations, leadership is important (Wilson, 2006). Today, superintendents must be experts in curriculum and instruction, human resource management, financial planning, and visionary leadership (Callan & Levinson, 2011; Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006; Dipola & Stronge, 2003; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2006; Owings & Kaplan, 2006; Wilmore, 2008; Young, 2008). Dipola and Stronge (2003) stated that the role of the contemporary superintendent is a combination of “strategic planner, leader, cheerleader, organizational manager, fiscal officer, diplomat, politician, and other equally important roles” (p. 2). Wilson (2006) stated that the success of public school systems is dependent on superintendents’ leadership skills as related to the expectations of local boards of education. In addition, the role of superintendent connects schools to the communities and school governing boards they serve (Glass, 2007). Dipola and Stronge (2003) noted that, “In essence, the superintendent personifies the aspirations and responsibilities of the entire organization” (p. 2). Therefore, the success of the superintendent and the success of the school system are inextricably linked.

Today, superintendents work in a society that has seen rapidly changing technological advances resulting in continuous communication (Callan & Levinson,

2011). Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Toung and Ellerson (2011) found that in the last 20 years, “American schools have seen extraordinary political, societal, economic, and demographic changes that have played a significant role in reshaping public education” (p. 117). In addition, superintendents must address the needs for additional resources, greater staff demands, and increasing student needs. They face increased state and national accountability and a more diverse student population. Not only must they understand the complexity of the work, they must be willing to embrace great challenges.

Many competent school administrators are not successful superintendents because they fail to have proper preparation for the position and lack the leadership behaviors needed to be an effective superintendent (Callan & Levinson, 2011). Due to the complexity of the work and the loneliness of the position, many superintendents do not make it past their second year. In order to guide district board of education members in the selection and evaluation of effective superintendents and educate aspiring superintendents, this study examines superintendents’ and board of education members’ perceptions regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia.

Background

History of the Superintendency

Kowalski (2006) stated that it would be difficult to understand the scope of the modern superintendency unless the history of the position is understood. Although the first public schools in America were established before 1640, the role of the superintendent was not created until the 1800s (Griffiths, 1966). The first superintendents were appointed in Buffalo, New York, and Louisville, Kentucky (Grieder, Pierce &

Jordan, 1969). By 1850, 13 school districts had established the position of superintendent. While most major cities had established the position by 1890, the superintendency was not widely supported (Griffiths, 1966). For example, many local school boards felt that the position was not necessary, while other boards felt that creating such a position would establish a political threat to their own power to control education. As the position struggled to find definition, some school districts discontinued the role and then later reestablished the position (Knezevich, 1984). This, in part, was due to the fact that local politicians were distrustful of independent-thinking superintendents who used professionalism as a basis for resisting educational decisions based on politics (Kowalski, 2004).

Beginning in the late 1800s, some education scholars recognized that the position of superintendent could be influential (Kowalski, 2006). Educational leader and physician Joseph Rice (1892) stated that “the importance of the position cannot be overestimated” (p. 11). President of Western Reserve University Charles Thwing (1898) wrote that superintendents were “rendering a service to the people far greater than that which any other citizen was rendering” (p. 30).

As one-room schools were replaced by the graded school system within local school districts, superintendents were employed to create and implement a uniform curriculum (Brubacher, 1966). In some cases, local boards employed clerks to assist them with operational tasks and the role of superintendent evolved from these clerk positions (Brunner, Grogan, & Bjork, 2002). During the first decade of the 1900s, community leaders restricted the role of superintendents to menial tasks because school boards had little faith in the ability of superintendents to provide school leadership and because local

boards felt that the role of superintendent was one of servant, not leader (Knezevich, 1984).

During the early 1900s, there was no formal preparation training for superintendents. In the absence of any identified qualifications or training program for the superintendency, it appears that the appointment of superintendents was based on varied criteria. Some were employed because they merely looked like leaders, some because they had been effective teachers, and others because of their political connection. Few were selected because of their training or demonstrated managerial skill (Knezevich, 2003).

By 1910, the role of the superintendent began to change (Kowalski, 2006). The Industrial Revolution created an emphasis on management skills. As school districts increased in size, there was a greater need to standardize curriculum and organizational practices. As a result, the role of superintendent became both formalized and standardized. A continuing quest toward professionalism facilitated the development of educational administration as a unique specialization and further separated the role of the superintendent from those of principals and teachers.

By the 1930s, school systems began to follow more scientific management models and superintendents were hired to ensure the overall well-being of the district (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Knezevich (1984) noted that school budgets continued to grow, while local revenues failed to keep pace, placing greater demands on superintendents. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, school reformers began to demand greater accountability and firing superintendents made the daily news. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983)

further increased accountability by stating that the security of the United States was threatened by an under-performing education system. The standards movement of the 1990s made accountability in education more specific and placed pressure on superintendents to become experts in the use of test results to guide decisions regarding district goals (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Regardless of school district size, current superintendent job descriptions verify that the position is both demanding and complex (Kowalski, 2006). The size and nature of the school district, however, can have an effect on the specific duties and responsibilities of the superintendent. For example, in large districts, assistant or associate superintendents can have responsibility for the administration of some managerial or educational leadership duties. Some school boards may be aware of specific areas of district need such as fiscal management or communication. Districts with small enrollments seek generalists who have a broad range of knowledge and skills. Today, superintendents are expected to maintain a strong dialogue with the broader community, while managing the operations of the school district. For this reason, many districts are expressing the need for leaders first and managers second. State and federal school reform efforts have placed additional duties upon contemporary superintendents (Kowalski, 2006). Increased federal and state accountability measures for district performance have forced present-day superintendents to be experts in continuous system improvement.

The role and responsibilities for superintendents have changed since the first superintendents began their work. Today, those roles and responsibilities of superintendent are defined through the establishment of professional standards, the

discourse of practitioners in the field, and through research conducted on the superintendency. The leadership behaviors selected for this study were developed through a review of the literature including professional standards and current research.

Professional Preparation

By the early 1980s, most states had established state licensing or certification standards for superintendents (Kowalski, 2006). States developed laws and policies that required school administrators to complete a graduate program of study in order to be employed as a district superintendent. More than 500 colleges and universities now offer courses in education administration, although many do not actually prepare superintendents. According to Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000), most superintendent preparation programs include courses in finance, personnel, theory, school law, and community relations. In 2011, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) approved the Educational Administration Constituent Council (ELCC) standards for the preparation of district administrators (NCATE, 2011). The ELCC standards include areas of leadership for vision and goals, leadership for curriculum and instruction, leadership for organizational management, leadership to develop community collaboration, moral and ethical leadership, and political and cultural leadership. The ELCC standards also promote the importance of an educational leadership internship in the training of district-level education leaders.

According to the American School Superintendent 2010 Decennial Study (Kowalski et al, 2011), 95% percent of superintendents held a valid state license or endorsement and 85% percent had completed an accredited university preparation program. West Virginia State Board of Education policy requires completion of a

graduate-level certification program in order to obtain the professional administration certificate needed to be employed as a superintendent. West Virginia State Board of Education (WVBE) Policy 5202, §4.24 (p. 4) defines the title of County Superintendent as, “the chief administrative officer of a board of education.” WVBE Policy 5202 states that, in addition to meeting other qualifications, a Professional Administrative Certificate may be issued to a person who has completed the minimum degree acquired through an accredited institution of higher education which includes completion of a graduate-level certification program, a master’s degree, and completion of the Evaluation Leadership Institute in evaluation skills.

Problem Statement

Considering the current roles and responsibilities of West Virginia superintendents, this research is being conducted to study the perceptions of superintendents and local board of education members regarding effective leadership behaviors in order to inform the recruitment, training, preparation, employment, and evaluation of superintendents.

From the time that the first superintendents were employed in the field of education until now, the job of being a superintendent has changed (Kowalski, 2006); the roles and responsibilities of being a superintendent have changed (Berman, 2005; Wilmore, 2008); the system of financing education has changed (Murphy, 2002); the number and diversity of students has changed (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Murphy, 2002); school curricula have changed (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005); the governance structure of American education has changed (Kowalski, 2006, Murphy, 2002); and the level of accountability placed on schools

systems has changed (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005; Cambron-McCabe, Coleman, 2003; Cunningham, Harvey & Koff, 2005; Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000, Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Murphy, 2002). In addition, superintendents have been faced with waves of successive reform efforts (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Murphy, 2002).

In spite of the challenges that contemporary superintendents face, however, Kowalski (2006) found that “thousands of practitioners have been highly successful and view this administrative role as being challenging, gratifying, and personally rewarding” (p. 2). The problem is that too many superintendents appear to be unable to shape the position into a professionally gratifying and personally challenging one, forcing many districts into an almost perpetual job search situation. Grissom and Andersen (2012), in fact, report that of 215 superintendents they studied beginning in 2006, 45% exited the position within three years. If – as was established in the literature more than two decades ago – one of the most often cited problems faced by superintendents is the stress of interacting with school board members (Hall & Difford, 1992), it is necessary to discern whether the role expectations held by board members and superintendents concerning the superintendent’s leadership behaviors are congruent. This study examined that issue.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors?

2. What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors when compared by district and/or respondent characteristics?

Instrumentation

This study used a quantitative approach to determine what differences if any exist between superintendent and district board member perceptions concerning the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents. The survey used in this study was adapted from the instrument developed by Wilson (2006) and also used by Groholski (2009). Content for the survey was revised by the author based on a comprehensive review of the literature. The draft survey was reviewed by a committee of experts including former district board of education members, current professors of educational leadership preparation programs, former district superintendents, and other leaders in the field of education. The survey was revised based on the review and recommendations of the committee of experts.

Operational Definitions

3. District school board - The district school board of education is defined as the official body established in state code and elected by the citizens of a school district to serve as the governing body of a local school district.
4. District school board member - A member of a district school board elected by the citizens to govern the functions and operations of a local school district.
5. Education level - Education level is defined as the highest level of education attainment (i.e., high school graduate, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate degree).

6. School district - A school district in West Virginia is defined as the single district of public schools located within a given county. There are 55 county school districts in West Virginia.
7. State Board policy - State board policy is defined as any policy established by vote of the West Virginia State Board of Education. State Board policy holds the legal standing of state code.
8. State code - The state code is defined as the statutes approved by the West Virginia Legislature and signed by the Governor.
9. Superintendent - The superintendent is defined as the chief executive of a school district employed by a district board of education or state board of education for the purpose of managing and leading the day-to-day operations of a school district.
10. Years of experience, board of education member - Years of experience for a district board of education member are the total number of years served as member of a district board of education.
11. Years of experience, superintendent - Years of experience for superintendent are the total number of years employed in the position of superintendent of a West Virginia public school district.

Significance

There is limited research on the essential leadership behaviors needed to be an effective superintendent (Wilson, 2006). Continued research on the subject of superintendent and district member perceptions regarding leadership behaviors for superintendents can clarify expectations for both superintendents and district board of

education members as future superintendent vacancies are filled. A more clearly defined set of needed leadership behaviors for superintendents can also guide higher education preparation programs as they seek to prepare future superintendents. Finally, educators who aspire to the superintendency can better prepare themselves for the expected leadership behaviors needed to be effective. The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of superintendents and district board of education members in West Virginia regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents.

Methods

The non-experimental study was descriptive in nature, examining the perceptions of district superintendents and members of district boards of education. Participants responded to the *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia* and indicate their perceptions of effective leadership behaviors for superintendents.

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of current public school district superintendents and district board of education members in West Virginia. Participants were asked to participate voluntarily. Data were obtained through a self-administered survey mailed to all current superintendents and district board of education members in West Virginia. Since each state has specific laws and policies that govern the role of district board of education members and the selection and evaluation of superintendents, this study was limited to the school districts of West Virginia.

Limitations

The findings of this study are limited to the perceptions of specific West Virginia superintendents and board of education members who responded to the survey rather than being generalized to the larger population of those groups. Both superintendents and board of education members who responded may have done so out of a particular bias, either positive or negative, about the role of the superintendent, and the potential for socially desirable responses to the survey items was perhaps increased given the absence of anonymity (i.e., superintendents and board of education members were asked to identify the districts they serve). The researcher's own professional experience as a district superintendent may have constituted a source of empathy and provided an experiential background that enhanced effectiveness in eliciting and understanding respondents' perceptions; it may also, however, be viewed as a limitation in that it was a potential source of bias.

While the leadership behaviors included on the survey instrument were based on congruence of the reviewed literature, there may be other leadership behaviors of importance which were not included.

CHAPTER TWO

“The old, less visible role of the school superintendent has changed to that of a highly visible chief executive who needs vision, skills, and knowledge to lead in a new and complex world” (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005, p. 1). Since the 1980s, national commission and task force reports have stated that school district administrators are critical to the success of school reform efforts. These reports call for improving the profession and reevaluating how the next generation of superintendents will be “identified, prepared, selected, and evaluated” (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005, p. 1). In discussing the changing role of the superintendent, Kowalski (2005) concluded, “Normative role expectations for local school district superintendents have evolved over the past 150 years, incrementally becoming more extensive, complex, and demanding” (p.1). Identification of leadership behaviors for the superintendency can be found in leadership standards developed for the superintendency, in professional literature on the superintendency, and in research studies completed on specific sets of superintendent leadership behaviors.

Leadership Behaviors Identified in Professional Standards

In the early 1990s, with broad input from school board of education members, practitioners, and professors of educational leadership, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) developed eight standards that broadly defined standards of practice for the superintendency (Hoyle, 1993). John Hoyle, chairman of the AASA Commission on Standards for the Superintendency, stated that the standards provided benchmarks for selection, preparation, and development of superintendents. The eight standards included leadership and district culture, policy and governance,

communicative/community relations, organizational management, curriculum planning/development, instructional management, human resources management, and leadership values/ethics.

