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Female superintendents: Perceived barriers and successful strategies used to attain the superintendency in California

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**FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS: PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND SUCCESSFUL
STRATEGIES USED TO ATTAIN THE SUPERINTENDENCY IN CALIFORNIA**

By

Denise M. Wickham

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University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

2007

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by

Denise M. Wickham

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Joe. Without his encouragement, support, and confidence in me, this milestone in my life would have never happened. Joe has always been my inspiration, he's always had more faith in me than I ever had for myself. He has spent countless hours reading articles, inputting data and re-reading chapters. He has nursed my headaches and wiped my tears, for him I am forever grateful. My daughter, Jennifer, has been extremely patient as "mom" has been preoccupied for the past 2 ½ years working during the weekends and evenings on homework. Jennifer will undoubtedly understand the value of higher education, as throughout her life we've always attempted to instill in her a passion for learning. I must also share my admiration for my mother, who sacrificed her entire life for the family dream, which never materialized. Throughout it all, she always encouraged me to pursue my goals, to get as much education as possible, and to never give up. Jennifer and Mom not only have given up quality "girl" time, but have helped stuff envelopes, stamp postcards, and sort through papers. I've missed our weekends shopping and our spontaneous day trips to someplace fun. Now that this project is complete, I look forward to merging back into my family and I can't thank each and every one of them enough for believing in me.

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FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS: PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES USED TO ATTAIN THE SUPERINTENDENCY IN CALIFORNIA

Abstract

by Denise M. Wickham
University of the Pacific
2007

There exists a discrepancy with the number of females in the California superintendency being twenty-three percent, whereas seventy five percent of all educators are female. This study examined the demographics of the typical female superintendent in California as well as the perceived perceptions of these females in attaining the position. This study examined barriers to the superintendency and successful strategies utilized by females in attaining the public school superintendency. Data for this study were collected through a survey of the perception of barriers and perceptions of successful strategies. All two hundred forty nine California female superintendents were mailed surveys, one hundred twelve responded.

The barriers perceived by the respondents to be statistically significant were: demands of family, lack of ability to relocate, and exclusion from the *Good Old Boy*

Network. The successful strategies perceived were: increasing visibility in professional circles, obtaining a doctorate degree, formulating and adhering to a plan of action, preparing an effective resume, developing a strong self concept, obtaining family support, learning coping skills, strategically preparing for district level experience, increasing flexibility to relocate, and pursuing opportunities for advancement within the structure.

The outcomes from the survey results suggest that females need to take strategic steps in networking, planning for demands of family responsibilities, considering relocating in order to attain the position, and securing a stable career path. University programs need to consider adequately preparing females for the unique barriers that they may encounter while attempting to secure a superintendent position. Future studies comparing barriers for men in comparison to women and/or examining the perceptions of minority superintendents independently should be considered.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The role of the public school superintendent is complex and varies from district to district. All effective superintendents of schools must be well steeped in financial, operation, and political leadership, as well as equipped with skills in leading improvement for teaching and learning (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b, p. 177). School superintendents today work more than ever in an increasingly high stakes environment full of adversity (Patterson, 2007). Superintendents must balance administrative teams, school boards, community members, labor unions and family obligations to name a few. A majority of superintendents are faced with ever increasing accountability to both state and federal governments while acquiring fewer resources to do the job (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996). Superintendents are the “CEOs” of public schools districts, and just as in the corporate world, most of these positions are held by men. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the superintendency is characterized as being the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States. The typical superintendent is a married, white male, between 51-55 years old (Glass, Bjork, Brunner, 2000). Tallerico (2000) has found that the public school superintendency is unique in that it has been the slowest of all K-12 administrative positions to integrate women and people of color. This study examined the barriers to the superintendency and the

successful strategies utilized by females in attaining the public school superintendency.

The number of women in teaching advanced in the early 1900s. By 1920, the overall percentage of women educators peaked at 86%, while men held only 14% of all school positions including supervisory and administrative jobs in the United States (Blount, 1998). Ella Flagg Young assumed the superintendency of the Chicago Public Schools in 1909 and declared that “Women are destined to rule the schools of every city....it will be my aim to prove that no mistake has been made and to show cities and friends alike that a woman is better qualified for this work than a man.” (Blount, 1998, p. 1). Her vision, however, was not sustainable.

In 1880 women held 55% of all teaching positions and men held 45%. By 1950 women held 75% of all teaching positions while men held 25% (Blount, 1998). The most recent statistics available are not substantially different (National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Teaching became increasingly more structured, and work became monitored by an expanding system of administrative supervisors (Blount, 1998). The independence and curricular freedoms that teachers had enjoyed previously were minimized as administrators took on the work of making decisions. The male educators who remained had to assert their masculine qualities somehow; thus, many male teachers became administrators to control the labors of women just as fathers and husbands had done in the home. As administrators assumed more control, male teachers felt less comfortable remaining in the classroom. Men either left teaching or found other ways to pursue masculine

appropriate work within the profession. In the 1900s, teaching had become a woman's profession-controlled by men (Blount, 1998).

The current number of female superintendents nationwide varies from 13% to 18% (Glass, et al., 2000; Grogan & Brunner, 2005). Regardless of the exact number, the scarcity of females in the profession is unquestionable. Theories of hierarchical structures exist that may help explain the causes of the gender discrepancy (Kanter, 1976). Where women find themselves within the organizational structure is extremely important for upward mobility (Skrla, 2000). Some existing barriers cited by females in assuming the public school superintendency include: lack of encouragement, lack of professional network, limited access to formal and informal training, exclusion from the *Good Old Boy Network*, and lack of influential sponsors (Sharp, Malone, Walter & Supley 2000).

For women, the superintendency has not taken advantage of the strengths they can bring to the profession. Age and prior experience continue to be particularly disadvantageous for women. Women are appointed to their first administrative position later than men. Men generally begin their administrative experience between the ages of 25 and 30 whereas females typically are appointed to administrative positions when they are between the ages of 31-40 (Glass, 2000). Women spend an average of fifteen years in the classroom before seeking an administrative position; men spend an average of five years. Boards are typically looking for candidates who have moved through several chairs of administrative ranks, including principal positions and central office experience. This has led to a pool of 50-55 year old women looking for their first superintendencies. Boards often do not want to hire

superintendents who are nearing retirement age (Tallerico, 2000). Glass (2000) found similar findings when researching the question “Where are all the women superintendents”? The results of his study are as follows:

1. Women are not in positions that normally lead to the superintendency.
2. Women are not gaining superintendent’s credentials in preparation programs.
3. Women are not as experienced or as interested in district wide fiscal management as men.
4. Women are not interested in the superintendency for personal reasons.
5. The *Glass Ceiling* exists and school boards are reluctant to hire female superintendents.
6. Women enter the field of education for different reasons.
7. Women enter the profession too late.

This study supported the fact that only 13% of superintendents nationwide are female and of those, women are typically older than most men. Although these barriers exist, there have been studies that address successful strategies and promising careers for females aspiring to the superintendency. Attaining the superintendency has led to a fulfilling, purposeful career. Personal accounts of females in the position create optimism for aspiring, female superintendents (Eakle, 1995). Through male sponsorships, supportive families, and determination, a body of women have made it to the top and continued to survive in the superintendency (Kowalski & Stouder, 1999). Tallerico (2000) addressed overt discrimination and its implications. She described means to overcome some barriers and specific strategies for interviewing

and networking. Successful strategies cited by researchers have included developing strong interpersonal skills, organizational relationships, knowledge about instructional issues of literacy and numeracy and the ability to balance family and professional obligations (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). Certain actions considered beneficial to career success among female educators include identifying and maintaining a sponsor, becoming more visible professionally, and obtaining the support of family and friends (Kowalski & Stouder, 1999).

Problem Statement

Considering 75% of K-12 teachers are women (National Center for Educational Statistics, US Department of Education, 2004), it would be reasonable to assume the majority of individuals in the position of the superintendency would also be women. However, women continue to be underrepresented among the ranks of the public school superintendency. According to the most comprehensive study in America, only 13% of females nationwide held the superintendent position in 2000, (Glass, et al., 2000). While the latest statistics in California reveal more promising results, women are still underrepresented in the public school superintendency. In California 23.5% of superintendents are female, still far below the number of females in education as a whole (School Services of California, February, 2007). There is a discrepancy between the pool of educators being 75% female and those in the top position of the educational systems. In spite of the fact that the Office for Civil Rights has prohibited discrimination based on sex (Title VII, Section 86.51, OCR, US Department of Health and Human Services) since 1964, a severe gender gap

continues to exist in the public school superintendency. This research attempted to determine barriers that may account for the discrepancy.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived barriers women encountered and successful strategies they employed while attempting to secure the public school superintendency in California. This study summarized the typical demographic profile of the female superintendent in California. Perceived barriers these women encountered were documented. Finally, it was important to determine successful strategies women used in attaining their position. This study also described what female superintendents believed were the factors that contributed to their success in attaining the superintendency.

Significance of the Study

There exists a need to determine why these untapped resources of women leaders are not being utilized fully in the California public school superintendency. Education deserves the benefit of the diverse perspectives and experiences that different kinds of educators can bring to school administration. There is obviously talent and potential among the teaching ranks of which the majority are women. This pool of talent should be tapped equally in seeking leaders of our educational institutions. Equal opportunity in employment is guaranteed by Title VII; it is the law to provide women an opportunity to become a school superintendent. All children should see both genders and all colors in leadership roles in every occupation and institution, including education. Finally, it is morally objectionable to ignore

inequities in the attainments of men, women and people of color. Equalizing opportunity is the right thing to do (Tallerico, 2000, p. 148).

This study may be beneficial to female educators aspiring to the superintendency. The shared experiences of current superintendents should provide a wealth of information regarding the barriers that exist, means to overcome those barriers, and specific strategies for successful attainment of the position. Knowing the skills and strategies necessary for females aspiring to the superintendency will be beneficial for universities and professional organizations who are preparing females to assume the role of the highest position in education. This study may serve as a resource guide for those in positions of hiring superintendents (school boards) to ensure a conscious awareness of perceived discriminatory practices. This awareness may lead to equal access for females and provide females with a greater opportunity for acquiring the superintendency. Universities involved in school administration and preparation programs can use this information to provide useful preparation for aspiring superintendents.

The superintendency is an important educational leadership position for America's schools. The search for and selection of superintendents are among the most significant responsibilities of school boards (Norton, et al., 1996; Tallerico, 2000; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). Providing fair and open access to potential candidates of quality is an important part of exercising this responsibility (Tallerico, 2000).