In 1994, a joint committee consisting of representatives of the AASA and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) identified responsibilities for superintendents. Those responsibilities were

- to serve as the school board's chief executive officer and preeminent educational advisor in all efforts of the board to fulfill its school system governance role;
- to serve as the primary educational leader for the school system and chief administrative officer of the entire school district's professional and support staff, including staff members assigned to provide support service to the board;
- to serve as a catalyst for the school system's administrative leadership team in proposing and implementing policy changes;
- to propose and institute a process for long-range and strategic planning that will engage the board and the community in positioning the school district for success in ensuing years;
- to keep all board of education members informed about school operations and programs;
- to interpret the needs of the school system to the board;
- to present options along with the specific recommendations to the board when circumstances require the board to adopt new policies or review existing policies;
- to develop and inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy;

- to develop a sound program of school/community relations in concert with the board;
- to oversee management of the district's day-to-day operations;
- to develop and carry out a plan for keeping the total professional and support staff informed about the mission, goals, and strategies of the school system and about the important roles all staff members play in realizing them;
- to ensure that professional development opportunities are available to all school system employees;
- to collaborate with other administrators through national and state professional associations to inform state legislators, members of Congress, and all other appropriate state and federal officials of local concerns and issues;
- to ensure that the school system provides equal opportunity for all students;
- to evaluate personnel performance in harmony with district policy and to keep the board informed about such evaluations;
- to provide all board of education members with complete background information and a recommendation for school board action on each agenda item well in advance of each board meeting; and
- to develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media.

(American Association of School Administrators, 1994, pp. 11-12)

In addition to the AASA standards, other standards can be used for identifying desired leadership behaviors for the superintendency. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards were developed for the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The ISLLC standards were written after a two-year study

conducted by personnel from 24 state education agencies and representatives from various professional organizations. The ISLLC standards are:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (CCSSO, 1996, p. 10 – 20).

The authors of the ISLLC standards state that the standards were designed to be compatible with the curriculum guidelines for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teachers Education

(NCATE), which were first developed in 2002. In 2011, NCATE approved the Educational Administration Constituent Council (ELCC) standards for programs of study in education administration. The ELCC standards are:

1. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared district vision of learning through the collection and use of data to identify district goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and implement district plans to achieve district goals; promotion of continual and sustainable district improvement; and evaluation of district progress and revision of district plans supported by district stakeholders.
2. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by sustaining a district culture conducive to collaboration, trust, and a personalized learning environment with high expectations for students; creating and evaluating a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular and instructional district; developing and supervising the instructional and leadership capacity across the district; and promoting the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning within the district.
3. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by ensuring the management of the district's organization, operation, and resources through monitoring and evaluating district management and operational systems; efficiently using human, fiscal, and technological resources within the district; promoting district-level policies and procedures that protect the welfare and safety of student and staff across the district; developing

district capacity for distributed leadership; and ensuring that district time focuses on high-quality instruction and student learning.

4. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources for the district by collecting and analyzing information pertinent to improvement of the district's educational environment; promoting an understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse district relationships with families and caregivers; and cultivating productive district relationships with community partners.
5. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to ensure a district system of accountability for every student's academic and social success by modeling district principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior as related to their roles within the district; safeguarding the values of democracy, equity, and diversity within the district; evaluating the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making in the district; and promoting social justice within the district to ensure individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling.
6. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context within the district through advocating for district students, families, and caregivers; acting to influence

local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning; and anticipating and assessing emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt district-level leadership strategies.

7. A district-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student in a substantial and sustained educational leadership internship experience that has district-based field experiences and clinical practice within a district setting and is monitored by a qualified, on-side mentor (NCATE, 2011).

In a comparison of all three identified standards (AASA, ISLLC, and NCATE), Hoyle, Bjork, Collier and Glass (2005) argue that the AASA standards have a stronger research base and connection to the role of the Superintendent than the ISLLC standards. In addition, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education agree that the ISLLC standards were limited in their scope, skill, and knowledge base (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). A comparison of the standards shows that the AASA, ISLLC and NCATE standards identify the same leadership behaviors (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Comparison of Leadership Behaviors Identified in Professional Standards

| Leadership Behavior | AASA Standards | ISSLC Standards | NCATE Standards |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Vision and culture | X | X | X |
| 2. Policy and governance | X | X | X |
| 3. Communication/community relations | X | X | X |
| 4. Organizational management | X | X | X |
| 5. Finance | X | X | X |
| 6. Instructional program | X | X | X |
| 7. Human resources | X | X | X |
| 8. Values and ethics | X | X | X |
| 9. Political acuity | X | X | X |

Leadership Behaviors Identified in Professional Literature

The role of superintendents has changed in recent years (Callan and Levinson, 2011; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Whitmore, 2008). In discussing the changing role of the superintendency, Eller and Carlson (2009) state, “In the past, it was clear that the superintendent was to establish financial stability, oversee the physical plant, maintain well-disciplined schools, and ensure each child had a textbook. Today, we are in a new era that continues to be redefined as time progresses. In this new era, a completely different skill set is required for the position of superintendent” (p. 22). While superintendents must still have managerial expertise, the role is now more oriented towards, vision, goal setting, and system improvement.

In order to understand the influences they have on change in a school district, Whitmore (2008) asserted that superintendents must have a specific set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in order to be successful. The professional literature in the field of education administration has identified important leadership behaviors for the superintendency: vision and organizational culture, policy and governance, organizational management, instructional program, system improvement, resource management, human resources, communication, community relations, political acuity, and values and ethics (Callan and Levinson, 2011; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Whitmore, 2008).

Leadership for Vision and Organizational Culture

A central leadership behavior for superintendents is the establishment of a vision that guides the work of the district (Eller & Carlason 2009; Harvey, McCabe,

Cunningham & Koff, 2013; Hoyle, 2006; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Whitmore, 2008). One of the most important roles of a superintendent is to establish and implement a district vision for research-based learning (Hoyle, 2006). The governing bodies, in most cases local boards of education, expect the superintendent to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission (Callan and Levinson, 2011).

Establishing and articulating a vision for the district must focus district efforts on teaching and learning to ensure that students are successful. Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham and Koff (2013) asserted that superintendents must lead the school system so the entire organization “focuses on student learning, while creating a compelling vision of the future (p. 22). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) agree that effective superintendents must continually have high expectations for teaching quality and high student performance. This behavior is evidenced in a variety of ways, including effective expressions of high expectations, developing and articulating a vision of high expectations, and influencing the development of goals that set high expectations for organizational performance. Because there are sometimes competing social influences on education, it is essential that the superintendent maintain a district focus on the vision and goals for student performance. Kowalski (2013) contended that philosophical disagreements over the purposes of education make strategic planning essential so that the district has a framework to complete the mission of the district.

Visionary leadership by the superintendent must inspire, ignite minds, and generate action to create change for improved learning (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). After analyzing fourteen reports examining the relationship between district

leadership and student achievement, Marzano & Waters (2009) concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between district leadership and student achievement of .24, significant at the .05 level. Therefore, if the superintendent can improve his or her leadership abilities and maintain a district focus on the goals of the district, significant improvements in students' achievement can be realized.

Leadership for Policy and Governance

Superintendent leadership behavior must be aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies (Callan and Levinson, 2011; Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013). In emphasizing the importance of educational governance, Hoyle, Bjork, Collier and Glass (2005) state,

Because of their position as the chief executive officer of local boards of education and their role in advising board action and administering school organizations, superintendents must be conversant with implications of a wide range of constitutional laws, Supreme Court decisions, and state and federal mandates for administering districts to ensure that they manage and lead districts in a manner that reflects the moral intent of society (p. 57).

Kowalski (2013) asserted that the federal government and state legislatures have played a prominent role in school reform by passing laws that have increased accountability and mandates. Superintendents must stay knowledgeable about changes in law and changes directed by court action. Kowalski (2013) concluded that both federal and state laws and policies are continually changing, requiring the superintendent to revise district policies and actions to align with state and federal requirement. Whitmore (2008) cautioned that since federal and state laws change rapidly, "a superintendent's

learning curve never flattens out as the leader strives to keep up with them and how they impact the district” (p. 104).

Leadership for Organizational Management

Superintendents must demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district (Callan and Levinson, 2011; Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013). Superintendents must maintain a focus on quality management of the district’s efforts in order to ensure that district is able to accomplish the goals set forth for students (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). Whitmore (2008) cautions that, while superintendent leadership roles are often emphasized, “it is also imperative that we not forget the critically important management of the district” (p. 67).

Kowalski (2013) noted that management emerged immediately after the American Industrial Revolution as an essential leadership behavior for superintendents and it remains so today. Starratt (1990) asserted that school administrators are both managers and leaders. As managers, a superintendent must enforce the rules and manage the resources effectively. Kowalski (2005) stated that although the emphasis on the managerial role of the superintendents has fluctuated, the importance of that role is seldom questioned. Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) contended that, whether authority is granted by state educational policy or delegated by the local school board, “organizational management is a critical role assigned to superintendents” (p. 156).

Leadership for the Instructional Program

The executive superintendent must be able to develop curriculum designs and instructional delivery systems for diverse student populations (Callan and Levinson, 2011; Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Whitmore, 2008). Kowalski (2013) asserted that the first appointed superintendents did not have administrative credentials, but were rather selected because of their success as teachers. Today, successful superintendents must effectively oversee the design of curriculum as well as teaching and learning (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). Superintendents must oversee the development of curriculum and delivery designs for diverse populations that meet present and future student needs as well as state and federal mandates.

In speaking directly to superintendents, Callan and Levinson (2011) stated, “Your primary responsibility as superintendent is to improve teaching and learning” (p. 111). Other authors have emphasized the role of the superintendent as instructional leader. Eller and Carlson (2009) argued that it is the superintendent’s job to establish a clear focus in curricular and instructional goals. Whitmore (2008) contended that “superintendents must lead the district in the application of best practices to enhance student learning” (p. 36).

Today the superintendent must understand how the components of technology, program evaluation, and data analysis are essential to their role as district instructional leader. Superintendents must ensure that technology, communications, and information systems are used to enrich curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). Superintendents must be researchers of teaching and

learning in order to implement research-based strategies that are based on the review of current district performance data. Today's school district CEO needs to be able to demonstrate knowledge on research findings regarding the use of a variety of instructional strategies. Harvey et al. (2013) warn that superintendents must become data-driven field scientists to increase student achievement.

Leadership for System Improvement

Continuous system improvement must be directed by the superintendent (Callan & Levinson, 2011; Eller & Carlson, 2009; Fullan, 2005; Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, Kowalski, 2013; Sparks, 2005; Whitmore, 2008). Duke (2008) concluded that superintendents, by nature of their strategic position, control the managerial levers to initiate and sustain school improvement. Fullan (2005) asserted that district leaders, near or at the top, must have a clear understanding of where the organization needs to go and the knowledge and skill to steer efforts toward meeting those identified goals. Effective superintendent leadership should be focused on building the capacity of principals, teachers, and parents to improve student learning (Kowalski, 2013). With the passage of federal and state laws that have increased accountability for school and district performance, pressure on superintendents to structure system improvement has dramatically increased.

Peterson and Barnett (2005) indicated that superintendents “must use their influence to facilitate and support continuous improvement and achievement for all students as well as members of the school organization” (p. 130). Today, superintendents must use a variety of evaluation and questioning skills to facilitate system improvement. “Successful school leaders ask critical and constructive questions, emphasize the use of

systematic evidence, and encourage careful monitoring of both teaching and pupil progress” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 6). Mike Schmoker (1996) contended, “All school districts should be focused on results” (p. 1). Stakeholders look to superintendents to keep the organization moving forward (Eller & Carlson, 2009). Harvey et al. (2013) described the role of the superintendent in system transformation as that of a high-level mechanic improving the district machine. System evaluation must be instituted with a vision for improving teaching and learning.

Leadership for Budgeting and Finance

Superintendents must exhibit an understanding of school finance, including budget creation and management (Callan and Levinson, 2011; Eller & Carlson, 2009; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Whitmore, 2008). Kowalski (2013) argue that oversight of fiscal operations continues to be the most visible management role performed by most superintendents. Since a substantial portion of local revenues are provided to districts from local tax collections, citizens closely monitor budget and business operations. Because business management of public education is complex, Kowalski (2013) acknowledged that, “a superintendent must possess technical knowledge and skills, and he or she must know the legal requirements for the state in which he or she is practicing” (p. 251).

While Eller and Carlson (2009) assert that the role of the superintendent is changing, they cautioned that finance is still a critical area for the success of a superintendent. The superintendent’s job is to identify, allocate, and justify resources necessary to develop and sustain an effective instructional program. “The superintendent is the primary contact for all forms or resource and financial procurement, from working

with the school board and the school community to the legislature” (Whitmore, 2008, p.35).

Leadership for Recruiting, Developing, and Motivating Personnel

Superintendents must recruit, select, develop, and promote qualified and motivated personnel (Callan & Levinson, 2011; Eller & Carlson (2009); Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Kowalski, 2013; Rebore, 2001; Whitmore, 2008). While a superintendent’s direct involvement in human resource management may be determined by the size of the district, Rebore (2001) clarified that three functions, consistent across all school systems, are to hire, develop, and motivate qualified personnel; assist personnel to reach the highest levels of achievement; and to assist personnel in career development.

Superintendents must see that professional development for district personnel is based on the need to improve teaching and learning based on student needs. Leithwood and Reihl (2003) agreed that, “Effective leaders encourage reflection and challenge their staff to examine assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed” (p. 6). Superintendents must see that information and resources are provided to help people identify gaps between current and desired practices. Finally, superintendents must see that an effective evaluation system for personnel is in place to increase district performance. Eller and Carlson (2009) warn that the superintendent must effectively evaluate central district administrators in a way that keeps the district moving forward by becoming adept in providing positive and reinforcement feedback.

Leadership that Demonstrated Effective Communication

Superintendents must be experts at communicating with a wide range of constituents (Callan & Levinson, 2011; Eller & Carlson, 2009; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Whitmore, 2008). Kowalski (2013) asserted that district stakeholders have an expectation that superintendents will be effective communicators. Whitmore (2008) theorized that leadership for the district “depends, in part, on the superintendent having excellent communication skills (p. 53).

The superintendent is the chief spokesperson for the district (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) noted that superintendents initiate interchange with multiple stakeholders through effective communication strategies, framing issues in ways that lead to productive discourse and decision-making. Kowalski (2005) emphasized the critical link between effective practice and communication. Today superintendents must be able to engage stakeholders in political dialogue, facilitate the development of a shared vision, create a positive school district image, gain community support, and keep the public well informed. Not only must superintendents have excellent written and verbal communication skills, they must have listening and nonverbal communication skills (Eller & Carlson, 2009). Harvey et al, (2013) concluded that an important part of communication is listening, including regularly surveying parents, students, staff, and the community.

Leadership for Improving Community Relations

Superintendents have direct responsibilities in community relations and involvement (Bjork & Keedy, 2001; Callan & Levinson, 2011; Eller & Carlson, 2009; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003;

Whitmore, 2008). Whitmore (2008) asserts that it is important for superintendents to be active in creating positive public relations. Kowalski (2013) specified that the superintendent has a duty to represent the school district; informing the public about school programs and effectiveness. The role of the superintendent to be the face of the district is essential (Eller & Carlson, 2009). Beyond being the district spokesperson, visibility in the schools and community is important for superintendents (Eller & Carlson, 2009). Superintendents today are expected to serve on a wide variety of community committees and boards to represent the educational interests of the community. Superintendents have both professional and political responsibilities related to community involvement (Bjork & Keedy, 2001). Therefore, the role of the superintendent's involvement in the community must not only be to provide information, but also to listen to the needs of the community, while building relationships.

Effective superintendents not only share information with the community about system efforts and progress, but must also be adept at listening to the community. Establishing effective two-way communication with differing community and cultural groups is essential to school system success (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005). The days when superintendents can impose their individual will over the communities they serve is over (Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013). Fragmented policy making and inadequate program funding have made it imperative that superintendents work with the community to develop systems of social support in order to meet ever-increasing student needs. Superintendents must engage the community around finding solutions, not rehashing needs. Public engagement is a two-way deal between the superintendent and the community.

Leadership that Demonstrates Political Acuity

The effective superintendent must demonstrate political acuity (Callan & Levinson, 2011; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Whitmore, 2008). Kowalski (2013) concluded that working with the community and governing structures has always required political acuity and skills. Political acuity is the ability to understand and use the power relationships both inside and outside the school system in order to accomplish the goals of the district. Because schools are public institutions, they are subject to special interest groups who seek to use policies or resources to advance their interests (Rowan & Miskel, 1999). Bjork and Gurley (2005) acknowledged that superintendents “are at the vortex of interest group politics that demand greater political acuity and a different way of enacting this role than during previous decades” (p. 169). Superintendents must demonstrate political acuity in order to build community support for district priorities (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005).

Carter & Cunningham (1997) asserted that superintendents need extraordinarily good political acuity due to the complexity of the political process and political forces in education. Gone are the days when the superintendent forced individual leadership upon the district. Brunner (2001) acknowledged a shift in the superintendent’s political approach to the leadership role, which may encourage more superintendents to embrace a concept of power “with” instead of power “over.” Working effectively with the board of education is essential to system effectiveness which includes equal treatment of board of education members (Eller and Carlson, 2009).

Leadership that Demonstrates Moral and Ethical Behavior

Effective superintendents are committed to moral and ethical leadership (Callan & Levinson, 2011; Eller & Carlson, 2009; Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005; Kowalski, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Whitmore, 2008). Trustworthiness and integrity from principals, teachers, staff, and the community cannot be expected if the superintendent does not practice these leadership behaviors. “The superintendent should understand and model appropriate value systems, ethics, and moral leadership (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005, p. 188). People will look to the superintendent and evaluate the honesty of a superintendent’s words and actions (Eller & Carlson, 2009).

Moral leadership requires that, in the accomplishment district goals, superintendents pay attention not only to what they do, but also to how decisions are made and the nature of their decisions (Kowalski, 2013). Howlett (1991) argued that ethics for school administrators must be seen in more than just a legal context; their work must be free from self-interest, bias, discrimination, nepotism, breaches in confidentiality, and lack of commitment. Callan and Levinson (2011) warn that maintaining fairness in relationships is important for superintendents. Fairness must not only be evident in actions, but also in communication. Sharing confidences with board of education members and employees can lead to problems.

Providing ethical leadership also means treating everyone equal within law and the policies of the district. Because you must always make fair and transparent decisions for the improvement of the system, the superintendency is a lonely job. Callan and Levinson (2011) wrote:

You are the superintendent. You soon discover how lonely the position is. You have no peer group in the organization and there is no one with whom you should share confidences. You may have heard about this before you became superintendent but did not truly understand it. The truth is you are different from other staff. You have no peer in the organization. You decide whom to promote and whom to demote. You determine budgets and allocate resources. You make decisions that affect other people's lives (p. 61).

Whitmore (2008) wrote that, while it may sound obvious, "acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner at all times is one of the most important functions of a superintendent" (p.93). Harvey et al. (2103) contended that successful superintendents are attuned to their own values and directly face situations that present conflicts with those values.

Table 2 represents the congruence of leadership behaviors for superintendents as reflected in professional literature (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Comparison of Leadership Behaviors Identified in Professional Literature

| Leadership Behavior | Leithwood & Riehl, 2003 | Callan & Levinson, 2011 | Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005 | Kowalski, 2013 | Whitmore, 2008 | Eller & Carlson, 2009 | Harvey, McCabe, Cunningham & Koff, 2013 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Vision and organizational culture | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2. Policy and governance | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| 3. Organizational management | | X | | X | X | | X |
| 4. Instructional program | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 5. System improvement | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| 6. Finance | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 7. Personnel | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 8. Communication | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 9. Community relations | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| 10. Political acuity | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 11. Moral and ethical behavior | X | X | X | X | X | X | |

Leadership Behaviors Identified in Research Studies

Few research studies on the leadership behaviors for superintendents have been conducted (Wilson 2006). Limited research exists as to the leadership behaviors needed to be successful superintendents or that examine the perceptions of school board of education members regarding the behaviors that are most important for superintendent success. In one of the few studies that have been conducted, Wilson (2006) surveyed superintendents and local school board of education members across the state of Arizona regarding activities and characteristics related to the job of school district superintendent. Results were analyzed for differences between superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent activities and characteristics and these results were compared to the current Arizona School Board policy job descriptions for superintendents.

Wilson (2006) asserted that there were no significant differences between the perceptions of superintendents and school board of education members regarding the surveyed superintendent activities and characteristics. Wilson contended, however, that there were differences between the leadership characteristics represented in the study and those emphasized in the current Arizona job description for superintendent. Leadership behaviors included in the Wilson research study included leadership and district culture, policy and governance, communication, community relations, school board relations, organizational management, resource management, instructional program management, human resource management, political acuity, and educational technology management (see Figure 3). Wilson compared perceptions of superintendents and school board of education members regarding the importance of superintendent work experience and

intellect as well as the effect of school board member turnover on superintendent effectiveness.

In another study, Groholski (2009) compared the perceptions of Texas public school superintendents and local school board presidents regarding the leadership characteristics of the superintendency. Using a modified questionnaire developed by Wilson (2004), Groholski surveyed superintendents and school board presidents from 1031 Texas public school districts. Survey results were compared for differences between superintendents and school board presidents as well as for large school districts compared to small districts. Leadership behaviors included in the Groholski research study included leadership and district culture, policy and governance, communication, community relations, school board relations, organizational management, resource management, instructional program management, human resource management, political acuity, and educational technology management (see Figure 3). The study also compared perceptions regarding the importance of work experience.

The Groholski study suggested three major findings (Groholski, 2009). First, superintendents viewed the importance of instructional leadership, prior work experience in education, and school board relations significantly higher than school board presidents. Secondly, superintendents of small districts viewed the importance of instructional leadership, experience in education, and school board relations significantly higher than school board presidents of small districts. However, school board presidents of small districts viewed a focus on professional development significantly higher than superintendents of small districts. Finally, superintendents of large districts viewed the

importance of instructional leadership, comfort with the media and politics, and school board relations significantly higher than school board presidents of large school districts.

Finally, Running (2004) examined the role of superintendent as it was perceived by school administrators and school board presidents among those public schools located in Region 20 of the state of Texas. Running concluded that there were no differences between the perceptions of superintendents, school board presidents, and school administrators regarding the role of superintendents. Perceptions concerning superintendent leadership behaviors in the following areas were examined: leadership and district culture, policy and governance, communication, community relations, school board relations, organizational management, resource management, instructional program management, human resource management, and political acuity (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Comparison of Leadership Behaviors Identified in Research Studies

| Leadership Behavior | Wilson (2006) | Groholski (2009) | Running (2004) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Vision and organizational culture | X | X | X |
| 2. Policy and governance | X | X | X |
| 3. Communicative/community relations | X | X | X |
| 4. School board relations | X | X | X |
| 5. Organizational management | X | X | X |
| 6. Finance | X | X | X |
| 7. Instructional program | X | X | X |
| 8. Personnel | X | X | X |
| 9. Values and ethics | X | | |
| 10. Political acuity | X | X | X |
| 11. Technology | X | X | |

Summary of Literature Review

A review of leadership behaviors for superintendents has included leadership behaviors identified in professional standards, leadership behaviors identified in professional literature and leadership behaviors identified in research studies completed on the superintendency. Common across all three areas of study were the leadership behaviors of vision and organizational culture, policy and governance, organizational management, instructional program, system improvement, finance, human resources,

communication, community relations, political acuity, and values and ethics. School board relations and technology were identified as separate leadership behaviors in the research studies of Wilson (2006) and Groholski (2009). School board relations, as evidenced by the specific leadership behaviors of communication, vision and organizational culture, political acuity, and values and ethics, have been included in the literature review, but will not be identified as a separate leadership behavior for the purposes of this study. In addition, while technology is an essential tool for working and communicating as a superintendent, technology is also not identified as a separate leadership behavior for the purposes of this study.

After a review of common behaviors identified in the literature, this study will survey superintendents' and local board of education members' perceptions regarding the following preferred superintendent leadership behaviors: (a) leadership for vision and organizational culture; (b) leadership for policy and governance; (c) leadership for organizational management; (d) leadership for the instructional program; (e) leadership for system improvement; (f) leadership for budgeting and finance; (g) leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; (h) leadership that demonstrates effective communication; (i) leadership for improving community relations; (j) leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and (k) leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior.

CHAPTER THREE

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of school superintendents and district board of education members regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia. This study used a quantitative approach to determine what differences, if any, exist between superintendents' and district board of education members' perceptions concerning the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents. Using survey research methods, current district school superintendents and board of education members responded to the *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia*. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the preferred leadership behaviors of superintendents as identified by current district school superintendents and district board of education members. For current superintendents, demographic data were gathered concerning district where employed, years of total experience as a district school superintendent, and the level of education attainment. For current district board of education members, demographic data were gathered concerning board of education member districts, years of total experience as district board of education members and level of education attainment.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors?

2. What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors when compared by district and/or respondent characteristics?

Design

This study used descriptive statistics to determine what differences, if any, exist between superintendents and district board of education members concerning the preferred leadership behaviors of superintendents in West Virginia. Using survey research methods, educators responded to the *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia*. The survey instrument collected data to answer the research questions.

Participants

Participants of this study consisted of current public school district superintendents and members of district boards of education in West Virginia. Participants were asked to participate voluntarily. Data were obtained through a self-administered survey mailed to all current superintendents and members of district boards of education in West Virginia. Since each state has specific laws and policies that govern the role of district board of education members and the selection and evaluation of superintendents, this study was limited to the school districts of West Virginia. A survey invitation letter and survey were mailed to each participant. Responses were confidential and participant names were not published.

Instrumentation

The survey used in this study, *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia*, was adapted from the instrument developed by Wilson

(2006) and also used by Groholski (2009). The *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia* (see Appendix C) consisted of 26 questions in four parts. Part One of the survey requested demographic information that included total years served as a superintendent or board of education member, highest level of education attainment, and the name of the school district. Part Two consisted of 11 Likert Scale questions regarding the respondent's perception of superintendent leadership behaviors. The level of agreement for each question in Part Two was measured using a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly agree" to strongly disagree." Part Three asked respondents to select and rank order the four most important leadership behaviors from a list of 11 leadership behaviors provided. Part four of the survey was an open-response question which asked respondents to provide any additional comments related to superintendent leadership behaviors.

Validation of Instrument

The survey used in this study was initially developed by Wilson (2006) and was adapted by Groholski (2009). Content for the survey was revised by the author based on a comprehensive review of the literature. The draft survey was reviewed by a committee of experts including former district board of education members, current professors of educational leadership preparation programs, former district superintendents, and other leaders in the field of education. The survey was revised based on the review and recommendations of the committee of experts.

Data Collection and Analysis

The *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia* and a personalized letter were mailed to participants during the first week of January 2014. A

self-addressed stamped envelope for return was enclosed with the survey. All surveys were coded to determine which respondents returned the surveys as a result of the initial mailing. Participants who did not respond to the first mailing received a second letter and survey in mid-January, 2014. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS.

Summary

This study was designed to compare the perceptions of school superintendents and district school board of education members regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia. To complete the study, a survey was mailed during the month of January 2014 to current district school superintendents and board of education members in West Virginia. The survey instrument gathered demographic data as well as data regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents. The research study used descriptive statistics and quantitative methods to examine the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR

This study compared the perceptions of school superintendents and district board of education members regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia. Chapter Four is a presentation of the data gathered from the *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia* (see Appendix C). The first section will discuss the survey population, the second section will discuss the method of data collection, and the third and final section will discuss the findings of the study.

Survey Population

The population for the study ($N = 330$) consisted of 55 superintendents and the 275 board of education members for the public school districts in West Virginia. Paper copies of the survey instrument were mailed to everyone in the study population, and two weeks after the first mailing, a second paper copy was mailed to the study population.

Data Collection

The *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia* (see Appendix C) consisted of 26 questions in four parts. Part One of the survey requested demographic information that included total years served as a superintendent or board of education member, highest level of education attainment, and the name of the school district. Part Two consisted of 11 Likert Scale questions regarding the respondent's perception of superintendent leadership behaviors. The level of agreement for each question in Part Two was measured using a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly agree" to strongly disagree." Part Three asked respondents to select and rank order the four most important leadership behaviors from a list of 11 leadership behaviors provided.

Part four of the survey was an open-response question which asked respondents to provide any additional comments related to superintendent leadership behaviors.