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the barriers women perceived they encountered in their pursuit of the public school superintendency in California?
2. What are the specific strategies female superintendents perceive as being effective in attaining the public school superintendency in California?
3. Do perceptions of barriers and successful strategies differ between females employed by type of district (unified, high school, elementary)?

Definition of Terms

Barrier: Any factor or obstacle that hinders career advancement to the next level in administration or management (Shakeshaft, 1998).

District Type

Unified: A school district that comprises elementary and secondary schools with one governing board and administrative team.

High School: A school district that is comprised typically of high school(s) with one governing board and administrative team.

Elementary: A school district that is comprised typically of K-8 school(s) with one governing board and administrative team. Some may be K-6 districts, more commonly found in Southern California.

Gatekeeper: This term can be the school boards themselves or the professional search firms hired by school boards to search and recruit candidates for the superintendency (Chase & Bell, 1990).

Glass Ceiling: An unacknowledged discriminatory barrier that prevents women and people of color from rising to positions of power or responsibility, as within a corporation (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000).

Good Old Boy Network: This term describes an informal system of networking between men whereby they help each other get to the top of an organization (Hudson, 1993).

Perception: The impressing and feelings of the participant that become part of the data to be used in attempting to understand a setting (Patton, 2002).

Sponsor: A mentor, teacher, or coach whose functions are to make introductions or to train a person to move effectively through the system; to promote that person for promising opportunities within the organizational structure (Kanter, 1976).

Superintendent: The superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the school district and is hired by the school board to manage the administrative affairs of the school district (Norton, et al., 1996).

Organization

This dissertation has been divided into five chapters. Introducing the study and determining the research questions driving the study have been included in Chapter I. Chapter II includes a review of the literature pertinent to the under representation of women in the superintendency. Chapter III provides a description of the methodology utilized to conduct the study, indicating the collection and analysis of the data. Limitations and assumptions also have been addressed. Chapter IV summarizes the data collected through quantitative measures. Finally, Chapter V

includes a summary of the study and its findings, conclusions and recommendations for practice, aspirants, and further study. A comprehensive reference list and appendices are attached following Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived barriers and successful strategies women encountered while attempting to secure the public school superintendency in California. By administering a questionnaire to current female superintendents in California, this researcher determined the successful strategies these females perceived to be beneficial for attaining the superintendent position. The personal and professional demographics of existing female superintendents in California were also examined.

This chapter review includes a historical perspective based on women's struggles to achieve gender equity in the school superintendency. Data have been presented to provide evidence of a gender discrepancy. Theories of organizational structure have been summarized, and these have alluded to possible causes of the gender discrepancy. Studies from various states have been cited, establishing some perceived barriers that exist elsewhere. The most recent comprehensive study of the American superintendency will be referred to frequently as the data from this study are replicated only every ten years (Glass, et al., 2000). Successful strategies for attaining the superintendency as posed in the literature have been reviewed. The role of professional search firms, otherwise known as gatekeepers, will be addressed.

Finally, implications of the literature and current trends for the future of women in the superintendency have been summarized.

The public school superintendency is a complex and multifaceted position. Today's superintendent must be an effective decision maker. He or she must possess strong financial, operational and political leadership skills, while also being equipped in leading improvement curriculum and instruction (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006a).

School superintendents today more than ever work in an increasingly high stakes environment full of adversity (Patterson, 2007). The superintendent must be prepared to balance administrative teams, school boards, community members, labor unions and family obligations to name a few. All superintendents today are faced with ever increasing accountability to both state and federal governments while typically acquiring fewer resources to do the job. The superintendent must also be a generalist and be willing to delegate authority to subordinates with specific duties and expertise (Sharp & Walter, 2004).

Superintendents are the CEOs of public school districts, and just as in the corporate world, most of these positions are held by men. Today's typical superintendent is a married, white male, between 51-55 years old. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the superintendency is characterized as being the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States (Glass, et al., 2000). By examining the history of hiring in administration, it appears that women who aspire to this level still remain at a disadvantage. Although there are more women in education, the administrative ranks still remain predominately male and predominantly white (Alston, 2000).

Historical Perspective

To fully understand the superintendency and the dominant gender within it, a brief review of the original structure of teaching is imperative. Men dominated the teaching profession in the early 1800s, working by themselves in schoolhouses throughout the country. By the mid-1800s, an interesting trend in educational employment developed in parallel with the emergence of female teachers. Local and state officials created the domain of school administration, a realm reserved from the beginning for men. Men were seen as the authority figures, controlling the labors of women just as fathers and husbands had done in the home (Blount, 1998). Later in the 1800s, the male/female ratios of teachers were nearly balanced, but by the early 1900s, women held 70% of all teaching positions. The peak emerged in 1920, with 86% of all school positions held by women and only 14% of those being held by men (Blount, 1998). Ella Flagg Young, (as cited in Blount, 1998) assumed the superintendency of the Chicago Public Schools in 1909 and declared that “Women are destined to rule the schools of every city,” (Blount, 1998, p.1). Her vision, however, has not materialized.

As male administrators assumed more control in education, male teachers felt less comfortable doing women’s work and either left teaching or found ways to enter the predominately male world of administration. This did not in itself cause the demise of women in administration. The aftermath of World War II had a devastating impact on the proportion of women in educational administration. The G.I. Bill of Rights provided grants for scholastic expenses and drastically increased

the proportion of males in superintendencies because many men used these funds to obtain administrative credentials and thus respectable salaries. Not only had men been enticed into education, but they also had been tracked into leadership positions at the expense of women's opportunities and often with federal government support (Blount, 1998). A backlash against single women educators and a rigid realignment of gender roles in schools, created a rapid decline from which there has been little recovery to the present (Blount).

Trends in the superintendency have been evident throughout the 20th century. Females began to integrate the superintendency with women's representation increasing from about 9% in 1910 to a high of 11% in 1930. However, as the role moved to extreme segregation by sex, women's representation hit an all time low of 3% in 1970 (Tallerico & Blount, 2004).

After 1970, a more promising trend emerged. In 1970, only one woman held a state superintendency; whereas in 1998, there was evidence of a 32% increase, with seventeen women holding the position (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). These researchers believed that advances made during the civil rights initiatives set the stage for the increase in female superintendents. Specifically they stated:

The enactment of the Title IX Educational Amendment of 1972 led to the dissolution of low quotas on the number of women who could enroll in colleges and universities and concomitant increases in the proportions of women earning administrative credentials. Similarly, the Women's Educational Equity Act of 1974 provided federal funding for numerous projects designed to dismantle sex-based inequities in education. These funds

planted seeds for the support and growth of both education-related sex equity research and action oriented assistance to prospective women administrators.

(p.646)

Furthermore, women in the work place were significantly affected by Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972. An educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance was prohibited by Title IX from gender discrimination. The passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which established the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, indicated that prejudice against minorities and women was the greatest barrier to their advancement. Both Title IX and the case against the glass ceiling should have offered groundbreaking ideas on ways in which women were to be given greater representation in numbers and visibility in top management and decision making positions. Although laws now exist to protect women from discrimination as they move through the layers of education, the data do not support that there has been much progress over the years since these laws were enacted. In 2003, women constituted 46.6% of the U.S. workforce but only held 10% of the senior management positions in Fortune 500 companies (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Although there has been a slight increase in the number of women serving across the positions in school leadership, the overall profile for female superintendents during the past century reports very little growth (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b).

Females Today

Glass (2000) reported that the number of female superintendents increased from 6.6% in 1992 to 13.2% in 2000, and although these data indicate progress, they also confirm a dramatic under representation of women in relation to white males.

The greatest gains in the 1990s were in the suburban and urban districts serving 3,000-24,999 students.

The disparity between men and women in the superintendency is paradoxical; the field of education is dominated by women serving as teachers, elementary principals and central office administrators while the superintendency is dominated by men. Thus, the absence of women in the highest position of a school district is unquestionably a concern for females seeking the superintendency. Education deserves the benefit of diverse perspectives and experiences that different kinds of educators can bring to school administration. Children should see both genders and all colors in leadership roles. The inequities in the achievements of men versus women should not be ignored (Tallerico, 2000).

Women comprise 51% of the total population in the United States and therefore it would be reasonable to assume women would also comprise 51% of superintendent positions (Shakeshaft, 1998). Studies conducted have concluded that only 13%-18% of superintendent positions are held by women (Glass, et al., 2000; Wolverton & Macdonald, 2001). Women are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration (Shakeshaft, 1998).

Although women make up the minority in the superintendency, they are older, have had more years in education and are more highly educated than their male counterparts. Tallerico (2000) found that women tend to have more teaching experience (average of 15 years) in comparison to men (average of 5 years). This typically means that women are applying for their first superintendencies later in life. Although school boards and consultants contend to not practice age discrimination,

50 years old is viewed as the twilight of the ideal career path, not the time to start looking for a school superintendency (Tallerico, 2000). Shakeshaft (1998) reports that women in educational administration tend to be in their mid to late 40s.....the higher the position they hold, the older they are (p.57). Women were also found to be more highly educated with 52% of female superintendents holding doctoral degrees in comparison to only 41% of men (Glass, 2000).

Female superintendents also report participating in more professional development activities in the curriculum and instruction area. For example, 73% of women participated in the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development-sponsored activities compared to 39% of men (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

Anecdotal evidence from United States professors of educational administration indicates a sharp shift in student demographics (those in educational administration programs) during the past 20-25 years—from predominately males in their late 20s or early 30s to predominantly females in their late 30s and early 40s (Tallerico, 2000). Comments from one of the professors in this study bring this statistic to life:

Our typical person entering educational administration now is a 40-42 year old female who has been teaching 17 years. With that pool entering their studies today, and the traditional notion that you've got to go through the chairs, what are we looking at? We're looking at 54-55 year old women looking for their first superintendencies. Boards say, "Why hire them? In another year, they'll be eligible to retire, and we'll begin our looking again."

So is there age discrimination? Yes. Absolutely. Does that limit women for getting into the superintendency? Absolutely...(p.77).

Another area that inadvertently limits women is their choice of site level experience. Most superintendents begin their careers as teachers, then move into site level administration and onto district administration prior to attaining the superintendency. However, 31% transitioned directly from site level administration into the superintendency. Men, especially, make this leap through the high school principalship. Females have sometimes been considered at a disadvantage if their principalship experience has been at the elementary level instead of the high school level (Sharp & Walter, 2004).