The survey was initially distributed by mail during the second week of January 2014 via the United States Postal Service. The initial mailing consisted of a cover letter, the survey consent form, the two-page survey instrument, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. During the first week of February 2014, a second mailing included a revised cover letter, the survey consent form, the two-page survey instrument, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Upon return, each survey was numbered, revealing that 48 superintendents completed and returned surveys while 196 district board of education members returned the survey for a total of 244 respondents ($N = 224$).

An analysis of the demographic data revealed that 32 of the 48 responding superintendents reported a master's degree as their highest level of educational attainment, 5 reported they held an education specialist degree and 11 held a doctorate. Of the 196 board of education members responding to the survey, 13 had obtained a high school diploma, 37 had completed additional training, 52 had obtained a bachelor's degree, 72 had earned a master's degree and 22 board of education members held a doctorate. This information is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Education Attainment Summary of Respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Group | | |
| Superintendent | 48 | 87 |
| District Board of Education Member | 196 | 71 |
| Superintendent Education Attainment | | |
| Master's Degree | 32 | 67 |
| Education Specialist Degree | 5 | 10 |
| Doctoral Degree | 11 | 23 |
| Board Member Education Attainment | | |
| High School Diploma | 13 | 7 |
| Other Training or Certification | 37 | 19 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 52 | 26 |
| Master's Degree | 72 | 37 |
| Doctoral Degree | 22 | 11 |

Major Findings

Research Questions

Q1: What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members regarding the importance of superintendent leadership behaviors?

In analyzing results for this research question, means were computed for each of 11 leadership behaviors as rated by superintendents. Respondents were asked to rate superintendent leadership behaviors using a Likert scale where 4 indicated strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The responses for superintendents indicated that “leadership for system

improvement” ($M = 3.96$) and “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership” ($M = 3.96$) were most highly rated. “Leadership for vision and organizational culture” ($M = 3.94$) was identified by superintendents as third most highly rated. Identified by superintendents as fourth through sixth most highly rated were “leadership for organizational management” ($M = 3.92$), “leadership that demonstrates effective communication” ($M = 3.92$), and “leadership for improving community relations” ($M = 3.92$). Responses are shown in Table 2.

Means were computed for each of 11 leadership behaviors as rated by board of education members using the same Likert scale as was used with superintendents. The responses for board of education members indicated that “leadership for effective communication” ($M = 3.91$) and “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior” ($M = 3.91$) were most highly rated. “Leadership for organizational management” ($M = 3.88$) was third most highly rated by board of education members. Fourth most highly rated by board of education members was “leadership for vision and organizational culture” ($M = 3.87$). Board of education members rated “leadership for system improvement” ($M = 3.82$) as fifth highest and “leadership for policy and governance” ($M = 3.80$) was cited as the sixth most highly rated leadership behavior for superintendents. Responses are also depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Supt Mean | Supt SD | Bd Mem Mean | Bd Mem SD |
|---|--------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | 3.94 | .245 | 3.87 | .365 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | 3.83 | .377 | 3.80 | .438 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | 3.92 | .279 | 3.88 | .373 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | 3.77 | .425 | 3.74 | .464 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | 3.96 | .202 | 3.82 | .408 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | 3.63 | .489 | 3.62 | .537 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | 3.65 | .483 | 3.68 | .567 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | 3.92 | .279 | 3.91 | .308 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | 3.92 | .279 | 3.74 | .464 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | 3.67 | .476 | 3.36 | .655 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | 3.96 | .203 | 3.91 | .339 |

Table 3 provides the results of the independent samples *t*-test used to measure the equality of means between the responses of superintendents and board of education members regarding their perceptions of the leadership behaviors for superintendents. Of the 11 leadership behaviors included in the survey, significant differences in the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members were found for three leadership behaviors. On question #5 of part two of the survey instrument, superintendents and board members were asked to rate the importance of “leadership for system improvement” using a four point scale where 4 indicated strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. Superintendents’ mean score for this item was 3.96, while board of education members recorded a mean score of 3.82. An independent samples *t*-test performed on these data revealed a significant difference, $t(239) = 2.213, p < .05$ for question #5 with superintendents perceiving “leadership for system improvement” as more important than did board of education members (see Table 3).

For “leadership for improving community relations,” survey question #9 used the same four-point scale as in the previous question. The mean score for superintendents was 3.92. For this leadership behavior, school board of education members recorded a mean score of 3.74. The independent samples *t*-test performed on these mean scores reports a significant difference, $t(240) = 2.565, p < .05$, with superintendents perceiving “leadership for improving community relations” as more important than did board of education members (see Table 3).

On question #10, using the same four-point scale as in the previous question, superintendents rated the importance of “leadership that demonstrates political acuity”

with a mean score of 3.67. The mean score for school board of education members for the same question was 3.36. The independent samples *t*-test performed on these mean scores reports a significant difference, $t(240) = 3.041, p < .05$, for question #10 with superintendents perceiving “leadership that demonstrates political acuity” as more important than did board of education members (see Table 3).

As a result of the independent samples *t*-test, no significant differences between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding question #1, “leadership for vision and organizational culture;” question #2, “leadership for policy and governance;” question #3, “leadership for organizational management;” question #4, “leadership for the instructional program;” question #6, “leadership for budgeting and finance;” question #7, “leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel;” question #8, “leadership that demonstrates effective communication;” and question #11, “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior” (see Table 3).

Table 3

Independent Samples t-Test Results for Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Supt Mean | Bd Mem Mean | <i>t</i> | df | Sig |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|-----|--------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | 3.94 | 3.87 | 1.18 | 241 | .238 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | 3.83 | 3.80 | .49 | 241 | .628 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | 3.92 | 3.88 | .69 | 241 | .490 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | 3.77 | 3.74 | .46 | 240 | .647 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | 3.96 | 3.82 | 2.21 | 239 | *.028 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | 3.63 | 3.62 | .05 | 241 | .958 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | 3.65 | 3.68 | -.41 | 241 | .684 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | 3.92 | 3.91 | .19 | 240 | .847 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | 3.92 | 3.74 | 2.57 | 240 | *.011 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | 3.67 | 3.36 | 3.04 | 240 | *.003 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | 3.96 | 3.91 | .99 | 241 | .323 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

In Part Three of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to rank order the four most important leadership behaviors from among the 11 leadership behaviors presented in Part Two. Descriptive results for superintendent responses for Part Three of the survey are provided in Table 4. “Leadership for vision and organizational culture” ($N = 37$) was the most often ranked leadership behavior by superintendents. The second most often ranked leadership behavior by superintendents was “leadership for system improvement” ($N = 29$). Superintendents identified “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior” ($N = 23$) as the third most frequently ranked leadership behavior. “Leadership for the instructional program” ($N = 21$) and “leadership that demonstrates effective communication” ($N = 21$) tied for fourth most important leadership behaviors for effective superintendents. For each of the 11 leadership behaviors included in Part Three, the number of superintendent respondents and rank based on the total number of times each behavior was ranked are provided in Table 4.

Descriptive results for board member responses for Part Three of the survey are provided in Table 4. “Leadership for budgeting and finance” ($N = 84$) was the most often ranked leadership behavior by board of education members. The second most often ranked leadership behavior by board of education members was “leadership for vision and organizational culture” ($N = 82$). Board of education members identified “leadership for recruiting, developing, and motivating personnel” ($N = 81$) as the third most frequently ranked leadership behavior. “Leadership that demonstrates effective communication” ($N = 79$) was the fourth most ranked leadership behavior by board of education members and “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior” ($N = 75$) was the fifth most ranked leadership behavior. For each of the 11 leadership

behaviors included in Part Three, the number of board of education member respondents and rank based on the total number of times each behaviors was ranked are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Perceptions of Superintendents and Board of Education Members Regarding the Importance of Leadership Behaviors in Part Three of the Survey

| Leadership Behavior | S N | S Rank | BM N | BM Rank |
|--|--------|-----------|---------|------------|
| 1. Leadership for vision and organizational culture | 37 | 1 | 82 | 2 |
| 2. Leadership for policy and governance | 6 | 11 | 50 | 9 |
| 3. Leadership for organizational management | 10 | 7 | 71 | 7 |
| 4. Leadership for the instructional program | 21 | 4 | 73 | 6 |
| 5. Leadership for system improvement | 29 | 2 | 63 | 8 |
| 6. Leadership for budgeting and finance | 19 | 6 | 84 | 1 |
| 7. Leadership for recruiting, developing, and motivating personnel | 9 | 8 | 81 | 3 |
| 8. Leadership that demonstrates effective communication | 21 | 4 | 79 | 4 |
| 9. Leadership for improving community relations | 9 | 8 | 24 | 10 |
| 10. Leadership that demonstrates political acuity | 9 | 8 | 11 | 11 |
| 11. Leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior | 23 | 3 | 75 | 5 |

Part four of the survey asked respondents to provide any additional comments related to superintendent leadership behaviors. A complete transcript of comments is

provided in Appendix E. Of the 48 superintendents who completed and returned a survey, 23 superintendent respondents provided 47 comments. An emergent category analysis was performed on the 47 comments provided by superintendents and revealed that there were 12 distinct categories related to superintendent leadership behaviors. The five topics which received the most number of comments from superintendents were moral and ethical leadership ($N = 7$), communication ($N = 6$), personnel ($N = 6$), vision and goal setting ($N = 6$) and team and capacity building ($N = 5$). A percentile rank-order listing of these comments is provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Comments Provided by Superintendents

| Category | N | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Moral and ethical leadership | 7 | 15 |
| Communication | 6 | 13 |
| Personnel | 6 | 13 |
| Vision and goal setting | 6 | 13 |
| Team and capacity building | 5 | 11 |
| Relationship with board of education | 4 | 9 |
| System improvement | 3 | 6 |
| Instruction | 3 | 6 |
| Budget and finance | 3 | 6 |
| Decision-making | 2 | 4 |
| Political awareness | 1 | 2 |
| Community relations | 1 | 2 |

Likewise, in Part Four of the survey, board of education members were asked to provide any additional comments related to superintendent leadership behaviors. A complete transcript of comments provided by board of education members is provided in Appendix E. Of the 275 board of education members who completed and returned a survey, 83 board of education members provided comments. An emergent category analysis was completed, and the comments provided by board of education members covered 20 distinct categories related to superintendent leadership behaviors. The six topics which received the highest number of comments from board of education members were communication ($N = 16$), decision-making ($N = 14$), relationship with the board of education ($N = 12$), moral and ethical leadership ($N = 12$) and vision and goal setting ($N = 12$). A percentage rank-order listing for comments provided by board of education members is represented in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Comments Provided by Board of Education Members

| Categories | N | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|----|---------|
| Communication | 16 | 12.6 |
| Decision-making | 14 | 11.0 |
| Moral and ethical leadership | 12 | 9.4 |
| Relationship with board of education | 12 | 9.4 |
| Vision and goal setting | 12 | 9.4 |
| Team and capacity building | 11 | 8.7 |
| Instruction | 10 | 7.9 |
| Budget and finance | 8 | 6.3 |
| Personnel | 7 | 5.6 |
| Organizational management | 4 | 3.1 |
| Community relations | 4 | 3.1 |
| Visible in schools and community | 4 | 3.1 |
| System improvement | 2 | 1.6 |
| Policy | 2 | 1.6 |
| Creative and innovative | 2 | 1.6 |
| Work ethic | 2 | 1.6 |
| Common Sense | 2 | 1.6 |
| Political acuity | 1 | .8 |
| Sense of humor | 1 | .8 |
| Being available | 1 | .8 |

Q2: What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors when compared by district and/or respondent characteristics?

In analyzing results for this research question, a Pearson R correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the ranking of the 11 leadership behaviors as rated by respondents in Part Two of the survey and selected district and/or respondent characteristics. The selected characteristics were student enrollment, student socioeconomic status, student achievement, level of board of education member or superintendent educational attainment, and years of experience as a board member or superintendent.

Descriptive statistics for the correlation between the perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership behaviors and district student socioeconomic status are represented in Table 7. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of district socioeconomic status used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the West Virginia Department of Education certified calculation of district student socioeconomic status for the 2013-2014 school year (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013). There was a negative correlation ($r = -.301$, $N = 48$, $p < .05$) between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to

establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission" decreased (see Table 7).

No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for student socioeconomic status and perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership for organizational management; leadership for policy and governance; leadership for the instructional program; leadership for system improvement; leadership for budgeting and finance; leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; leadership that demonstrates effective communication; leadership for improving community relations; leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.

Descriptive statistics for the correlation between the perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership behaviors and district student achievement are represented in Table 7. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of district student achievement used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the sum of the district percent of proficient students in English language arts and mathematics as published by the West Virginia Department of Education for the May 2013 assessment administration (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013b). There was a positive correlation ($r = .307$, $N = 48$, $p < .05$) between student achievement and the perceptions of superintendents regarding "leadership for vision and organizational culture." As district student achievement increased, the level of agreement with the

statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased (see Table 7).

No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for student achievement and perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership for organizational management; leadership for policy and governance; leadership for the instructional program; leadership for system improvement; leadership for budgeting and finance; leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; leadership that demonstrates effective communication; leadership for improving community relations; leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.

Descriptive statistics for the correlation between the perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership behaviors and the number of years employed as a superintendent are represented in Table 7. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of years employed as a superintendent was the total number of years reported by each superintendent respondent in Part One of the survey. There was a negative correlation ($r = -.377$, $N = 48$, $p < .05$) between years serving as a superintendent and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As years of serving as a superintendent increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement” decreased (see Table 7).

No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for student achievement and perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership for vision and organizational culture; leadership for policy and governance; leadership for organizational management; leadership for the instructional program; leadership for budgeting and finance; leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; leadership that demonstrates effective communication; leadership for improving community relations; leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for the Correlation between District Characteristics and Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| District Student Socioeconomic Status | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission | Pearson Correlation | -.301 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.038 |
| | N | 48 |
| District Student Achievement | | |
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission | Pearson Correlation | .307 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.034 |
| | N | 48 |
| Number of Years Serving as a District Superintendent | | |
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | Pearson Correlation | -.377 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.008 |
| | N | 48 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

The descriptive statistics for the correlation between the perceptions of board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and district student enrollment are represented in Table 8. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were

rated by superintendents using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of district student enrollment used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the West Virginia Department of Education certified measure of district student enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013a). There was a negative correlation ($r = -.146$, $N = 182$, $p < .05$) between student enrollment and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership that demonstrates effective communication.” As district student enrollment increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills” decreased (see Table 8).

No other correlations (positive or negative) were established for district enrollment and perceptions of district board of education members regarding leadership for vision and organizational culture; leadership for policy and governance; leadership for organizational management; leadership for the instructional program; leadership for system improvement; leadership for budgeting and finance; leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; leadership for improving community relations; leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.

Descriptive statistics for significant correlations between the perceptions of board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and district student socioeconomic status are represented in Table 8. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for

each statement. The measure of district socioeconomic status used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the West Virginia Department of Education certified calculation of district student socioeconomic status for the 2013-2014 school year (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013a). There was a positive correlation ($r = .169$, $N = 183$, $p < .05$) between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As the district percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased (see Table 8). There was also a positive correlation ($r = .217$, $N = 183$, $p < .05$) between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for policy and governance.” As the district percentage of student with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies” increased (see Table 8).

No other correlations (positive or negative) were established for student socioeconomic status and perceptions of district board of education members regarding leadership for organizational management; leadership for the instructional program; leadership for system improvement; leadership for budgeting and finance; leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; leadership that demonstrates effective communication; leadership for improving community relations; leadership that

demonstrates political acuity; and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.

Descriptive statistics for the significant correlation between the perceptions of board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and the level of board member education attainment are represented in Table 8. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of education attainment used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the level of education attainment reported by respondents in Part One of the survey. There was a positive correlation ($r = .174$, $N = 193$, $p < .05$) between the level of board member education attainment and the perceptions of board of education regarding “leadership for system improvement.” As board of education members’ level of education attainment increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement” increased. There was also a positive correlation ($r = .185$, $N = 193$, $p < .05$) between the level of board member education attainment and the perceptions of board of education regarding “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.” As board of education members’ level of education attainment increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership” increased (see Table 8).

No other correlations (positive or negative) were established for the level of board member education attainment and perceptions of district board of education members regarding leadership for vision and organizational culture; leadership for policy and

governance; leadership for organizational management; leadership for the instructional program; leadership for budgeting and finance; leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; leadership that demonstrates effective communication; leadership for improving community relations; leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.

Descriptive statistics for the correlation between the perceptions of board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors and the number of years of experience serving as a board of education member is represented in Table 8. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by board members using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of years of experience as a board of education member was the total number of years reported by each board member respondent in Part One of the survey. There was a negative correlation ($r = -.146$, $N = 193$, $p < .05$) between years serving as a board of education member and the perceptions of board members regarding “leadership for organizational management.” As years of serving as a board of education member increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district” decreased (see Table 8). No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for years of experience and perceptions of board of education members regarding the leadership behaviors for superintendents.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Significant Correlations between District Characteristics and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| District Student Enrollment | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | Pearson Correlation | -.146 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.049 |
| | N | 182 |
| District Student Socioeconomic Status | | |
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission | Pearson Correlation | .169 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.022 |
| | N | 183 |
| Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | Pearson Correlation | .217 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.003 |
| | N | 183 |
| Level of Board of Education Member Education Attainment | | |
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | Pearson Correlation | .174 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.016 |
| | N | 193 |
| Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership | Pearson Correlation | .185 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.010 |
| | N | 195 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

Table 8 (cont.)

Descriptive Statistics for Significant Correlations between District Characteristics and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Board of Education Member Years of Experience | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------|
| Survey Item | Measure | Correlation |
| Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the district. | Pearson Correlation | -.146 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | *.043 |
| | N | 193 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

The descriptive statistics for correlations between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and district student enrollment are represented in Table 9. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents and board of education members using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of district student enrollment used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the West Virginia Department of Education certified measure of district student enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013a). There was a negative correlation ($r = -.146$, $N = 182$, $p < .05$) between student enrollment and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership that demonstrates effective communication.” As district student enrollment increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills” decreased (see Table 9). No other correlations (positive or

negative) were reported for district enrollment and perceptions of superintendents or district board of education members regarding the 11 leadership behaviors.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Correlations between District Enrollment and Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Superintendent Significance (2-Tailed) | Board Member Significance (2-Tailed) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | .941 | .126 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | .722 | .141 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | .711 | .062 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | .689 | .275 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | .160 | .143 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | .356 | .933 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | .232 | .172 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | .545 | *.049 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | .568 | .115 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | .570 | .508 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | .518 | .102 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

Descriptive statistics for correlations between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and district student achievement are represented in Table 10. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents and board of education members using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of district student achievement used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the sum of the district percentage of proficient students in English language arts and mathematics as published by the West Virginia Department of Education for the May 2013 assessment administration (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013b). There was a positive correlation ($r = .307$, $N = 48$, $p < .05$) between student achievement and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As district student achievement increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased (see Table 10). No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for student achievement and perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding the 11 leadership behaviors.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Correlations between District Student Achievement and Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Superintendent Significance (2-Tailed) | Board Member Significance (2-Tailed) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | *.034 | .234 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | .805 | .141 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | .268 | .370 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | .615 | .327 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | .793 | .720 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | .744 | .953 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | .958 | .435 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | .238 | .400 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | .107 | .360 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | .189 | .629 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | .983 | .760 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

Descriptive for correlations between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and district student socioeconomic status are represented in Table 11. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors in Part Two of the survey were rated by superintendents and board of education members using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of district socioeconomic status used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the West Virginia Department of Education certified calculation of district student socioeconomic status for the 2013-2014 school year (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013). There was a negative correlation ($r = -.301, N = 48, p < .05$) between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As the district percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” decreased (see Table 11).

There was a positive correlation ($r = .169, N = 183, p < .05$) between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As the district percentage of students of low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission,” increased. There was also a positive correlation ($r = .217, N = 183, p < .05$) between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education

members regarding “leadership policy and governance.” As the district percentage of student with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies,” increased (see Table 11). No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for student socioeconomic status and perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding the 11 leadership behaviors.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for Correlations between District Student Socioeconomic Status and Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Superintendent Significance (2-Tailed) | Board Member Significance (2-Tailed) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | *.038 | *.022 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | .919 | *.003 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | .956 | .372 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | .334 | .094 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | .452 | .320 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | .552 | .484 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | .345 | .074 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | .492 | .405 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | .403 | .204 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | .940 | .455 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | .943 | .766 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

Descriptive statistics for correlations between the superintendents' and board of education members' perceptions regarding leadership behaviors and the level of respondents' education attainment are represented in Table 12. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents and board of education members using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The measure of education attainment used for the Pearson R correlation analysis was the level of education attainment reported by respondents in Part One of the survey. There was a positive correlation ($r = .174, N = 193, p < .05$) between the level of board member education attainment and the perceptions of board of education members regarding "leadership for system improvement." As board of education members level of education attainment increased, the level of agreement with the statement "effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement" increased. There was also a positive correlation ($r = .185, N = 193, p < .05$) between the level of board member education attainment and the perceptions of board of education members regarding "leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership." As board of education members' level of education attainment increased, the level of agreement with the statement "effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership" increased (see Table 12). No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for the level of respondents' education attainment and perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding the 11 leadership behaviors.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Correlations between Respondents' Level of Education Attainment and Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Superintendent Significance (2-Tailed) | Board Member Significance (2-Tailed) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | .634 | .923 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | .499 | .650 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | .447 | .237 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | .259 | .489 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | .462 | *.016 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | .317 | .105 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | .115 | .137 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | .649 | .487 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | .649 | .116 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | 1.000 | .310 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | .917 | *.010 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

Descriptive statistics for the correlation between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding leadership behaviors and years of experience are represented in Table 13. Perceptions of the 11 superintendent leadership behaviors were rated by superintendents and board of education members using a Likert scale; respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. Years of experience employed as a superintendent or serving as an elected board of education members was the total number of years reported by each respondent in Part One of the survey.

There was a negative correlation ($r = -.377, N = 48, p < .05$) between years serving as a superintendent and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As years of serving as a superintendent increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement” decreased. There was a negative correlation ($r = -.146, N = 193, p < .05$) between years serving as a board of education member and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for organizational management.” As years of serving as a board of education member increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district” decreased (see Table 13). No other correlations (positive or negative) were reported for student achievement and perceptions of superintendents or board of education members regarding the 11 leadership behaviors.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for Correlations between Respondents' Years of Experience and Superintendents' and Board of Education Members' Perceptions Regarding Leadership Behaviors

| Leadership Behavior | Superintendent Significance (2-Tailed) | Board Member Significance (2-Tailed) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | .167 | .927 |
| 2. Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | .680 | .058 |
| 3. Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | .635 | *.043 |
| 4. Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | .757 | .307 |
| 5. Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | *.008 | .389 |
| 6. Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | .733 | .709 |
| 7. Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | .294 | .625 |
| 8. Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | .402 | .123 |
| 9. Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | .857 | .517 |
| 10. Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | .908 | .753 |
| 11. Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | .322 | .558 |

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter contains a summary of the purpose, procedures and findings of the study. Conclusions derived from the research findings are presented with related discussion and implications. Finally, recommendations are presented for board of education members, superintendents, those who aspire to the superintendency and for those creating or conducting training or certification programs for superintendents. Recommendations for further study are discussed.

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of school superintendents and district school board of education members regarding the preferred leadership behaviors for the superintendents in West Virginia. A review of the literature provided a list of 11 leadership behaviors: (a) leadership for vision and organizational culture; (b) leadership for policy and governance; (c) leadership for organizational management; (d) leadership for the instructional program; (e) leadership for system improvement; (f) leadership for budgeting and finance; (g) leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; (h) leadership that demonstrates effective communication; (i) leadership for improving community relations; (j) leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and (k) leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior.

The following research questions were used to guide the study.

Q1: What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members regarding the importance of superintendent leadership behaviors?

Q2: What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors when compared by district and/or respondent characteristics?

Summary of Population

The population for the study ($N = 330$) consisted of 55 superintendents and the 275 board of education members for the public school districts in West Virginia.

Summary of Methods

The *Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia* and a personalized letter were mailed to participants during the first week of January 2014. A self-addressed stamped envelope for return was enclosed with the survey. All surveys were coded to determine which respondents returned the surveys as a result of the initial mailing. Participants who did not respond to the first mailing received a second letter and survey in mid-January 2014. Forty-eight superintendents completed and returned surveys for a superintendent response rate of 87.3%. A total of 196 board of education members returned the survey for a board member response rate of 71.3%. A total of 244 surveys were returned from a survey population of 330 for a total population response rate of 73.9%. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. An emergent category analysis was conducted to determine findings from respondent written comments.

Summary of Findings

Q1: What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and West Virginia board of education members regarding the importance of superintendent leadership behaviors?

In analyzing results for this research question, means were computed for each of 11 leadership behaviors as rated by superintendents. Using a Likert scale in Part Two of the survey, respondents indicated 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree for each statement. The means for all 11 leadership behaviors as rated by superintendents were between the ratings of somewhat agree and strongly agree. The responses for superintendents indicated that the highest rated leadership behaviors were leadership for system improvement, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership, leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership for organizational management, leadership that demonstrates effective communication, and leadership for improving community relations.

The means for all 11 leadership behaviors as rated by board of education members were between the ratings of somewhat agree and strongly agree. The responses for board of education members indicated that the highest rated leadership behaviors were leadership for effective communication, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior, leadership for organizational management, leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership for system improvement, and leadership for policy and governance. In comparing the mean scores, superintendents and board of education members rated the same five leadership behaviors within their top six rated leadership behaviors. The identified leadership behaviors for both groups were leadership for system improvement, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership, leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership for organizational management, and leadership that demonstrates effective communication.

The independent samples *t*-test performed on mean scores indicated a significant difference for the perceived importance of three leadership behaviors with superintendents perceiving leadership for system improvement, leadership for improving community relations, and leadership that demonstrates political acuity to a higher degree than did board of education members. As a result of the independent samples *t*-test performed on the statements in Part Two of the survey, no significant differences were noted between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership for policy and governance, leadership for organizational management, leadership for the instructional program, leadership for budgeting and finance, leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel, leadership that demonstrates effective communication, and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior.

In Part Three of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to rank order the four most important leadership behaviors from among the 11 leadership behaviors. Descriptive results for superintendent responses reported that the five most ranked leadership behaviors were leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership for system improvement, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior, leadership for the instructional program, and leadership that demonstrates effective communication. Descriptive results for board of education members reports that the five most ranked leadership behaviors were leadership for budgeting and finance, leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership for recruiting, developing, and motivating personnel, leadership that demonstrates effective communication, and leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior.

In examining the highest ranked leadership behaviors for both groups, three leadership behaviors were identified by both groups as important. On Part Three of the survey, both superintendents and board of education members ranked leadership for vision and organizational culture, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior and leadership that demonstrates effective communication among their top five most ranked leadership behaviors. However, superintendents ranked leadership for system improvement and leadership for the instructional program within their five most important leadership behaviors, while board of education members ranked leadership for recruiting, developing, and motivating personnel and leadership for budgeting and finance among their five most important leadership behaviors.

Part four of the survey asked respondents to provide any additional comments related to superintendent leadership behaviors. Separate emergent category analyses were conducted to extract common categories within the comments provided by superintendents and board of education members. A transcript of comments is provided in Appendix E. The categories most often commented upon by superintendents were moral and ethical leadership, communication, personnel, vision and goal setting, and team and capacity building. The categories most often commented upon by board of education members were communication, decision-making, relationship with the board of education, moral and ethical leadership, and vision and goal setting.

Q2: What differences, if any, exist between the perceptions of superintendents and district board of education members regarding superintendent leadership behaviors when compared by district characteristics?

In analyzing results for this research question, a Pearson R correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the ranking of the 11 leadership behaviors as rated by respondents in Part Two of the survey and selected district characteristics. The selected district characteristics were student enrollment, student socioeconomic status, student achievement, level board member or superintendent educational attainment, and years of experience as a board member or superintendent. The following correlations were noted concerning superintendent or board member perceptions of leadership behaviors and district characteristics.