Wolverton and Macdonald's (2001) research found there are at least two main causes for the lack of females in the superintendency. First, more high school principals are men than women, and many believe the high school principalship is the position that most clearly resembles the superintendency. Second, the expertise of search consultants are valued by school boards and these firms are regularly used when districts are searching for a superintendent. These consulting firms typically seek high school principals to recruit applicants for these positions. In fact, one consulting firm used this analogy (my personal apologies to Korean War Veterans):

There's a big difference between serving as a high school principal and as an elementary principal....It's almost like you've been to Vietnam and back again if you've been a high school principal. And you were only exposed to the Korean War in the elementary principalship. That's the board bias. And guess what? I tend to agree (Tallerico, 2000, p. 30)

Thus recruitment strategies may contribute to the gender gap as white males are likely to benefit because men currently occupy assistant superintendencies and secondary principalships in far greater numbers than do females (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

Although, the high school principalship is one route to the superintendency, there are others that also dramatically increase the chances that a white male, rather than a female or non-majority male will meet the experiential background criteria. Higher proportions of female superintendents have occupied the superintendency position in the smallest local school districts across the United States (Marshall, 1986; Tallerico & Bursyn, 1996), thereby giving the size progression advantage to males. However, women are gaining access within rural or small-town districts. Rural districts require leadership that is very personal, which many times fit with the perceived female style of leadership (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). The site level and other district level experiences are essential for those aspiring to the superintendency; however, some of the primary gatekeepers tend to be the search firms who determine who should have access to the superintendent position (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b).

Professional Search Firms

Tallerico (2002) examined the role of gatekeepers to the superintendency: school boards and professional search firms. She found that although encouragement and support of women appear to be increasing, individual acts by consultants and board of education members have neither altered organizational practices nor enhanced the social responsibility essential to changing the male-dominated system.

After addressing school board tendencies to hire professional consulting firms (which favor male candidates) and boards' tendencies to hire final candidates and those who are most like them, Tallerico suggested a strong need for professional development of school boards. By raising board members' awareness of the factors that limit diversity in candidate pools, boards can become more sensitive and proactive in providing equitable access to all potential candidates. Chase and Bell (1990) determined that gatekeepers' speech about women's actions and situations was one of the processes that continued to contribute to the male dominance in the profession. Some powerful cases where board members were specifically asked by their consultants such questions as "Is this district ready for a woman? Is this board ready for a female superintendent?" These questions are blatantly biased and potentially prejudicial to the entire search and selection process (Tallerico, 2000). Tallerico concluded that without professional development that increases awareness of existing biases, these gatekeepers will continue to suppress women's ascension to the top of educational organizations. Unnecessarily limiting access to the superintendency is not a practice the profession can afford.

Consultants can work in favor of equity and diversity. Tallerico (2000) also found some consultants who not only acknowledge gender biases that exist in school leadership, but they work with school boards to turn those around. One firm specifically suggested to school boards that the women brought forward have had to work twice as hard to get this far, thus they are very hard working, competitive applicants. Another consultant, in bringing forward a number of female applicants, pointed out to the districts he represented, "It would be absurd and arrogant to believe

that 50% of the population doesn't have leadership potential. That just doesn't make sense, and it cuts too many people out of the process" (Tallerico, 2000, p. 111).

Miller, Washington, and Fiene (2006) reported that the primary skill sought by professional search firms was the ability to network successfully. Networking is an important trait as it is considered necessary for managing the often conflicting demands of the various stakeholder groups seeking to influence schools. Because these networks were part of the good old boy system of informal influence, women and minorities were at a decided disadvantage. Dana and Bourisaw (2006b) also reported that women who aspire to increasingly stronger and more influential leadership positions can find pathways to reaching that goal considerably strengthened when they establish strong and influential networks.

Styles of leadership must also be considered when searching for causes regarding the lack of females in the male dominated position of superintendent. Coleman (2003) believed if the term orthodox is taken to mean the norm, then orthodox leadership is male. The cultural identification of women as caring, domestic and implicitly of lesser importance and status should be examined. The tensions of society's expectation of women and men become apparent in the role female leaders play. Specifically she stated:

Those women who have achieved positions which are held predominantly by men have realized, consciously or unconsciously, that there are social roles and expectations governing the role of females from the culture. They must become 'abnormal' women; they must transcend the social expectations of femaleness in order to aspire to the socially prescribed role of leader. (p.327)

Moreover, Coleman contended that patriarchy continues to be a dominant force in society. The impact of gender on leadership is considerable in terms of differential access to power, as it has an influence on the self-perceptions of men and women as leaders, and on their own professional and social experience.

Structural Theories

As demonstrated in the previous section, school boards' and consulting firms' biases, and societal expectations can all be considered factors for the lack of females within the superintendency. However, Kanter (1976) suggested organizational structures shape the gender composition of the leaders at the top. Kanter's structural theory can be incorporated into the educational organization by considering this organization with its own set of social structures.

According to Kanter's framework of explanations for organizational behavior, gender differences do not exist; the causes for the disparity are the result of differences in ambition, mobility, work style, efficacy, and location within the organizations' social structure. Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) supported this with evidence of a glass ceiling within the organizational structure of the superintendency. They suggest:

It's not the ceiling that's holding women back, it's the whole structure of the organization in which we work; the foundation, the beams, the walls, the very air. The barriers to advancement are not just above women, they are all around them.we must ferret out the hidden barriers to equity and effectiveness one by one. (p. 136)

Kanter would agree. The structural conditions actually shape gender differences in organizations. People in low mobility or blocked mobility situations tend to limit their aspirations, seek satisfaction in activities outside of work, dream of escape and create sociable peer groups in which interpersonal relationships take precedence over other aspects of work. This seems to happen regardless of gender and is considered a structural phenomenon. In contrast, people at the upper levels of organizations tend to be more motivated, involved, and interested in their jobs than those at the lower levels (Kanter, 1976).

On the surface, this theory may implicate that women have limited aspirations. However, Kanter (1976) concluded that the more advantageously one is placed within the organization the more likely the person is to maintain higher aspirations and to be encouraged in keeping them. High mobility situations foster rivalry, instability, and concern with intrinsic aspects of the job. Low-mobility situations, however, foster camaraderie, stability, and concern for extrinsic rewards, both social and monetary. When people are faced with advancement opportunities, they compare themselves upward in rank and begin seeing themselves associated with peers above them, known as anticipatory socialization. Thus, it can be concluded that initial placement in an opportunity structure helps determine whether a person will develop the aspirations and orientations that make further mobility possible, regardless of gender. Within school organizations, the employees often placed in positions of upward mobility tend to be male. For example, high school principalships are dominated by men (Wolverton & MacDonald, 2001). People well placed in the opportunity structure and those with aspirations to move upward, make

connections that give them organizational power. There is evidence to suggest that a high status male mentor bringing a woman up the ladder provides a visible sign to subordinates that the woman does have influence upward and outside the sphere. Women can be more effective in attaining a higher position if it appears that they have organizational power that is supported by a man (Kanter, 1976). Since school boards hire superintendents, this credibility and exposure to the board would provide tremendous leverage for the aspiring female.

Patterson (2007) states that although mentors have been cited as a solid source of help, women claim that many of their models have come from men. Females may have difficulty mentoring other females because competition gets in the way. Dana and Bourisaw (2006b) also found women to be non-supportive of other women. Men and women are accustomed and conditioned to working under the direction and leadership of men; they are not accustomed to performing work that meets the expectation of a woman CEO (p. 161). Women sabotage other women. The term for this phenomena has been described as horizontal violence (Freire, 1970, as cited in Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). This describes “the curious behavior of members of oppressed groups who lash out at their own peers in response to oppression instead of attacking their oppressors,” (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b, p. 169). It seems that low self-esteem with self-deprecation creates a system where women attack other women in order to reduce the pain or discomfort of feeling devalued. The threatened women make comments that bring successful women to their own level of lack of self-confidence (p. 170).

The social construction of maleness in U.S. society and within the school superintendency suggests that the superintendency is incompatible with the social construction of femaleness (Skrla, 2000). Stromquist (cited in Skrla, 2000) adds this to the study:

The position most resistant to change has been the top administrative job of school superintendent...It also appears that educational boards-and the communities they represent-have continued to express a belief that the position of superintendents should be limited to men. [Another] element might be that since the position of superintendent is closely linked to power, white men are most reluctant to share this type of position with competing social groups, such as women or racial minorities. In that case, what may be at work is men's active gatekeeping role; a role which, it must be noted, has not been sufficiently challenged by the existing legislation (p.299).

Trustworthiness and predictability within organizations are signified by social homogeneity (e.g., belonging to social groups such as those based on similarity of gender or shared experiences). School boards express preferences for men over women as related to their need to trust and predict their superintendents' behavior (Bell, 1988). Many board members in Bell's study mentioned that gender had been a topic of discussion prior to hiring a new superintendent. Board members (who are predominantly male) expect a superintendent to assert authority, but when the superintendent is female, those expectations are contradicted by cultural expectations of women. Thus, not only do male dominance and stereotyped preferences create pressure toward social conformity, but structures and expectations shape the

conditions of the superintendency. It has also been found that demographic similarity generates interpersonal attraction and trust, and with the majority of school board members continuing to be male, it seems fitting that the comfort level continues to support men in the position (Hess, 2002). Most organizations have been created by and for men and are based on male experiences (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Even though women have entered the workforce in droves in the past generation, and it is generally agreed that they add enormous value, organization definition of competence and leadership are still predicated on traits stereotypically associated with men: tough, aggressive, and decisive (Meyerson & Fletcher). Theories of organizational structures being at the root of the problem have been addressed in the literature for decades. Ortiz and Marshall (1995) elaborated that organizational structures condition women's behaviors and attitudes in the work place. Izraeli (1983) in studying Kanter's proportions theory found that there was a stronger impact on stereotypical views of women than of men. Specifically, he concluded that:

People who choose the wrong occupation for their sex, such as the female mechanic or the male kindergarten teacher often pay the price of being made to feel that they are deviant or in some important way not in place. They face the double problem of proving that despite their occupational choice their femininity or masculinity is not open to questions and that despite their sexual identity, their occupational skill is not diminished. (p. 164)

As time progresses and more females attain the superintendency position, the organizational norms and structures are beginning to be reconstructed (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). Women dominate the teaching profession, have been in education

longer, and are higher qualified for the superintendency. Their skills and contributions to education cannot be overlooked (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006a).

Barriers Summarized

Although organizational structures and societal expectations may explain the gender discrepancy, there are other possible barriers that may be preventing women from attaining the superintendency. Wolverton and Macdonald (2001) suggested that women may be ascending up the wrong path. Whereas, Kanter (1976) believed that there are deeper underlying causes, such as the social construction of the job itself. Kanter also supported the premise of the organizational structure within society itself as an underlying cause for the lack of females in top positions. Cotter, Hermesen, Ovadia and Vanneman (2001) implied that the Glass Ceiling represented greater discrimination at the top of hierarchy where the pool of available women has become superior to the pool of men.