1. A negative correlation was found between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As the district percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” decreased.
2. A positive correlation was established between student achievement and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As district student achievement increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased.
3. A negative correlation was found between years serving as a superintendent and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As years of serving as a superintendent increased, the

level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement” decreased.

4. A negative correlation was established between student enrollment and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership that demonstrates effective communication.” As district student enrollment increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills” decreased.
5. A positive correlation was found between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As the district percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased.
6. A positive correlation was established between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership policy and governance.” As the district percentage of student of low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies” increased.
7. A positive correlation was found between the level of board member education attainment and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for system improvement.” As district student enrollment increased,

the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement” increased.

8. A positive correlation was established between the level of board member education attainment and the perceptions of board of education regarding “leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical leadership.” As board of education members’ level of education attainment increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership” increased.
9. A negative correlation was found between years serving as a board of education member and the perceptions of board members regarding “leadership for organizational management.” As years of serving as a board of education member increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district” decreased.

Conclusions and Discussion

The major findings in the study suggest the following conclusions:

1. It may be inferred from this study that West Virginia superintendents and board of education members who participated in the survey agree that the 11 leadership behaviors identified in this study are important to be an effective superintendent.

A review of leadership behaviors identified in the literature, professional standards for superintendents and previous research studies identified 11 core superintendent leadership behaviors: (a) leadership for vision and organizational culture;

(b) leadership for policy and governance; (c) leadership for organizational management; (d) leadership for the instructional program; (e) leadership for system improvement; (f) leadership for budgeting and finance; (g) leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel; (h) leadership that demonstrates effective communication; (i) leadership for improving community relations; (j) leadership that demonstrates political acuity; and (k) leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior. Analysis of these data led to several conclusions regarding the perceptions of the leadership behaviors by superintendents and district board of education members. Using a Likert scale in Part Two of the survey, respondents indicated strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree for each statement regarding each of the 11 leadership behaviors. A review of the means for superintendents and for board of education members establishes that both respondent groups rated the 11 leadership behaviors between somewhat agree and strongly agree.

2. It may be inferred from the findings in this study that West Virginia superintendents and board of education members are in general agreement that three essential leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia are leadership that demonstrates effective communication, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior, and leadership for vision and organizational culture.

In Part Two of the survey, both the superintendents and board of education members had high agreements with the following statements:

- effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills;
- effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership; and

- effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals, and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission.

In Part Three of the survey, both superintendents and board of education members ranked leadership that demonstrates effective communication, leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior, and leadership for vision and organizational culture within their top five most highly ranked leadership behaviors. Finally, in Part Four of the survey, both superintendents and board of education members provided a high number of comments concerning communication, vision, and moral and ethical leadership.

The comments of both superintendents and board of education members verify the role of communication in being an effective superintendent. In commenting on the importance of effective communication, one superintendent stated, “Effective communication skills are the basis or foundation for all other leadership behaviors. Each behavior above is critical to success, but each requires effective communication.” Another superintendent also believed communication to be linked to other leadership behaviors and stated, “Communication is tied to community relations – political acuity – at least in my mind!” Communication, both the ability to speak and listen, was an area that several board of education members discussed in their written comments. “The superintendent must be a good communicator,” stated one board member. A second board member wrote, “Effective communication is important.” “The use of good communication skills is imperative to be a successful superintendent,” said another board member. Several board of education members emphasized the ability to listen as an important aspect of communication. As one board member stated, superintendents must

be willing to “listen and hear what the personnel and what the public is (sic) talking about.”

Previous studies conducted on superintendent leadership behaviors confirm the important of effective communication skills. Douglas (2006) surveyed superintendents and board of education presidents and found that both groups responded with the highest mean score to the same item: “Effective communication with board members, district and school staff, parents, and the community is essential in superintendent effectiveness: (p. 39). A similar study conducted by Groholski (2009), which surveyed Texas district superintendents and school board presidents, also identified visionary leadership and communication as desirable leadership characteristics.

The fact that communication was identified by West Virginia superintendents and board of education members as an essential leadership skill for superintendents is not surprising. For more than 30 years, evidence has been mounting that communication is a core competency for not just superintendents, but all school administrators (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005).

Vision was a second area important to both superintendents and board of education members. In discussing the role of the superintendent, one board member commented, “The superintendent must be the CEO of the county school system. They (sic) must form and cast a vision and then put together a high performance leadership team to work the plan.” Another board member emphasized that superintendents must possess and articulate vision and planning in all aspects of job performance, and a third board of education member expressed that effective superintendents must have a long term vision for the school district. One superintendent saw vision connecting other

leadership behaviors stating, “Effective leaders must reflect a vision that brings together all parts of the office of superintendent and makes them work together for the good of students.”

The ability of district leaders to develop and articulate a district vision for learning that is supported by the community is critical for promoting the success of all students (Whitmore, 2008). The superintendent must be able to clearly and effectively communicate the district vision to all stakeholders and be able to state how that goals of the district are directly related to the vision. A well-articulated vision and the development of aligned goals set the tone for teaching and learning in the district.

Modeling moral and ethical leadership was a third area that was important leadership behavior to both board of education members and superintendents. One superintendent stated, “Leadership is being respected so that the vision articulated is prioritized and implemented. Staff must believe what you say.” As one board of education member stated, “You must be able to trust your superintendent.” A second board member agreed saying, “Trust. Trust is number 1. If you don’t trust your superintendents, every word goes in one ear and out the other.” Another board of education member commented, “The superintendent must be a straight forward, honest, moral individual that considers all the facts before making decisions or recommendations to the local board.” The independent Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) identifies moral and ethical leadership as one of the seven standards which are widely used in the United States for the training and preparation of school administrators (Whitmore, 2008). In order to promote learning for all students, superintendents must lead with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

3. The findings in this study suggest that superintendents perceive leadership behaviors for system improvement, community relations, and political acuity as significantly more important than do board of education members.

An independent samples *t*-test comparison of means for each leadership behavior reports that there was a significant difference between how superintendents and board of education members rated their agreement with the following three statements with superintendents rating each behavior significantly higher than board of education members who participated in the survey: Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement, Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement and Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity.

The survey responses and comments of superintendents provide support for the significant differences in the rating of these three items. First, the mean scores for Part Two of the survey identify the highest level of superintendent's agreement (3.96) with the statement "effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement." In addition, in Part Three of the survey, superintendents ranked "leadership for system improvement" as the second highest leadership behavior.

Bonnie and Lance Fusarelli (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005) make that case that system improvement is a new area of emphasis for superintendent leadership. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, superintendents are now required to be system reformers. While funding has remained the same, superintendents must now do more to improve achievement for all students. Data-driven decision-making must now be used to identify and remove obstacles to increasing student performance. While superintendents are aware of this increasing responsibility, it may be that board of education members are

not as aware of the importance of system improvement or that the leadership behaviors and responsibilities in this area are not as visible to board of education members.

In this study, superintendents rated significantly higher agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement” than did board of education members. In reviewing the submitted comments by board of education members in this study, it may be that board of education members may have a more narrow view of community leadership with regard to the role of superintendent. One board member stated, “The superintendent must involve all parents and community into decision-making.” A second board member commented, “Each community is different, with different values. To be successful, a superintendent must obtain the support of the school staff and the community.” Another board of education member commented that superintendents should have “visibility in the community.” As the federal government has placed greater focus on school performance, the community has placed greater demands on their schools (Kowalski, 2013). Public schools and local communities have always been connected, yet superintendents have been asked to play an increasingly greater role in the communities they serve. First, superintendents are asked to serve on community committees and to be active in community endeavors. Second, superintendents are expected to maintain a high community profile (Lober, 1993). Finally, system change and reform requires the superintendent to communicate with and obtain community support for reform efforts (Kowalski, 2013). Today, the need for community leadership is increasing due to the need to increase political capital in the form of increased support, social capital in the

need to develop positive relationships, and human capital in the need to increase the knowledge and skills of the public.

In this study, there was a significant difference between the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members with regard to “leadership that demonstrates political acuity.” With a mean score of 3.67, superintendents rated this leadership behavior significantly higher than did board of education members. With a mean score of 3.36, “leadership that demonstrates political acuity” was rated by board of education members as the lowest of the leadership behaviors included in the survey. Wilson (2006) also found that governing board members ranked the superintendent leadership behavior of being politically astute as one of their lowest rated characteristics for effective superintendents in Arizona. Many may view education as an institution that should be above political influence (Blumberg, 1985). Yet, as school systems have become more diverse and have faced increasing pressure to meet NCLB standards, political pressures have increased (Kowalski, 2013). In addition the ELLC standards expect both building-level and district-level administrators to take an active role in political advocacy. Yet, in practice, superintendents have become increasingly mired in difficult political realities (Wirt & Kirst, 2009).

4. The findings in this study regarding the perceptions of superintendents and board of education members regarding important leadership behaviors for West Virginia superintendents have similarities and differences to the findings of previous studies completed on the same or similar topic.

In this study, West Virginia superintendents and board of education members were in general agreement that “vision and organizational culture” was also among the

highest rated leadership behaviors for West Virginia superintendents. Wilson (2006) also found that being a “visionary leader” was among the the top leadership characteristics for Arizona superintendents as ranked by both superintendents and board of education members. In addition, Wilson found that Arizona superintendents and board of education members were in agreement that “understanding of school finance, focus on professional development, understanding of school law, and politically astute, and intellect” were the lowest ranked leadership characteristics. In agreement with the Wilson (2006) study, this study found that the three leadership behaviors with the lowest mean score ratings, as rated by West Virginia superintendents and board of education members, were “leadership for budgeting and finance, leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel, and leadership that demonstrates political acuity.”

Running (2004) found that there were no statistical differences between the perceptions of school board presidents and superintendents in Texas, Region 20, regarding the superintendent behaviors included in his 2004 study, while this research study found that that superintendents perceived leadership behaviors for system improvement, community relations,” and political acuity as significantly more important than did board of education members.

Groholski (2009) found that superintendents and board of education presidents from the 1031 public school districts in Texas appeared to agree that “effective communication” and “visionary leadership” were among the most desirable leadership characteristics of superintendents. In agreement, this study found that communication and visionary leadership were essential leadership behaviors for superintendents in West Virginia. In this study, superintendents and board of education members were in general

agreement that “leadership that demonstrates effective communication” and “leadership for vision and organizational culture” were essential leadership behaviors for West Virginia superintendents.

5. The percentage of students in the district with low-socioeconomic status affected the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members regarding some superintendent leadership behaviors.

A negative correlation between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture ” was revealed. As the district percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” decreased. A positive correlation between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture ” was discovered. As the district percentage of students of low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased. A positive correlation was found between the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status and the perceptions of board of education members regarding “leadership for policy and governance.” As the district percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies” increased.

Harvey, Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham and Koff (2013) argue that one constant in educational research is the strong relationship between low-socioeconomic status and achievement; “as poverty goes up, test scores go down” (p. 126). They suggest that in the most troubled neighborhoods, leaders need to think in terms of broad-based community revitalization because the issues related to poverty are difficult to address in the educational setting alone.

Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1998) found that poverty is the one factor that consistently reduces the likelihood of academic success. As the results of this study found, when the percentage of students with low-socioeconomic status increased, the level of superintendents’ agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” decreased. It is possible that superintendents working in high-poverty districts may perceive that increasing student achievement is a problem of such intractability that having a vision for high expectations is secondary to dealing with the pressures placed on the school system by factors related to the more immediate issues that arise with high numbers of students in poverty (i.e., poor behavior, poor attendance, low graduation rates). It was also found in this study, however, that board of education members from districts with higher percentages of students with low-socioeconomic status rated the importance of the leadership behaviors for superintendents higher in the areas of vision and aligning actions with policy and law. In school districts with higher levels of poverty, board of education members perhaps see a greater need for superintendents to establish a vision and organizational culture that has a positive impact on student outcomes and that such leadership should be aligned with established policy and law.

6. The level of student achievement has an effect on the perceptions of superintendents regarding leadership for vision and organizational culture.

A positive correlation was found between student achievement and the perceptions of superintendents regarding “leadership for vision and organizational culture.” As district student achievement increased, the level of agreement with the statement “effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district’s mission” increased. Just as it may be more difficult to develop and maintain a vision for high expectations when school districts are struggling with low academic performance, it is plausible that developing and maintaining leadership behaviors for vision and organizational culture may be less difficult for superintendents where academic achievement is higher. It is also plausible that superintendents who have guided school districts to achieve higher levels of student academic achievement may have rated to a higher degree the importance of developing and maintaining effective leadership behaviors for vision and organizational culture.

7. The comments of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members in this study suggest that effective superintendents create and build the capacity of strong central office leadership teams.

Providing leadership that builds a strong central office leadership team was not identified in the literature as a specific superintendent leadership behavior, but shared leadership is frequently discussed as important for both district leadership and school leadership. Bjork and Kowalski (2005) reported that superintendents should see themselves as a CEO of a learning organization, managing the district organizational structures to establish an effective culture. Fullan (2005) likens the distributed leadership

that must occur in successful schools with what must happen at the district level. Large-scale reform requires teams of people developing and driving a clear consistent strategy for improvement.

In discussing the importance of building a strong district leadership team, one superintendent responding in Part Four of the research survey stated, “I believe each person must realize their [*sic*] areas of strength and weakness within themselves [*sic*]. This will make a difference in their [*sic*] effectiveness as a leader. The people they are working with should help the superintendent by supporting those areas of weakness. It will take a team effort to become a successful leader.” In agreeing with the importance of a team approach to leadership at the district level, one board member wrote, “The superintendent needs the skills to put together a competent staff and organize them to a well-functioning cooperative team.”

8. The comments of West Virginia board of education members and superintendents suggest that developing a relationship of trust between the superintendent and the board of education members is an essential leadership behavior for superintendents.

Developing and maintain a strong relationship of trust between the superintendent and board of education members was a leadership behavior discussed by both superintendents and board of education members in the comments they provided in Part Four of the survey. Coleman (2003) surveyed superintendents and board of education members to study the congruence between superintendents’ and board of education members’ expectations of the superintendent and student achievement. Coleman (2003) concluded that:

The importance of the superintendent/school board relationship as a variable in student achievement may never be fully known. Prior research and this study have made strong arguments suggesting that the superintendent/board member relationship does have an impact upon student achievement because of the fact that the leadership of the organization is that which drives the vision (p 92).

Research findings on effective superintendents include the importance of good communication as essential to maintain good superintendent-board relations (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier & Glass, 2005).

In Part Four of this survey, one board member wrote, “A district’s ability to function, regardless of the superior qualities of the superintendent, is frustrated by a hostile board/superintendent relationship.” In agreement, one superintendent stated, “Leadership of the superintendent is as good as the BOE [*sic*]. If you have the BOE’s [*sic*] trust and support, you can change the school environment.”

Summary

While the 11 leadership behaviors identified in this study are seen as important to be an effective superintendent in West Virginia, the three leadership behaviors of communication, vision, and ethics were viewed by both superintendents and board of education members as essential to the success of superintendents in West Virginia, regardless of district characteristics. Superintendents should devote time and attention to establishing a clear and guiding vision for the school district, establishing effective and ongoing communication systems regarding their role in leading the district, and in being a model for moral and ethical decision-making in leading the school district.

Superintendents participating in this study view system improvement, community relations and political acuity significantly more important than do board of education members. In comparing these leadership behaviors to previous studies and current literature, the areas of system improvement, community relations and political acuity are increasing in importance due to the increased accountability for student performance and resulting stakeholder concern and involvement in the operation of the school district. Certification and training programs for current and aspiring superintendents should prepare candidates for leading system improvement, improving community involvement and relations and developing political acuity.

Participants in this study perceive that effective superintendents are able to create and build strong central office leadership teams. As the responsibilities of leading a school system become increasingly complex, it is essential for superintendents to develop the collaborative leadership skills needed to create central office leadership teams that model effective distributive leadership. Finally participants in this study perceive that it is essential for superintendents to develop and maintain relationships of trust with board of education members. Certification and training programs for current and aspiring superintendents should prepare candidates for building and maintaining effective relationships with board of education members and central office leadership teams.

Implications

1. The information on effective superintendents' leadership behaviors identified in this study can inform the programs of study and preparation for aspiring superintendents and the professional development programs for West Virginia superintendents and board of education members.

2. The findings of this study can be used to further define superintendent leadership behaviors as they appear in job postings for and evaluations of superintendents. Search firms and organizations assisting school districts in the filling of superintendent vacancies can use the findings of this study to seek applicants that demonstrate effective leadership behaviors.
3. The findings of this study can be used by boards of education and superintendents to better understand and discuss perceptions of the leadership behaviors needed to be an effective superintendent.

Recommendations

1. A national study on the same topic could be conducted to see if there are differences in the perceptions of West Virginia superintendents and board of education members concerning superintendent leadership behaviors and the perceptions of a national population.
2. A West Virginia qualitative study conducted on the same topic could provide further depth to the findings of this study or determine if the findings of that study are consistent with the findings of this study on superintendent leadership behaviors.
3. Based on the finding in this study regarding the effect of student achievement on superintendents' ability to focus on vision and organizational culture, a study could be conducted to examine the effect, if any, of students' low-socioeconomic status on the ability of superintendents to demonstrate leadership behaviors for vision and organizational culture that lead to the improvement of student achievement.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY COVER LETTER

Keith A. Butcher
1167 Armstrong Road
Summersville, WV 26651

January 11, 2014

Dear Board of Education Member:

I need your assistance. Please take ten minutes to complete the enclosed survey on the leadership behaviors of superintendents. Survey results will *not* be published at the individual or county level but will instead be compared by district characteristics (e.g, size, achievement level, and funding level). The results of this survey will be used to identify the leadership behaviors that you believe are most critical for superintendents. The survey results will be shared with you and can be used to inform those who aspire to the superintendency. The results could also be used by universities as they develop certification programs for superintendents in West Virginia. I am conducting this study to fulfill requirements for a doctorate in educational leadership at Marshall University.

Thank you for participating in this valuable study. Your time, experience, and responses are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Keith Butcher

APPENDIX B: SURVEY CONSENT FORM

January 11, 2014



| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Marshall University IRB | |
| Approved on: | 1/16/14 |
| Expires on: | 1/16/15 |
| Study number: | 556694 |

Survey Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*Superintendent and Local Board Member Perceptions Regarding Preferred Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia*” designed to analyze differences in perceptions concerning West Virginia superintendent leadership behaviors. The study is being conducted by Dr. Michael L. Cunningham, Leadership program Director for the Marshall University Graduate School of Education and Professional Development, and Keith Butcher. This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirements for Keith Butcher.

This survey is comprised of four short sections and will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your replies will be confidential, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate, you may either return the blank survey or you may discard it. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Returning the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Michael Cunningham at (304) 746-1912 or Keith Butcher at (304) 880-6827.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey and returning it, you are also confirming that you are **18** years of age or older.

Please keep this page for your records.

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,
Keith A. Butcher
Marshall University Doctoral Student
(304) 880-6827
kbutcher@access.k12.wv.us

APPENDIX C: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORM



www.marshall.edu

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
401 11th St., Suite 1300
Huntington, WV 25701

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205
IRB2 #00003206

January 16, 2014

Michael Cunningham, Ed. D.
Leadership Studies, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 556694-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Cunningham:

Protocol Title: [556694-1] Superintendent and Local Board Member Perceptions
Regarding Preferred Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West
Virginia

Expiration Date: January 16, 2015

Site Location: MUGC

Submission Type: New Project APPROVED

Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire January 16, 2015. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Keith Butcher.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia

*The Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia consists of four parts. **Part One** requests information about you. **Part Two** asks for your perceptions concerning leadership behavior for school district superintendents in West Virginia. **Part Three** asks you to rank order leadership behaviors for superintendents. **Part Four** asks for any additional comments you might have related to superintendent leadership behaviors.*

Part One: Please complete the following questions related to your experience and education.

1. How many years have you served as a board of education member? _____ Years

2. Place an "X" in the box that represents your highest level of education attainment.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | High School Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other Training or Certification | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bachelors Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> | Masters Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> | Doctorate Degree |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|

3. Name of county school district _____
Note: Survey results will not include individual or county data.

Part Two: Please read each statement and place an "X" in the box to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 4 | Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | | | | |
| 5 | Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | | | | |
| 6 | Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | | | | |
| 7 | Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | | | | |
| 8 | Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | | | | |
| 9 | Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | | | | |
| 10 | Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | | | | |
| 11 | Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | | | | |
| 12 | Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | | | | |
| 13 | Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | | | | |
| 14 | Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | | | | |

Part Three: After reviewing the following list of superintendent leadership behaviors, rank order the most critical four leadership behaviors with (1) being *most* important.

(1 = most important, 2= second most important, 3 = third most important, and 4 = fourth most important)

- _____ Leadership for vision and organizational culture
- _____ Leadership for policy and governance
- _____ Leadership for organizational management
- _____ Leadership for the instructional program
- _____ Leadership for system improvement
- _____ Leadership for budgeting and finance
- _____ Leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel
- _____ Leadership that demonstrates effective communication
- _____ Leadership for improving community relations
- _____ Leadership that demonstrates political acuity
- _____ Leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior

Part Four: Please add any additional comments you might have related to superintendent leadership behaviors.

Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia

*The Survey of Leadership Behaviors for Superintendents in West Virginia consists of four parts. **Part One** requests information about you. **Part Two** asks for your perceptions concerning leadership behavior for school district superintendents in West Virginia. **Part Three** asks you to rank order leadership behaviors for superintendents. **Part Four** asks for any additional comments you might have related to superintendent leadership behaviors.*

Part One: Please complete the following questions related to your experience and education.

1. How many years have you served as a district superintendent? _____ Years
2. Place an "X" in the box that best describes your highest level of education attainment.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Ed.Spec. (EdS) Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree |
|--|--|---|--|

3. Name of county school district _____
Note: Survey results will not include individual or county data.

Part Two: Please read each statement and place an "X" in the box to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 4 | Effective superintendents use leadership skills to establish a vision, goals and strategic plans that forward the district's mission. | | | | |
| 5 | Effective superintendents provide leadership that is aligned with federal, state and local laws and policies. | | | | |
| 6 | Effective superintendents demonstrate leadership behaviors in organizational management so that the system can accomplish the strategic goals set for the school district. | | | | |
| 7 | Effective superintendents provide leadership for curriculum and instruction. | | | | |
| 8 | Effective superintendents provide leadership for system improvement. | | | | |
| 9 | Effective superintendents provide leadership in the areas of finance. | | | | |
| 10 | Effective superintendents provide leadership for recruiting, selecting, developing and promoting qualified and motivated personnel. | | | | |
| 11 | Effective superintendents demonstrate good communication skills. | | | | |
| 12 | Effective superintendents provide leadership in community relations and involvement. | | | | |
| 13 | Effective superintendents demonstrate political acuity. | | | | |
| 14 | Effective superintendents model moral and ethical leadership. | | | | |

Part Three: After reviewing the following list of superintendent leadership behaviors, rank order the most critical four leadership behaviors with (1) being *most* important.

(1 = most important, 2= second most important, 3 = third most important, and 4 = fourth most important)

- _____ Leadership for vision and organizational culture
- _____ Leadership for policy and governance
- _____ Leadership for organizational management
- _____ Leadership for the instructional program
- _____ Leadership for system improvement
- _____ Leadership for budgeting and finance
- _____ Leadership for recruiting, developing and motivating personnel
- _____ Leadership that demonstrates effective communication
- _____ Leadership for improving community relations
- _____ Leadership that demonstrates political acuity
- _____ Leadership that demonstrates moral and ethical behavior

Part Four: Please add any additional comments you might have related to superintendent leadership behaviors.

APPENDIX E: SURVEY COMMENTS

Superintendent Comments

#1 Must build relationships and match your values and beliefs

I note that all behaviors are important for effective leadership, but these top 4 are core behaviors that influence all others.

I think it should say Leadership for policy and administration as the board is governing body who sets policy.

I am finding that it is difficult to lead when those in key positions need to be taken by the hand and guided step by step! Therefore, it is key to have an organizational plan ready with all the parts outlined and defined first in order to run an effective school system. As a new superintendent, there are so many things to consider that were never in my “radar” from past positions; thank goodness I do have a mentor: however there are things that come up that I did not even know to ask about!

Effective Leadership must reflect a vision that brings together all parts of the office of the superintendent and makes them work together for the good of students.

I chose those 4 behaviors because I felt that some of the other behaviors would be an end result if you demonstrated the four I chose.

I believe each person must realize their areas of strength and weaknesses within themselves. This will make a difference in their effectiveness as a leader. The people they are working with should help the superintendent by supporting those areas of weakness. It will take a team effort to become a successful leader.

Leadership is being respected so that the vision articulated is prioritized and implemented. Staff must believe that you live what you say. If they believe in you, they will see the vision and work toward it. Each employee must be valued for his/her role in the goal for students to learn. I believe it.

A strong leader provides an example and allows and promotes those in the organization to perform their duties by trusting them.

Transparency, understanding the political climate, make core budget matters and your chief business official has the proper knowledge, skill, experience to keep the system financially solvent, and always keeping the idea of moving forward.

I believe that a superintendent’s clarity with decision making is an important behavior. An effective superintendent is also a capacity builder throughout the system. Superintendents need a deep understanding of finances in the efficient operation of their district.

I feel it would be very helpful to have a mentor as a new superintendent. Many of the speed bumps that we encounter could be avoided with having the opportunity to speak with a seasoned veteran. Each of the above categories is important. Selecting four is difficult.

Leadership of the superintendent is as good as the BOE. If you have the BOE's trust and support you can change the school environment. My BEST work is the first year of a contract and usually the last year of NO support with the BOE.

All of the above are necessary in order for a superintendent to be an effective leader.

I put "somewhat" agree for finance and personnel because I have two very strong central office administrators who handle these two areas. This allows me to focus my time on instruction.

It's very difficult to be the instructional leader and provide leadership in all areas. Shared leadership at the county level should be in place as well as the school level.

It is difficult to select only 4 and rank order them. A superintendent needs to be a multi-faceted leader.

Although each of these areas are in many ways equally important a vision and organizational culture contains the other areas not marked 1-4. System improvement is the how of the vision and organizational culture –it is the process by which culture is constantly moving toward the vision. Recruiting, developing and motivating personnel and improving community relations are the who for the work to be accomplished for students. The what of the superintendents' behaviors is demonstrating moral and ethical practices.

Base all decisions on what is fair, right and the best for the children we represent. Excellent schools and dedicated public employees are America's hope for our country to be viable and strong in today's world.

The ability to handle stress greatly affects how these behaviors play out. Also, leadership as it pertains to working with board of education members is critical to the success of a superintendent.

In # 10 on page 1 I feel that the personnel director does not communicate the most qualified persons to the superintendent in all hiring. I would like to see the superintendent given more control over the hiring.

Communication is tied to community relations—political acuity—at least in my mind! Allowing those in your senior staff to do these jobs is also a key factor/behavior.

Effective communication skills are the basis or foundation for all other leadership behaviors. Each behavior above is critical to success, but each requires effective communication.

Board of Education Member Comments

A good superintendent is a servant leader. He/she cannot expect the system to move forward or morale to improve among faculty and staff if his/her leadership is not consistent, of high standards and are of true service to the school community. He/She does not have to be liked, but must be respected.

Responses are critically important but only as relevant to current district circumstances and future vision implementation. One size does not fit all (a concept that state and federal government seems to miss) Superintendents relationship with the elected board was not really addressed in this survey. A district's ability to function, regardless of the superior qualities of the superintendent, is frustrated by a hostile board/superintendent relationship.

- should have had a comment about supt and board behavior/communication
- not enough or more concerning being able to work with board.

One facture is the superintendent is only as good as the staff he has under him. They are as important as the superintendent. Most of the time they the ones seen at schools to carry out his or hers instructions. You're only as good as the staff you have working for or with you.

Of course my responses are influenced by my own experience in my county. And if I could continue leadership behaviors from Part 3, I would rank communication, vision and policy to quickly follow my #4 rank.

After reviewing the list above of superintendent's leadership behaviors, all of these can be ranked at #1 depending on the time of year. They are all important and a good superintendent will cover them all in time.

I have had the privilege of working with a superintendent who demonstrates the above qualities. As a result our board and superintendent have worked well together to implement and fulfill the goals of the district in providing the best educational opportunities for our students and an effective and positive workplace for our employees.