Consulting firms as the gatekeepers to the superintendency have also been blamed for seeking male candidates over females. These professional consulting firms tend to favor male candidates; the consultants themselves are often male, former superintendents who rely on past networks and subconsciously relate to someone like themselves (Chase & Bell, 1990). Women may not yet be adept at getting themselves noticed by these networks (Vail, 1999). Other factors suggested that contribute fewer women in the superintendency include lack of male sponsors, unwillingness to relocate, lack of encouragement, and stereotyped assumptions of female leaders (Coleman, 2003; Kanter, 1976).

Raising a family, considered in conflict with attaining and maintaining an effective superintendency, was not seen as a barrier (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). Women reported strong support by their spouses or partners in managing family responsibilities. Regardless of gender, married superintendents will need strong support from their spouses (Craig & Hardy, 1996).

In one of the most comprehensive studies of the superintendency, Kowlaski and Stouder (1999) suggested the following barriers for limiting administrative opportunities for women:

1. Lack of family support
2. Lack of employment opportunity
3. Gender discrimination
4. Lack of collegial support
5. Familial responsibilities
6. Lack of self-confidence
7. Racial/ethnic discrimination
8. Personal lack of tenacity (p. 6)

Overall the findings suggested that females were hesitant to report that gender discrimination had been a barrier. Only 38% of superintendents reported discrimination; yet, 38% more of the respondents were not sure. Follow up interviews were conducted and, in general, the women in the study indicated that they were reticent to authenticate having experienced discrimination because they lacked conclusive evidence to that effect. They appeared, nevertheless, to harbor suspicions of having been negatively affected due to discrimination (Kowlaski & Stouder, 1999).

At the same time, Wiggins and Coggins (2001) found that when superintendents select candidates based on qualifications, gender was not found to be a factor.

Relocation is still considered by 88% of female superintendents as one of the major barriers for women aspiring to the superintendency. To accommodate this, commuter marriages have become more common with 20% of female superintendents reporting this change in their lifestyle in order to assume the position (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). One superintendent described the job as migrant work, packing up every few years to move to a distant community and going through the resettlement process all over again (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). The lack of mobility and role of wife and mother continue to be bigger barriers for women than for men (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b).

Grogan and Brunner (2005) provided some optimistic data. As more women serve as superintendents, school boards may consider women as less of an anomaly. School boards are already viewing women with backgrounds in curriculum and instruction as qualified, viable candidates. As the numbers of female superintendents increase, as more teachers and administrators work with more female superintendents, women will be seen more often as role models for others.

Strategies Utilized for Bridging the Gender Gap

In spite of the startling statistics and perceived barriers, women have succeeded in becoming district superintendents. If this trend continues, women will make strides in closing the gender gap that has existed for generations. For example, the latest data from School Services of California showed 249 female superintendents and 805 male superintendents out of 1,054 in the state. It can be assumed that these

women leaders have utilized successful strategies for attaining the CEO position in public schools. Factors that may advance career opportunities for women were specifically cited in the 2000 Study of the American School Superintendency (Glass, et al., 2000). Although not specifically addressing the superintendency, Glass, et al., suggested the following strategies for career advancement:

1. Demonstrate an emphasis on improving instruction
2. Knowledge of instructional process
3. Ability to maintain organizational relationships
4. Interpersonal skills
5. Responsiveness to parents and community groups. (p.88)

As might be expected, there are some overlapping suggestions for advancement to the superintendency for women. Grogan and Brunner (2005) reported that their boards hired them to be educational leaders rather than managers. They believe that as more school boards value administrators with backgrounds in curriculum and instruction, women would become more attractive candidates. Other factors that were commonly reported in their findings were: strong interpersonal skills, ability to maintain organization relationships and responsiveness to parents and community. These researchers believed women were strong in parent and community relations due to their typical path via the elementary route:

Although sometimes cited as a disadvantage, familiarity with elementary-level experience as a teacher, principal and often central-office supervisor for elementary education actually prepares superintendents well. For example, they often are more knowledgeable about the fundamental instructional issues

of literacy and numeracy-important considerations if superintendents are expected to be instructional leaders. They also have more experience working with diverse communities of parents and other caretakers who are more involved at the elementary school level than any other level. (p.6)

Vail (1999) believed that as school boards increase their emphasis on student achievement, they are valuing instructional leadership more than finance and business ability. The unofficial, traditional route to the superintendency has been through the high school principalship, a position rooted in organizational and financial understanding (Tallerico, 2000). Female administrators who wanted to be superintendent candidates had deliberately served on facilities, finance, and/or construction committees to build up their resumes (Vail, 1999). Boards of education, while emphasizing that the instructional program is important, do not want an inexperienced superintendent in fiscal management (Glass, 2000). These three studies indicate attitudes are changing (Vail, 1999; Tallerico, 2000; Glass, 2000).

Boards can also help female candidates by not necessarily using professional search consultants for recruiting qualified candidates. Men are more likely than women to think professional search firms' promotion of their candidacy was instrumental in getting them hired (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). Search consultants may be one of the causes at the root of this gender gap. Until school boards become more interested in seeking a diverse group of candidates, and thus use alternative methods for seeking qualified candidates, the predominately white, male applicant will continue to dominate the pool (Chase & Bell, 1990).

All superintendents are more likely to be appointed from outside the district than promoted from within; however, men are twice as likely to be appointed from the outside (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). Bell (1988) would attribute this to boards' ability to rely upon, to be able to predict, and to trust the superintendents they hire. Based upon the concept of social homogeneity, male board members continue to find it easier to communicate and therefore to trust male candidates for the superintendency. Hiring women more often from the inside suggests a potential shift in social homogeneity should the female candidate be known. More women than men are promoted to the superintendency from within the organization (Glass, et al., 2000).

Leadership, Power, and Preparation

Common attributes of women leaders identified in studies conducted over the past 30 years confirm the notion that women approach school leadership differently than men do and that their leadership characteristics tend to correspond to emerging demands for school reform (Bjork, 2000). There is a general agreement that women face more barriers to becoming leaders than men do, especially for leader roles that are male dominated (Eagly, 2001). Women tend to get promoted based on performance, while men get promoted based on potential (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006a). Women tend to have a deeper understanding of instruction, learning, teaching and curriculum. Women are also perceived as being more likely to be collaborative in their working relationships and tend to use democratic leadership styles and power, which in turn, contribute to achieving high levels of job satisfaction among staff. Women are viewed as being change agents who are deeply involved in reform and

working toward creating common visions of schooling for children and climates conducive to learning. They are regarded as being relational, community sensitive, and politically savvy. These leadership attributes, are closely aligned with expectations for superintendents to be educational, political and managerial leaders as well as change agents (Bjork, 2000).

How women use power is a central issue in the superintendency. Historically, men have been perceived as being better suited to become leaders than women (Euster, 1994). Traditional gender stereotypes are a major reason for the negative perception of female leaders. Role incongruence occurs when a woman exhibits behaviors expected of leaders. Because of the incompatibility of the gender stereotype of women and the view of effective leaders, female leaders are viewed differently, often more negatively, than male leaders exhibiting the same behaviors (Dawley, Hoffman & Smith, 2004). Leadership aimed at being empowering in female groups invokes dilemmas, tension and ambivalence (Bartunek, Walsh & Lacey, 2000). Aggressiveness is usually viewed as a negative trait in women. Female leadership behavior is often viewed less positively than the equivalent behavior of men. The term is strictly accepted and understood where educated men of some stature demonstrate aggressive behavior to get what they want for their organization. Such is not true for women (Eagle, 1995; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b).

Women naturally utilize a more collaborative approach, building on relationships and involving others in decision-making. In the women led environment, the goal is for everyone to win. This contradicts historical norms for

the superintendency where men lead through control or, if there is any collaboration, it will be limited and a man will continue to control the results. A women's style of collaborative leadership challenges the status quo, often creating discomfort for school boards and those she supervises because control is spread throughout the organization (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b).

According to Gerry House (as cited in Vail, 1999, p. 12), a well-regarded superintendent in Memphis, her managerial style is participatory. "A leader gets the work done with and through other people," but she adds this style of managing requires the leader to have a vision of where the organization is going and is clear about expectations. She also adds that both men and women still have trouble seeing females as leaders. The stereotype of a woman as a difficult boss remains. Women will be at a disadvantage because of history and culture long before women are embraced as leaders (Vail, 1999).

Entine and Nichols (1997) believed that glorifying traditional feminine qualities can end up perpetuating the stereotypes women executives have worked so hard to break down. Neither men nor women have a lock on integrity, nor on the ability to inspire a team and develop good personal relationships--the qualities all executives need to make businesses thrive in the future. Entine and Nichols suggest all aspiring superintendents must emphasize these qualities as effective strategies for leading a district, regardless of gender when seeking the position.

In studying career paths, Kowalski and Stouder (1999) found two distinct patterns. One reflected the importance and the influence of mentors (often males). Their finding is consistent with Kanter's (1976) thesis of hierarchical structures. As

stated previously, Kanter fully believes that a high status man is necessary in bringing a woman leader into the next layer of a structured organizational system. Men must be mentors and break women into the good old boy network by displaying to subordinates and others that they have confidence in their organizational power. A woman's position within the organization and her association with those above her is a component leading to advancement. Nearly seventy seven percent of females in the 2000 study of the American Superintendency believed that the sponsorship into the good old boy network helped them acquire their positions (Glass, et al., 2000). Sponsorship is a consistent theme throughout the research for women aspiring to the superintendency. Dana and Bourisaw (2006b) state "Women who aspire to increasingly stronger and more influential leadership positions can find pathways to reaching that goal considerably strengthened when they establish strong and influential networks" (p. 196).

More women today are prepared with years of experience in education, doctorate degrees, and male sponsors than ever before. Women need to be strategic in planning their career paths, seeking mentors, and making connections with the school board. Considering most women are promoted to the superintendency from within the organization, establishing relationships and connections in their current positions will be imperative. Ensuring a strong support system and understanding the political aspects of the superintendency are key components for success. Seeking networking opportunities, seeking professional development opportunities, connecting with professional organizations, and expanding their knowledge of curriculum and instruction should be a priority for aspirants. Not to be overlooked

are traits such as demonstrating a strong sense of self-determination and self-development and establishing methods of effective communication (Lee, 2000; Tallerico, 2000; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006a).

Emphasizing what is unique among women leaders in the superintendency and focusing on the differences in how men and women lead may engender the development of a universal image of female leadership juxtaposed to the dominant male paradigm (Bjork, 2000). Understanding how the role of the superintendent may influence the behavior of others, regardless of gender, could lead to redefining the position and advancing theories exposing a wider range of individuals serving as superintendents. Isolation and loneliness come with the job, whether male or female. The superintendent has a board and other administrators who will provide information, guidance, and direction. Female superintendents must remember that these people will typically be male (Craig & Hardy, 1996). Females then must develop a network of mentors and those must cross gender boundaries. No one can understand a superintendent quite like another superintendent.