{Name redacted} County is fortunate to have a superintendent who demonstrates exceptional skills in the critical areas of leadership and communication. He is an individual who possess and articulates vision and planning in all aspects of job performance. I contribute these traits among others that enable him to be the effective leader that he is.

First and foremost, a superintendent needs to maintain finance. Without finance a county cannot survive. There is not enough emphasis on finance in superintendent training!!! Next, one must know one's instructional curi situation and what that entail to ensure

WESTEST score are adequate. Super - must get out into schools and be a facilitator of learning and motivate the staff! Super must know state policy and channel this down to county! The vision of the county must be sent by the super to all employees of the county. Super must involve all parents and community into decision making. I could go on and on!

The superintendent is very proactive in leadership.

Although I feel that all of these behaviors and competencies are critical for a successful school system the size of the county school system must be considered. In larger counties an effective superintendent may need assistant superintendents to concentrate more heavily on certain behaviors (i.e. instructional program; recruiting; finance; etc.) In smaller systems the superintendent may lead all of these functions and be equally engaged in the listed behaviors.

The complexity of state and local rules and regulations stifle a superintendent's ability to be a visionary leader. If our schools are to be forward looking, our leaders need room to be creative and innovative. Not the case now.

Must be a good communicator. Big problem for all school districts is misinformation. A district without vision is sure to be in trouble. Have to assume that a superintendent has a good academic background and understands outcome expectations.

My #4 covers it all. In taken over counties a super can be a dictator without local oversight. What we need most is superes who get academic results instead of being focused on processes which is a common K-12 trap. This avoids academic accountability and that has helped WV rank 48th.

The superintendent must be fair, firm and consistent in all their job requirements.

An effective superintendent has only the well-being of the students foremost. All decisions, programs etc. should be made with only the students in mind. This will then lead to benefit of the total school system.

Transparent to BOE and the public

The superintendent needs the skills to put together a competent staff and organize them to a well-functioning, cooperative team.

A superintendent needs to be an individual that can stand alone and be confident with his/her decisions. Also, the superintendent needs to be an individual that does not hold grudges but with whom you can disagree and discuss to arrive at the best decision.

While all of the above are important, the rank order shifts from year to year as well as within the year. The most skilled are able to make the shifts while keeping the overriding behaviors in play.

Each community is different with different values. To be successful a superintendent must obtain the support of the school staff and the community. Superintendents new to a community must make changes gradually and with the community and staff support.

Most duties are delegated to department heads a lot of policy and procedures is under state and federal mandate public relations and communications has been a weakness of all superintendents I have encountered. It is of greater importance than most consider Moral and ethical behaviors are traits that are “taken for granted.” Right or wrong this assumption is considered a characteristic A superintendent being a visionary is the characteristic I feel separates a good superintendent from a great superintendent

A superintendent that will be his/her own person and not be ruled by board, politics or special interest groups!

A superintendent needs to set a positive example for all employees. Don't ask others to do what you won't do yourself. Be willing to stand up and take responsibility for your actions and decisions. When things don't go exactly as planned, don't ask your central office employees to take the blame for mistakes you made.

I feel that one of the most important leadership skill by any Group leader is making sure that their employees are valued and supported. I believe that every principal, board employee (in supervising roles) and superintendents should read “Leaders eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't” by Simon Sinek. This book explains clearly what leadership is all about! We need this type of a leadership model in our educational system today.

I appreciate a superintendent that will listen and reason on problem matters. Ours is great!

- temperament - (even) – cool - calm. - Constant thought process for what is best for children. – Able to deal with direction under pressure (school sliding into river) with 500 people and Christmas gifts. Ability to back-track to clean up others messes and lies. (perhaps only important in counties with state control for 11+ years)

Superintendents should not dominate the Board or compete with the Board in the eyes of the Public. Superintendents should always consider the impact on the budget of any recommendation made. Superintendents should not dominate Board meetings. Superintendents should treat all Board of education members the same, in terms of giving information and in providing justification for recommendations, even those members with whom they disagree. Superintendents should not play favorites among Board of education members. Superintendents should be a resource for the orientation of new Board of education members.

My #1 choice is based on somewhat idealistic conditions since present WV law greatly limits the superintendent's ability to recruit qualified personnel.

To be effective, the superintendent needs to understand the entire instructional program-- not just reiterate messages from the st. dept. This includes motivating personnel and effective communication.

Being a leader does not consist of having a lot of Education or training. Being a leader is setting goals and then getting your people to believe in you and also wanting to reach those goals. Counties already have budgeting and finance people the superintendent just has to listen and work well with them. "Communication"

An effective superintendent must understand the difference between Leadership and Management. Superb leadership creates good management. People are led - budgets and buses are managed. #6 is actually 2 questions!

-willingness to listen to both BOE and staff within school, open to ideas. -confidence in decisions made. - long term vision, patience with policy.

You did not address relationship to Board #4--The role of the Board is to establish the vision working with the Superintendent who will implement goals and plans to achieve vision. This is (hopefully) cooperative effort between the Board: the super. The board then monitors progress and holds the superintendent accountable for organizational management. Vision and goals are essential for effective assignment of resources. #10-- limited by state code. #13--political acuity in board relations and funding sources. Board can help with this.

The above exercise seems "belittling" to the job. A superintendent, in order to be effective "should" be fluent in all those skills, depending on the task at hand---a true juggling act.

An Good Supt is an effected supt

I would like to think any superintendent would possess greater than average skills in all 11 areas for they are all areas of importance. Schools are all about teaching although many other areas are extremely important. Just as principals are the instructional leaders of their schools, superintendents should be the overall instructional leaders of their county, hence "#1."

There are so many challenges a superintendent must deal with, while in office. Effective communication is also very important as if the inner drive of the person to succeed.

The superintendent should not have finance as a primary concern, but in today's world of lower tax receipts, federal and state cuts, unfunded mandates, and aging facilities and rising costs, we must consider finances. In an ideal world, the leader would be concerned with instructional programs for students and staff. He/She would be knowledgeable of research-based programs to raise student achievement, to develop outstanding administrators and to all staff performance.

Leadership in consolidation of schools.

All are important. Hard to put in order.

You must have a superintendent who is willing to work with his/her board to do what is best for the county.

Visibility in community. Open door policy for community members. Immediate response when principals fail in their leadership roles.

Now after 3 superintendents under state takeover, I find that all 3 were very different but system improvement was and is the most important attribute.

Part Three was a difficult exercise. Selecting the top four and ranking them in order. I feel all of the behaviors are important.

Superintendent must be known as a “very” hard worker (may be the most important characteristic of all).

The superintendent must be the CEO of the county school system. They must form and cast a vision, then put together a high performance leadership team to work the plan.

An effective superintendent must have administration ability.

The use of good communication skills is imperative to a successful superintendent’s career.

A superintendent must show leadership in all of the above, and most of all have a positive relationship with the school board. One area that is vital to his or her success as manager of a school system is the central office staff. I’m now serving with the 5th superintendent in my 18th year, and two have been excellent, two average at their best, and one was very weak, and only stayed 6 months. Split school boards and teachers that resist change makes it very difficult for superintendents to achieve goals in any system. In rural counties such as ours, the good ones leave for the money, after going through training experience needed for that purpose.

The difference between rank order in almost all of these leadership behaviors is so narrow due primarily to the vast range of responsibilities a superintendent is required to oversee on a daily basis.

It is my belief that the superintendent has the potential to set the entire “tone” of a school system. While they essentially serve at the pleasure of the board, they (the superintendent) have the true power to make significant change.

Less interest in the position now - [county name redacted] fortunate in latest change of command.

Ranking the leadership behaviors in part #3 is extremely difficult because they are all very important and interrelated. All are critical and an effective superintendent must be able to equally weigh each concept and apply appropriately in various situations.

Excellent communication with board of education members—via email, text, telephone, etc., open to suggestions, sense of humor.

People skills are extremely important. I believe it is also important to be able to say “no” when needed.

I’m thankful we have a superintendent who chooses to be an active member of the community. He also exhibits the ability to deal with “sticky” issues effectively.

To listen and hear what the personnel have to say and what the public is talking about. To have 1st hand knowledge of what his or her personnel do. ex. walk in to a building ask the custodian how good are your cleaners and waxes? What do you need? Get to know the personnel. (who cares and who is there)

Trust! Trust is number 1! If you don’t trust your superintendent, every word they say goes in one ear and out the other. Everything they do---you read between the lines wondering---is there a hidden agenda? A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold. Prov. 22:1 (They will know you by the fruits you bear)

Superintendents must effectively work with their personnel and have intimate knowledge of who is getting the job done and who is not.

You must be able to trust your superintendent. Mutual respect is important to be able to accomplish all goals and objectives for your county.

A take charge person, with the ability to be a good listener that is not afraid to make tough decisions, with parents, staff, community, business representatives, and the media. Also, person is capable of saying I made a mistake or I need to further review your issue. Common sense can go a long way for any leadership person at a level. A high energy person is well respected by all in the community.

A superintendent must above all of these broad areas be able to recognize and adapt to all situations. For example, as a coach, having a game plan is essential to having an “effective” performance. This does not guarantee success, even if all players execute flawlessly. From an evaluation perspective a superintendent/coaches are the ones that “adapted” at halftime to improve on plan.

A good superintendent must be open minded, available to the public, willing to address all issues. He must be steadfast in his goals, doing what ever it takes to improve his schools and educational system while at the same time, staying within his budget.

Most important factor is hiring effective teachers and demonstrating a positive vision.

Each of the above is extremely vital and necessary for effective leadership.

The superintendent must be visible and active in schools and the community. You cannot run a district from your office and through email and memo!

All superintendents need to have the ability and knowledge to be a good superintendent. All employees, parents and students, must be able to look to the “Super” for guidance and leadership.

Superintendents need to work with their boards to advance student learning.

A good superintendent has all the above qualities.

Superintendents need to control what goes on in their county without micromanaging. They need to establish leaders in their schools who can conduct the everyday business of their respective schools. They also need to understand the role of their board and realize they do represent the people and deserve to be listened to with respect.

Must have good common sense.

“He who cannot be a good follower cannot be a good leader.”—Aristotle Effective Superintendents realize that they have areas of personal weakness, either by experience or training, and must build a team around them who have the expertise to assist them and lead in those areas, for example: finance. In those instances, effective superintendents must follow in order to lead.

It is impossible to rank the importance of these. Write other professionals and directors are built to assist different areas of the school district (i.e., financial, technology, maintenance, student development) it is necessary for the superintendent to have his/her pulse on all aspects of the school district.

A diversified background of classroom experience, elementary and secondary leadership positions is extremely helpful. A “textbook” superintendent or one with very limited educational experience is a serious handicap.

It is important to understand that counties are vastly different and may need different things from their superintendents.

As our district is going through finance issues, I lean towards this as being most important. Although I believe organizational management and effective communication is a must.

An effective superintendent builds a strong team that they rely on to make important decisions when it comes to finance, budgeting and instructional programming. It takes a strong well-rounded team supporting a superintendent to make them effective.

I believe it's critical, when you get qualified people to fill positions that you allow them some flexibility to manage situations without constant supervision.

The superintendent must have a good working knowledge of school laws. Good or bad, these are the basics which we work on.

1) must be up front and communicate well with board members 2) be willing to listen to staff with input. 3) show respect to staff and public.

Straight forward, Honest, moral individual that considers All facts before making decisions or Recommendations To the Local Board.

Communication and good people skills will be a good base for everything else. This is the same in all jobs and positions in my opinion.

In #10 on page 1, I feel that the personnel director does not communicate the most qualified persons to the superintendent in all hiring. I would like to see the superintendent given more control over the hiring.

An effective superintendent is able to hire effective staff that can perform some of the above activities important to schools listed above. Having a gifted management team will get the work done in the schools. The board should be able to enhance leadership activities and guidance to much vision inspired activities. The state board and dept of ed create much of the atmosphere we all must work under.

APPENDIX E: CURRICULUM VITA

Keith A. Butcher

EDUCATION

Marshall University

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, 2014

Marshall University

Education Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership, 2013

West Virginia University

Master of Arts in Education Administration, 1979

Concord College

Bachelor of Science in Music Education, 1975

CERTIFICATION

State of West Virginia, Teacher, Permanent

Specializations: Music Education (Grades 1-12)

Additional Endorsement: Elementary Education (Grades 1-8), Gifted Education (Grades K-8)

State of West Virginia, Principal Elementary, Permanent

State of West Virginia, Principal Secondary, Permanent

State of West Virginia, Vocational Administration, Permanent

State of West Virginia, Supervisor General Instruction, Permanent

State of West Virginia, Principal Elementary, Permanent

State of West Virginia, Superintendent, Permanent

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1975-1978 Teacher, Nicholas County Schools, Summersville, West Virginia

1978-1983 Elementary School Principal, Nicholas County Schools, Summersville, West Virginia

1983-1989 Teacher of the Gifted, Nicholas County Schools, Summersville, West Virginia

1989-1996 Elementary Principal, Nicholas County Schools, Summersville, West Virginia

1996-1998 Elementary Principal, Braxton County Schools, Sutton, West Virginia

1998-2002 Elementary Principal, Nicholas County Schools, Summersville, West Virginia

2002-2004 Assistant Director, Office of Instructional Services, West Virginia

Department of Education, Charleston, West Virginia

2004-2006 Executive Director, Office of Instructional Services, West Virginia

Department of Education, Charleston, West Virginia

2006-2007 Executive Director, Office of Federal Programs and Accountability, West Virginia Department of Education, Charleston, West Virginia

2007-2012 Executive Director, Regional Education Service Agency 1, Beckley, West Virginia

2012-2014 Superintendent, Fayette County Schools, Fayetteville, West Virginia

2014-Present Superintendent, Nicholas County Schools, Summersville, West Virginia

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

2004-2007 Member, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
2004-2005 Vice-President, National Association of State Title I Directors (NASTID)
2005-2006 President-Elect, National Association of State Title I Directors (NASTID)
2006-2007 President, National Association of State Title I Directors (NASTID)
2007 Chairperson, National Title I Conference, Long Beach, California
2011 West Virginia Counseling Program Advocate of the Year