Perceptions others have of the superintendency may continue to be a barrier women must overcome. Ms. House, the former superintendent in Memphis who is now the executive director of the Institute for Student Achievement, (as cited in Gewertz, 2006), described perceptions others may have in regards to race and gender: "People seem concerned that as a female, or as an African-American, you aren't able to deal with the tough issues of the superintendency. That perhaps you can do the curriculum and instruction, but when it comes to budget, maintenance, or facility

issues there are subtle comments that get made that would suggest people don't necessarily have the confidence you can handle it." (p. 2)

Future Strategies

It has been suggested to change the nature of the job by providing more funding for central office administrators so they can take some of the pressures off the superintendent to allow more time for critical tasks and family life. This would also provide a well from which to draw future superintendents, and more women would be attracted to the job if the oppressive workload was altered (Glass, 2000). Despite 51% of women and 43% of men reporting difficulty balancing work and personal lives, reconciling home and work responsibilities continues to be largely a woman's role. (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b)

As more females enter the public school superintendency, strategies for success and sustainability are becoming more abundant. Eight female superintendents (Johnston, et al., 2002) compiled their narratives, filled with professional and personal stories for others to learn. These female superintendents stated that mentors influenced them in life-changing ways. They also believed being female was advantageous as stated, "We're good at motivation, persuasion, building relationships, uniting people, and creating a team. People respond positively to our inclusive styles" (p. xvi).

Entering the new millennium, it is time for new metaphors to capture the subtle systemic forms of discrimination that still linger (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). These researchers suggest leaders to reconstruct the organizations, with re-building practices that are stronger and more equitable, not just for women, but for everyone

within the organization. Skrla (2000) concurred and expressed the need to recognize, challenge, and change the andocentric constructions and discriminatory policies in the profession.

Summary

Teaching and administrative positions in public schools in the United States are segregated and stratified by gender (Chase & Bell, 1990). Statistics vary, but it can confidently be stated that although women comprise the overwhelming majority of K-12 teachers, a low percentage of females move on to attain superintendency positions. Barriers exist and many researchers believe there are some consistencies in these barriers such as: organizational limitations, lack of male sponsors, the glass ceiling, gender discrimination, and pressures of family responsibilities.

School boards are finding greater difficulty attracting qualified applicants for vacant superintendencies. Work pressures and time demands simply are discouraging many principals and central office administrators from becoming superintendents (Glass, 2000). Unnecessarily limiting access to the superintendency is not a practice the profession can afford (Tallerico, 2000). Brunner (2002) suggested that re-conceptualization of the superintendency is necessary. This should result in a superintendency that includes greater use of open-ended questions, proactive listening, respectful and caring treatment of others, a fuller honoring of multiple perspectives, a focus on social justice, and one that more accurately reflects the realities of the role.

Organizational structures exist in public schools as they do in the corporate world. Without acknowledging these structures as potential barriers for women's

advancement, the tradition of male dominance within the superintendency will continue. Further examination of Meyerson and Fletcher (2000), Skrla (2000), and Kanter's (1976) theories of hierarchical structures must be explored, as should success stories from existing female superintendents.

As a new era begins, women are prepared to fill the top leadership positions of the public school superintendency. In comparison to men, women are older, more qualified, have more years in education and hold more doctoral degrees. McGrath (as cited in Eakle, 1995) stated that "Women will advance in education...through networking and struggling to overcome persistent stereotypes." Women superintendents experience higher productivity, work longer hours, and have higher entry scores to preparatory programs than do men (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). Successful leadership requires exceptional skills with respect to communication, collaborate empowerment, and caring for employees and customers (students, parents, and community). The set of skills that is emerging from the research on district instructional leadership are essentially parallel to those depicted in studies of women's education leadership (Miller, et al., 2006).

Multiple studies have been conducted on leadership styles; however, not one style has been shown, nor has gender been established, as making a person a more effective superintendent. Boards typically hire a person for the right fit for their district, seeking superintendents they value and trust. More importantly, male and female superintendents are more alike than they are different. Their paths to the position, their strengths and weaknesses, some of their support systems are the same for both men and women (Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2000). Some women,

however, continue to believe that women offer uniqueness to the superintendency with which men cannot compete for. Eakle (1995) summed her experience as a female superintendent by focusing on her strengths and differences:

I choose to believe that it does matter to my district that I am a woman and not a man. We have already begun many of the reforms and restructuring recommended by current research, changes that depend on collaboration and broad-based support on the part of staff members, families and the community. The strengths that I bring to this position as a woman will serve my district well in the coming years. (p.5)

Female superintendents emerge as community builders, grounded in knowledge of curriculum and instruction and prepared to dedicate themselves to leading school districts across the country. There is no doubt they have the expertise to lead systems in these changing times (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

There certainly are some positive trends emerging in preliminary data of the superintendency. Currently in the state of California, 23.5% of the superintendents are female (data retrieved from School Services of California, February, 2007). This statistic is higher than any other located on the percentages of women in the superintendency. According to Vail (1999) one thing is certain, "The pool of candidates willing to take on the titanic role of school superintendent is dwindling, and women remain the richest, untapped resource for the job" (p. 2).

Gender equity incorporates a consideration of social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and age. It has become imperative for educational planners in different divisions to pool their expertise in order to create an

environment of gender equity (Lee, 2000). Education deserves the benefit of the diverse perspectives and experiences that different kinds of educators can bring to the job. Equal opportunity for employment is a guaranteed right provided by the democracy of this country. Children should see both genders in leadership capacities in all employment areas, including public education. There is an ethical and moral obligation to ensure equal opportunity in the attainment of the superintendency for men, women, and minorities (Tallerico, 2000; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006a).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived barriers women encountered and successful strategies they employed while attempting to secure the public school superintendency in California. The data collected provided insight into the “typical” demographic profile of the current female superintendent. This study draws conclusions from survey data to identify perceived barriers and successful strategies for women in the public school superintendency in California. Finally, this study also draws conclusions from the survey data to examine the extent to which the perceived barriers and successful strategies differ between females employed by unified, high school, or elementary districts.

This research study consisted of a non experimental-descriptive research design. Descriptive research is a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of education phenomena (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This particular study was a sample (female superintendents in California) at one point in time, May-June of 2007.

Research Questions

These research questions have been addressed in this study:

1. What are the barriers women perceived they encountered in their pursuit of the public school superintendency in California?

2. What are the specific strategies female superintendents perceived as being effective in attaining the public school superintendency in California?
3. Do perceptions of barriers and successful strategies differ between females employed by type of district (unified, high school, elementary)?

Participants

All female superintendents in the State of California were mailed questionnaires (249 as stated by School Services of California, February, 2007). Subjects had the title of superintendent and had earned this position regardless of size of district. Only females were surveyed, as this study investigated perceptions of female superintendents specifically. Questionnaires were returned by 112 female superintendents, accounting for 45% of the female superintendent population.

Instrumentation

Based on a review of the literature and receiving written permission from Dr. Ivy D. Lee (2000), the survey instrument *Questionnaire on Perceptions of Barriers and Strategies Impacting on Women Securing the Superintendency* (See Appendix A) was adapted and used. This instrument was used because it addressed the main research questions of perceived barriers and perceived successful strategies. A demographic component was also included to provide this researcher a significant demographic detail regarding the current population of female superintendents in the State of California.

Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) recommend that researchers keep questionnaires as short as possible; therefore, the questionnaire was reduced from 56 items to 41

items. Respondents rated the 41 items questionnaire by utilizing a Likert-type scale (1-5). Barriers were identified with a 1 signifying not a barrier to a 5 signifying a major barrier. Similarly, perceptions of successful strategies were determined with a 1 signifying not a successful strategy to a 5 signifying a highly successful strategy. The Likert scale, a type of attitude scale, was appropriate as this survey attempted to define an individual's viewpoint or disposition toward a statement (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). According to Lee (2000), the reliability and validity of the instrument were established by Dr. Dulac. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were .96 for barriers and .86 for strategies. Content validity was established by submitting it to two experts in the area of women in administration. Dr. Catherine Marshall and Dr. Jean Stockard confirmed their review of the instrument, and Dr. Dulac made the recommended changes (Lee, 2000). Dr. Lee used this instrument to survey 23 female superintendents in the state of Virginia. As suggested by Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), a survey's content validity may be established by having a team of content experts review the instrument prior to formal data collection. This researcher reestablished content validity by surveying two long time educators and existing female assistant superintendents (Dr. Mary Jones and Sallie Kjellberg). Comments and suggestions were considered and modifications were made accordingly.

Part I of the instrument gathered demographic data about the respondents' personal and professional profile. The variables include: age, marital status, number of children in school, age of youngest child, highest degree earned, race/ethnic origin, type of school district where employed (unified, high school, elementary), average

daily attendance of district, number of years in education, and process involved in seeking the position (hired from within, recommendation, search firm recruitment, sought position herself), and previous position prior to attaining the superintendency. These variables are described using frequency and percent tables listed in Chapter IV. Tables have been created for all 11 demographic questions. The data collected provides a typical profile of a female superintendent in California.

Part II of the instrument included perceptions of barriers: conflicting demands of career and family, lack of ability to relocate, the belief from others that women do not make good administrators, misplacement within the organizational structure, societal socialization for proper roles for men and women, predominance of male candidates for administrative positions, lack of male mentor, gender bias, professional search firm's role, exclusion from the Good Old Boy Network, lack of knowledge of the political realm, lack of motivation, the belief by others that women must be better qualified, covert gender discrimination, and overt gender discrimination. These variables have been described using frequencies and percentages.

To determine perceptions of significant barriers, proportions of respondents who selected 4 or 5 as a major barrier were recorded as prominent barriers. For each item, a one-sample proportion test was used to determine whether evidence suggests, in the population, more than 1/3 of California female superintendents would consider the item to be a prominent barrier. $H_0: P = .333$ $H_a: P > .333$. Tables are provided in Chapter IV, displaying the results of frequency and percent for each barrier question. Respondents were also given the opportunity to suggest other barriers they believed to impact females attempting to secure a superintendency in California.

Part III of the instrument included perceptions of successful strategies used in attaining the superintendency. These included increasing visibility in professional circles, obtaining a doctoral degree, formulating and adhering to a plan of action, preparing an effective resume, utilizing a women's network similar to the Good Old Boy Network, gaining access to community power groups, enlisting in a male mentor, enlisting in a female mentor, obtaining family support, learning coping skills to balance career and family, developing a strong self concept, strategically preparing for and broadening district level experience, increasing flexibility to relocate, seeking out professional search firms, and pursuing specific opportunities for advancement within the organizational structure. Respondents were also given the opportunity to suggest other strategies they believe may have helped them in attaining their positions. All variables addressed in the Likert scale are described in Chapter IV using frequencies and percentages. To determine significant successful strategies, proportions were determined of prominent strategies that exhibited 4 or 5 in a majority of the respondents. A one-sample proportion test was used to determine whether evidence suggests, in the population, more than one-half of the California female superintendents would consider the item to be a prominent successful strategy. $H_0: P = .5$ $H_a: P > .5$. Written comments were also listed in Chapter IV.

Final Analysis

For purposes of determining whether perceived barriers and perceived successful strategies differed between females employed by types of districts (unified, high school, elementary), the following procedures were used:

1. For each item and each individual, the responses were dichotomized. Those that were numbered 4 or 5 were classified in a group signifying the statement as a perceived prominent barrier/successful strategy. Those statements numbered 1, 2, or 3 were considered to be perceived as not a barrier nor a successful strategy.
2. To determine if there were variances across types of districts, a Chi Square Test of Association was used for each item separately. An alpha of .10 was employed because this study was exploratory and possible trends for these percentages were being investigated. This test of proportions determined on each of the items if the proportion of respondents from the three types of districts varied significantly.

Procedures

To maximize generalizability of this study, questionnaires were sent to all 249 female superintendents in California. The list of female superintendents was generated from the master list of all superintendents obtained from the School Services of California (February, 2007). This researcher deleted the males from the list. Any names being non gender specific such as Pat or Chris then included further investigation by either calling the District to determine the gender or searching the website for a photograph or other gender specifying data.

All female superintendents in California received an introductory letter (See Appendix A), the questionnaire (See Appendix B), and a self addressed,

stamped envelope to increase the rate of return. Respondents were advised that complete anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained and that the identity of respondents could not be determined. However, if respondents chose to identify themselves and request a copy of the study, they could do so by indicating on the returned questionnaire. A ten-day deadline was established for the return of the questionnaires. Following the ten-day time period, all female superintendents were sent a follow up postcard encouraging participation.

To minimize or avoid threats to validity, these procedures were in place:

- The questionnaire was specifically addressed to the female superintendent in the district. Should that female no longer be employed in the district, only another female superintendent was asked to complete the survey. The letter specifically requested that males not participate.
- This data collected for this study occurred in a short amount of time. A ten-day time period in May was allocated to return surveys. Follow up was conducted within ten days, thus creating a twenty-day maximum data collection window. May and June were critical months, as superintendents were typically available during those time periods for end of the year activities. Completing the data collecting during the month of May allowed the researcher to contact the existing superintendents in California prior to possible relocations, transitions (typically occurring on July 1), or vacations.

Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences). For all demographic variables, tables showing the frequencies and percentages of respondents in each category were created. The frequencies and percentages of participants who circled each level of response to the lists of potential barriers and strategies are shown in Tables 1-11. In addition, the responses to the barrier variables were collapsed so that the proportion of respondents who perceived the item to be a prominent barrier (as indicated by their circling a “4” or “5”) could be obtained. For each item, a one-sample proportion test was used to determine whether evidence suggests, in the population, more than 1/3 of California female superintendents would consider the item to be a prominent barrier. In addition, the responses to the strategies variables were collapsed so that the proportion of respondents who perceived the item to be a prominent successful strategy (as indicated by their circling a “4” or “5”) could be obtained. A one-sample proportion test was used to determine whether evidence suggests, in the population, more than 1/2 of California female superintendents would consider the item to be a prominent successful strategy. One-tailed tests were employed with alpha set at .05.

Significant perceived barriers and significant perceived successful strategies were then compared according to type of district. The Chi Square Test of Association was used to compare the proportions of individual group differences by type of district (unified, high school, and elementary) to determine if perceptions of barriers and successful strategies differ by types of districts.

Limitations

This study's limitations included the following:

1. Turnover is common in the superintendency and records are updated annually. Records may not have been accurate, thus resulting in some surveys being sent to female superintendents who were no longer employed in the district.
2. Recent quantitative research of this nature for female superintendents in California was not identified or located. Establishing changes in current trends or differences in perceived barriers or successful strategies for females in California could not be determined at this time.
3. The sample in this study did not include female superintendents from private, non-public, or elected (county office) positions. Thus the results of this study may only be generalized to public school superintendents selected by locally elected school boards in California.
4. The validity of the survey results may have been compromised by respondents deliberately or unconsciously presenting a bias. For example, respondents may state they have been the victims of overt gender discrimination, yet do not have evidence to support such a claim. Conversely, respondents may minimize experiences of gender discrimination. The self reported data are not being triangulated.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed respondents provided reliable and truthful information on their surveys.
2. It is assumed there are common trends in perceived barriers and perceived successful strategies for females who have achieved the superintendency.

This assumption is based on a review of the literature.

3. It is assumed that only female superintendents in California responded to the surveys.

Summary

The information collected from female superintendents in California provided data for statistical analysis regarding the demographic profile of the typical California female superintendent, the perceived barriers female superintendents experienced, and the perceived strategies females believed led to success in attaining the position. More specifically, the research design described provided a comparison of the perceived barriers and successful strategies against superintendents from three very different types of school districts (unified, high school, and elementary). The research design protected the anonymity of the respondents by questionnaires not being coded for identification nor requiring any identifiable information on the questionnaires.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The findings discussed in this chapter were derived from the data collected through a questionnaire on perceptions of barriers and successful strategies impacting women securing the superintendency (See Appendix A). The survey instrument was described in the previous chapter. A total of 112 surveys were returned, accounting for 45% of the total female superintendent population in California.

All female superintendents in California, as listed in February 2007, were mailed a questionnaire. The questionnaires included a self addressed stamped envelope. The questionnaires were not coded in any way in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. If the respondent chose to identify herself, she was provided that opportunity at the conclusion of the questionnaire. Ten days after the questionnaire was mailed, a follow up postcard was sent encouraging respondents to participate in the voluntary study. Fifteen more surveys were received after the follow up postcard.

Female superintendents were asked eleven demographic questions. These questions assisted in determining the typical female superintendent respondent. The participants were also asked to identify perceived major barriers and perceived successful strategies used to attain the superintendency position.

In determining the typical female superintendent respondent, the demographic data present both personal and professional information. The data are provided in frequency distribution tables as follows:

Table 1
Age of Female Superintendents

Age	Frequency	Percent
>30	0	0%
30-39	1	.9%
40-49	18	16.1%
50-59	77	68.8%
>60	16	14.3%
Total	112	100%

Table 1 shows the majority of the respondents, 77 or 68.8%, are between the ages of 50-59. 83.1% of the respondents are over the age of 50.

Table 2
Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	6	5.4%
Married	89	79.5%
Widowed	2	1.8%
Divorced or Separated	12	10.7%
Partnered	3	2.7%
Total	112	100%

Table 2 shows that a majority of the female superintendents (82.2%) are married or partnered.

Table 3
Number of Children in School (K-12)

School Age Children	Frequency	Percent
0	78	69.6%
1	22	19.6%
2	9	8.0%
3	2	1.8%
4 or more	1	.9%
Total	112	100%

Table 3 shows that a majority or 69.6% of the superintendents have no children in grades K-12. Another 19.6% of the respondents had one school age child.

Table 4
Age of Youngest Child

Age	Frequency	Percent
No children	25	22.3%
Under 5 years old	2	1.8%
5-12 years	5	4.5%
13-19 years	22	19.6%
>20 years	58	51.8%
Total	112	100%

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents have children over the age of 20 (51.8%). 22.3% did not have any children.

Table 5
Racial/Ethnic Origin

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Native American	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	.9%
Hispanic	10	9%
Black/non-Hispanic	1	.9%
White, non-Hispanic	98	88.3%
Multi-racial	1	.9%
Total	111	100%

Table 5 presents a summary of the racial origin of the female superintendents. The majority, 88.3% are white. 9% are Hispanic, and of the respondents 1 was Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 was Black, 1 was Multi-racial and 1 did not state.

Table 6
Highest Degree Earned

Degree	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's	7	6.3%
Master's	51	45.5%
Doctorate	54	48.2%
Total	112	100%

Table 6 presents a summary of the highest degree earned by female superintendents. The doctorate had the highest number with 54 respondents or 48.2% having received the degree.

Table 7
Type of School District

District Type	Frequency	Percent
Unified	38	33.9%
High School	8	7.1%
Elementary	66	58.9%
Total	112	100%

Table 7 indicates a majority of the superintendents (58.9%) are employed in elementary school districts. 8 or 7.1% are employed in high school districts.

Table 8
ADA of School District

District ADA	Frequency	Percent
Under 3,000	62	55.4%
3,000-9,999	31	27.7%
10,000-39,999	16	14.3%
40,000 and above	3	2.7%
Total	112	100%

Table 8 indicates that a majority (55.4%) of the superintendents are employed in districts that have fewer than 3,000 students. 83.1% are employed in districts with fewer than 10,000 students.

Table 9
Number of Years in Education

Years in Education	Frequency	Percent
10 years or less	0	0%
11-15 years	1	.9%
16-20 years	11	9.8%
21-25 years	16	14.3%
25 years or more	84	75%
Total	112	100%

Table 9 indicates the majority (75%) have 25 years or more experience in education. None of the respondents have 10 years or less experience.

Table 10
How Respondent Was Hired

How Respondent Was Hired	Frequency	Percent
From within	48	42.9%
Friend or colleague recommendation	9	8%
Professional Search Firm	29	25.9%
Sought position herself	21	18.8%
Other	5	4.5%
Total	112	100%

Table 10 indicates a majority of the respondents (42.9%) were hired from within their districts. 25.9% indicated Professional Search Firms contributed to their attainment of the position.

Table 11
Previous Position Held Prior to this Superintendency

Position Held Prior to Superintendency	Frequency	Percent
Deputy/Assistant Superintendent (Non-specific)	15	13.4%
Assistant Superintendent Educational Services/Curriculum & Instruction		23.2%
Assistant Superintendent Business/Finance	1	.9%
Assistant Superintendent Personnel	5	4.5%
Superintendent in a Previous District	18	16.1%
Principal-High School	6	5.4%
Principal-Middle School/Junior High School	5	4.5%
Principal-Elementary	8	7.1%
Other	28	25%
Total	112	100%

Table 11 indicates 23.2% (26) were hired from the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services position just prior to attaining their position. This number could be greater, as 13.4% did not indicate which specific Assistant Superintendent position they held prior to the superintendency. 16.1% of the respondents indicated they had been a superintendent in a district previous to attaining their current position. Of the 28 respondents that indicated “other”, some were hired directly from teaching positions, from county office positions, or from coordinator/director positions.

Part II of the questionnaire asked specific questions related to the perceived barriers the females superintendents may have encountered. The respondents were asked to indicate their perception of barriers using the Likert scale ranging from “1” not a barrier to “5” representing a major barrier. Proportions referenced are sums of cells 4 and 5 representing a prominence for a major barrier. Prominent barriers were considered $H_a: P > .333$ and a $p < .05$ to be considered significant.

Research Question One

What are the barriers women perceived they encountered in the pursuit of the public school superintendency in California?

Table 12
Perceptions of Barriers

Question-Topic	Not a Major Barrier		2		3		4		A Major Barrier		One-Sample Proportion Tests		
	1								5		N	P ^a	Z ^b
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
1. Demands of family	9	8	10	9	43	39	34	31	15	13	111	.44	2.42**
2. Lack of ability to relocate	18	16	14	13	24	21	37	33	19	17	112	.50	3.75**
3. Belief women are not good administrators	43	39	27	24	19	17	17	15	5	5	111	.20	-3.01
4. Inappropriate career paths	54	49	29	26	15	14	10	9	2	2	110	.11	-4.98
5. Societal socialization to "proper" roles for men and women	40	36	25	23	21	19	20	18	5	5	111	.23	-2.40
6. Predominance of male candidates for administrative positions	24	22	25	22	27	24	27	24	8	7	111	.32	-.394
7. Lack of a male mentor/sponsor	50	45	25	22	22	20	12	11	3	3	112	.13	-4.47
8. Gender bias in screening and selection process	25	22	19	17	32	29	22	20	14	13	112	.32	-.260
9. Overt gender discrimination	35	31	36	32	20	18	15	13	6	5	112	.19	3.267

Question-Topic	Not a Major Barrier								A Major Barrier		One-Sample Proportion Tests		
	1		2		3		4		5		N	P a	Z b
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
10. Exclusion from informal socialization process of the "Good Old Boy Network"	15	13	23	21	21	19	31	28	22	20	112	.47	3.14**
11. Lack of knowledge and understanding within political realm	35	32	25	23	29	26	18	16	4	4	111	.20	-3.01
12. Lack of motivation by women to compete for top jobs	45	40	23	21	30	27	13	12	1	1	112	.13	-4.67
13. The belief by others that women must be better qualified than men	26	24	25	23	30	27	20	18	9	8	110	.26	-1.54
14. Covert gender discrimination	24	21	15	13	30	27	33	30	10	9	112	.38	1.14
15. Professional search firm's role in selection process	42	40	25	24	16	15	11	11	11	11	105	.21	-2.68

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (one-tailed)

a) The proportion that marks 4 or 5 is considered to perceive this as a prominent barrier.

b) The test statistic for the one-sample proportion test that the proportion who perceives the barrier to be prominent exceeds 1/3. Note: Percentages may exceed 100% due to rounding.

Table 12 indicates items numbered 1, 2, and 10 to be considered significant barriers with the proportion of respondents greater than $P > .333$. Demands of family, Item number 1 ($P = .44$; $Z = 2.42$, $p < .01$) were considered a barrier with 44% of the respondents indicating a score of 4 or 5 on the Likert scale. Item number 2 ($P = .50$; $Z = 3.75$, $p < .01$) considered the lack of ability to relocate as a result of personal commitment to be considered a significant barrier. Item number 10 ($P = .47$; $Z = 3.14$, $p < .01$) considered the exclusion from the informal socialization of the *Good Old Boy Network* to be a barrier. Although not considered statistically significant, 39% of respondents believed covert discrimination was a barrier and 33% believed gender bias in the screening and selection process was a barrier.

Part III of the questionnaire asked specific questions related to the perceived successful strategies the female superintendents believed are prominent in attaining the superintendency. The respondents were asked to indicate their perception of successful strategies using the Likert scale ranging from “1” not a successful strategy to “5” representing a highly successful strategy. Proportions referenced are sums of cells 4 and 5 representing a prominence for a highly successful strategy. Significant proportion was considered $H_a: P > .5$.

Research Question Two

What are the specific strategies female superintendents perceive as being effective in attaining the public school superintendency in California?

Table 13
Perceptions of Successful Strategies

Question-Topic	Not a Successful Strategy								Highly Successful		One-Sample Proportion Tests		
	1		2		3		4		5		N	P ^a	Z ^b
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
1. Increasing visibility in professional circles	0	0	4	4	15	13	46	41	47	42	112	.83	6.99**
2. Obtaining a doctoral degree	1	1	5	5	27	24	44	40	34	31	111	.70	4.27**
3. Formulating and adhering to a plan of action to achieve career goals	0	0	4	4	21	19	50	45	37	33	112	.78	5.85**
4. Preparing an effective resume/vita	0	0	4	4	25	23	39	36	42	38	110	.74	4.95**
5. Utilizing a women's network, similar to the "Good Old Boy Network"	12	11	17	15	43	38	31	28	9	8	112	.36	-3.02
6. Gaining access to community power groups	5	5	13	12	30	27	43	39	20	18	111	.57	1.42
7. Enlisting a male mentor/sponsor	13	12	23	21	38	34	28	25	10	9	112	.34	-3.40
8. Developing a strong self concept	0	0	0	0	3	3	24	21	85	76	112	.97	10.01**

Question-Topic	Not a Successful Strategy		2		3		4		Highly Successful		One-Sample Proportion Tests		
	1								5		N	P a	Z b
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
9. Obtaining family support	2	2	1	1	5	5	25	22	79	71	112	.93	9.07**
10. Learning coping skills to balance conflicting demands of career and family	3	3	1	1	7	6	32	29	69	62	112	.90	8.50**
11. Enlisting a female mentor/sponsor	6	5	12	11	30	27	32	29	31	28	111	.57	1.42
12. Strategically preparing for a broadening District level experience	0	0	2	2	5	5	31	28	74	66	112	.94	9.26**
13. Increasing flexibility to relocate	7	6	5	5	21	19	42	38	36	32	111	.70	4.27**
14. Seeking our Professional Search Firms	13	12	15	14	33	30	32	29	17	16	110	.45	-1.14
15. Pursuing opportunities for advancement within the organizational structure	1	1	2	2	11	10	46	41	52	46	112	.88	7.93**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (one-tailed)

a) The proportion that marks 4 or 5 is considered to perceive this as a prominent strategy.

b) The test statistic for the one-sample proportion test that the proportion who perceives the strategy to be prominent exceeds 1/2. Note: Percentages may exceed 100% due to rounding.

Table 13 indicates items numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 15 to be considered significant barriers with the proportion of respondents greater than $P > .5$. These successful strategies were considered significant: increasing visibility in professional circles ($P = .83$; $Z = 6.99$, $p < .01$), obtaining a doctoral degree ($P = .70$; $Z = 4.27$, $p < .01$), formulating and adhering to a plan of action to achieve career goals ($P = .78$; $Z = 5.85$, $p < .01$), preparing an effective resume ($P = .74$; $Z = 4.95$, $p < .01$), developing a strong self concept ($P = .97$; $Z = 10.01$, $p < .01$), obtaining family support ($P = .93$; $Z = 9.07$, $p < .01$), strategically preparing for and broadening district level experience ($P = .94$; $Z = 9.26$, $p < .01$), increasing flexibility to relocate ($P = .70$; $Z = 4.27$, $p < .01$), and pursuing opportunities for advancement within the organizational structure ($P = .88$; $Z = 7.93$, $p < .01$).

In responding to research question number 3, the same data are disaggregated by unified, high school and elementary respondents.

Research Question Three

Do perception of barriers and successful strategies differ between females employed by type of district (unified, high school, elementary)?

Table 14
Perceived Barriers by Type of District

Perceived Barriers	Number	Unified	High School	Elementary School	Without High School	
		n=38	n=8	n=66		
Question-Topic	N	%	%	%	N	X ²
1. Conflicting demands of career and family	111	50	0	46	103	.142
2. Lack of ability to relocate as result of personal commitment	112	58	25	49	104	.855
3. Belief from others that women do not make good administrators	111	32	13	14	103	4.646**
4. Inappropriate/wrong career path experiences	110	16	0	9	102	.945
5. Societal socialization to "proper" roles for men and women	111	26	13	22	103	.306
6. Predominance of male candidates for administrative positions	111	35	38	29	103	.446
7. Lack of male mentor/sponsor	112	11	0	17	104	.737
8. Gender bias (Board members, personnel departments, etc.) in screening and selection process	112	32	13	35	104	.115

Perceived Barriers	Number	Unified n=38	High School n=8	Elementary School n=66	Without High School	
Question-Topic	N	%	%	%	N	X ²
9. Overt gender discrimination	112	21	13	18	104	.128
10. Exclusion from informal socialization process of the "Good Old Boy Network"	112	45	25	52	104	.443
11. Lack of knowledge and understanding within political realm.	111	26	13	17	103	1.303
12. Lack of motivation by women to compete for top jobs.	112	11	0	15	104	.443
13. The belief by others that women must be better qualified than men	110	32	25	17	102	.812
14. Covert gender discrimination	112	42	25	38	104	.180
15. Professional search firm's role in selection process	105	27	13	18	97	1.020

67

Alpha .10

(With only 8 high school districts reporting, omitting the high school and running the X² tests for elementary versus unified better meets the statistical assumptions for Chi Square of Association)

**p<.10, **p<.05*

The only variable (number 3) considered significant in which females in unified districts felt significantly stronger than those in elementary districts was the perception from others that women do not make good administrators.

Table 15
Perceived Successful Strategies by Type of District

Perceived Successful Strategies	Number	Unified	High School	Elementary School	Without High School	
		n=38	n=8	n=66		
Question-Topic	N	%	%	%	N	X ²
1. Increasing visibility in professional circles	112	84	88	82	104	.096
2. Obtaining a doctorate degree	111	76	63	68	103	.864
3. Formulating and adhering to a plan of action to achieve goals	112	79	75	77	104	.039
4. Preparing an effective resume/vita	110	76	50	75	102	.001
5. Utilizing a women's network similar to the "Good Old Boy Network"	112	37	38	35	104	.042
6. Gaining access to community power groups	111	63	50	54	103	.850
7. Enlisting a male mentor/sponsor	112	32	25	36	104	.244
8. Developing a strong self concept	112	97	100	97	104	.014

Perceived Successful Strategies	Number	Unified	High School	Elementary School	Without High School	
Question-Topic	N	n=38 %	n=8 %	n=66 %	N	X ²
9. Obtaining family support	112	95	100	91	104	.498
10. Learning coping skills to balance conflicting demands of career and family	112	92	100	88	104	.455
11. Enlisting a female mentor/sponsor	111	50	88	57	103	.463
12. Strategically preparing for and broadening District level experience	112	95	100	92	104	.205
13. Increasing flexibility to relocate	111	76	71	67	104	1.073
14. Seeking out Professional Search firms	110	51	38	42	102	.917
15. Pursuing opportunities for advancement within the organizational structure	112	89	100	85	104	.443

70

Alpha .10

(With only 8 high school districts reporting, omitting the high school and running the X² tests for elementary versus unified better meets the statistical assumptions for Chi Square of Association)

*p<.10, **p<.05

None of the variables were considered significant in comparing the proportion of females employed in unified districts to those in elementary districts considering successful strategies for attaining the superintendency.

Qualitative Comments

In coding the comments made by females there were some commonalities. The importance of networking tended to be a theme, with five respondents specifically considering the lack of networking opportunities as a barrier. Networking was also consistently addressed as a successful strategy. Related to networking is the informal socialization of the Good Old Boy Network. Two respondents specifically commented about “Good Old Boys” in their responses.

1. “Good Old Boys still seem to rule even in the case when they are not completing job responsibilities as effectively as women.”
2. “Greatest barrier is search firm attitudes (made up of Good Old Boys) and school boards who question if women are strong enough to handle the job. Women board members are often a problem and feel competitive with other women.”

Another common theme cited in the barriers was the search firm’s role in the hiring process. Respondents indicated:

1. Search firms largely depend on the “network” and “stable” they have created and continue to use. The problem is most firms are still dominated by white 50-80 year old men. Rather than looking at the characteristics and experience a person brings to the table, the search firms look to their “old-time colleagues” and politically safe candidates. Times have

dramatically changed, and the changes demand a new breed of leader. It is my personal opinion that the search firm “racket” is an unnecessary and expensive journey for most districts. I think they exert too much influence over the selections and discussion of the candidates with the Board and as a result you see the same crew of people being passed around.

2. Search firms tend to “pigeon-hole” women into a smaller group of positions i.e., elementary and more affluent.

Two superintendents believed not having a business background was a barrier.

Two additional superintendents cited physical appearance being a barrier:

1. If they are “pretty” they must not be smart.
2. Being a young looking woman-some men give me problems.

Four women of color specifically cited barriers related to their race:

1. Being a minority has an impact on your opportunities....
2. As a woman of color I think there are additional barriers and barriers that are connected to race i.e. #3, 7, 10, & 13 also are impacted by racism.
3. As a person of color, I find in many ways there are additional barriers.
(However, she did not specify what those are)
4. Racism, male, white dominated world.

The respondents in this study seemed more likely to list and comment on the barriers they encountered rather than on the successful strategies employed.

However, some did elaborate regarding successful strategies. The main additional successful strategies listed were thoroughly preparing oneself for the position.

Strategies such as going through the positions; teacher, principal, director, assistant

superintendent prior to seeking the position were listed as important. Other strategies listed included coursework, professional training, and broadening experiences. Two also cited specific community organizations (Rotary) as being an additional successful strategy. In support of the importance of networking, lack of networking was cited as a barrier, while pursuing networking opportunities was cited as a successful strategy. Several respondents commented:

1. Networking is a critical strategy.
2. Visibility, networking, assuming roles in local groups (i.e., ACSA).
3. Maintaining professional networks: knowing the right people and getting insider information.
4. Visiting the district and the schools, meeting people.
5. I hired a consultant to help me put my resume, letters, and application packet. She also coached me with interview question responses.

Thoroughly researching the district and preparing for the interview were common themes cited in five of the responses. Women cited visiting the district in which they were applying for and speaking to members of the community as some examples of researching the district.

Finally, women stated working harder and understanding the style of women was not to be overlooked. Women believed they had something to prove and therefore the expectations for women are different and women are held to a higher standard. Respondents specifically cited:

1. Working harder than men on delivering promises. Women struggle to balance position power with personal power. Women are seen as “power hungry” for women as opposed to men. “Who do you think YOU are”?
2. I believe women are still viewed as aggressive versus assertive. [Women] have to be in the field longer and prove ourself.
3. [Women] understanding the difference between strength and being a “bitch”!
4. Learning to cite strengths and what I could bring to the district. A “tooting your own horn” approach.
5. Working hard to prove you can make a difference.
6. Pay attention-learn and observe others from where you are. Seek mentorship. ASK. Do not wait to be discovered.

Two others although cited in the strategies area listed:

1. In the mid 90s I was told “the board wasn’t ready for a female superintendent” I think it is much better now...although I think it is harder for females pursuing a Unified District Superintendency.
2. I had female mentors (highly successful) Search firms don’t really approach women.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived barriers and successful strategies women encountered while attempting to secure the public school superintendency. The study also examined the personal and professional demographics of the female superintendents in California. The Questionnaire on Perceptions of Barriers and Strategies Impacting Women on Securing the Superintendency was used. Surveys were sent to two hundred forty nine female superintendents. One hundred twelve surveys were returned, accounting for a 45% response rate.

The research findings also include personal written statements made by some of the respondents, enriching the data through experiences and other perceptions from the females currently in the position. In this chapter, conclusions on the quantitative findings are organized in response to the study's research questions. Also included in the chapter are the relations of the findings to the prevailing research. Recommendations to the field and recommendations for future research studies are included in this chapter. Implications and significance of the study's findings are also reflected in this chapter.

Demographic Data

Part 1 of the questionnaire included eleven demographic questions. The typical superintendent respondent to this study was a married, white female, between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine. An overwhelming majority did not have any children in school (69.6%) with 22.3% of respondents not having any children at all. Slightly more women held doctoral degrees (48.2%) than Master degrees (45.5%). Being that there are more elementary districts with average daily attendance less than 3,000 students in California, it was no surprise that the majority of respondents were from elementary districts (58.9%) with fewer than 3,000 students (55.4%). Seventy five percent of females had been in education for 25 years or more, supporting the research that states women typically older and have been in education longer than men (Tallerico, 2000).

Superintendents are more likely to be appointed from outside the district than promoted from within, although men are twice as likely as women to be appointed from the outside (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). The data found in this study support the finding that the minority of women respondents (42.9%) were hired from within. Although the research varies regarding the value of search firms for females, 25.9% of respondents state they were hired through the use of search firms. More interesting however, were the anecdotal statements regarding search firms. One respondent stated, "Search firms largely depend on the network and stable they have created and continue to use. The problem is most firms are still dominated by white 50-80 year old men who are no longer current in leadership of complex organizations..." While another stated, "The greatest barrier is the search firm attitude (made up of Good Old

Boys) and school boards who...”. Chase and Bell (1990) found evidence that search firms limit women’s access to the superintendency; however, ten years later, Tallerico (2000) determined that some firms may actually be beneficial to women by educating boards about the level of experience and qualification women bring to the profession. Although 25.9% of respondents report they were hired through the use of search firms, some of the evidence may indicate the search firms do not yet play an entirely positive role for women aspiring to the position.

As superintendents indicated their previous position held prior to their current superintendency, a large percentage came from being an Assistant Superintendent either unspecified or from the Educational Services division (36.6%). Grogan and Brunner (2005) believed school boards will be looking more for women with backgrounds in curriculum and instruction as the nation continues to emphasize accountability and support the goals of educational institutions as learning organizations. 16.1% of respondents indicate they had superintendency experience in a previous district. Only 5.4% of respondents indicated they went directly from the high school principalship to the position. This supports Wolverton and Macdonald’s (2001) research that believed recruitment and hiring from the high school principalship (predominately male dominated) was one of the causes behind the gender disparity in the superintendency. Twenty five percent of the respondents held various other positions rather than those coded for data (Assistant Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Assistant Superintendent of Business, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, Superintendent in a previous district, Principal/High School, Middle School, or Elementary school). Some other

positions held were county office employees, personal consultants, teachers, or other supervisory roles.

Discussion for Research Question One

What are the barriers women perceived they encountered in their pursuit of the public school superintendency in California?

The data support three main barriers women face in their support of the public school superintendency in California. Conflicting demands of family, lack of ability to relocate as a result of personal commitment, and exclusion from the informal socialization process of the Good Old Boy Network were determined significant.

Forty four percent of the respondents felt that the conflicting demands of family were a prominent barrier. Other studies have supported family demands and responsibilities as being barriers (Kowlaski & Stouder, 1999). Shakeshaft (1998) found that balancing a career and family is an overwhelming barrier for women. Although Grogan and Brunner (2005) did not find that raising a family was in conflict, the research collected in this study tends to support earlier studies that clearly state family demands play a significant role for females in the superintendency.

Grogan and Brunner (2005) cited relocation as a major barrier for women aspiring to the superintendency. This study confirms this with 50% of respondents citing the lack of ability to relocate as a prominent barrier. Of the three variables deemed “significant”, the lack of ability to relocate was the most prominent of all fifteen barriers. The job of superintendent has been described as migrant work, and the lack of mobility continues to be a larger barrier for women than for men (Dana &

Bourisaw, 2006b). Current California female superintendents in this study strongly support the research regarding relocation that has been completed over the past several decades. Relocation or lack of willingness to do so is a barrier for females in the superintendency.

Finally, exclusion from the Good Old Boy network was the second most prominent barrier with forty seven percent of the respondents citing this as a significant barrier. Since other studies (Kowalski & Strouder, 1999; Glass, et al., 2000; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b) found that breaking into the good old boy network was a positive factor in acquiring the superintendency, it makes sense that exclusion from the network would be prohibitive for those aspiring to the position. In addition to the survey questionnaire, a few respondents provided additional written confirmation of their perceptions of barriers. Two respondents specifically used the exact words “Good Old Boy Network” in their responses. Both believed the Good Old Boy Network continues to be a barrier and one stated “Good Old Boys still seem to rule...”. Based on this research and on a review of the literature, the Good Old Boy Network is certainly perceived as a barrier for women in the superintendency.

Although not statistically significant, 38% of the respondents believed covert gender discrimination to be a prominent barrier. This was followed by perceived gender bias in the screening and selection process (32%) along with a perceived predominance of male candidates for the positions (32%). Gender bias has been cited in research, yet it is difficult to determine if gender discrimination has actually taken place; therefore, women hesitate to report gender bias based on inconclusive evidence (Kowalsi & Stouder, 1999).

Discussion for Research Question Two

What are the specific strategies female superintendents perceive as being effective in attaining the public school superintendency in California?

The data from this study support ten variables as perceived successful strategies. These are increasing visibility in professional circles (83%), obtaining a doctoral degree (70%), formulating and adhering to a plan of action to achieve career goals (78%), preparing an effective resume (74%), developing a strong self concept (97%), obtaining family support (93%), learning coping skills to balance conflicting demands of career and family (90%), strategically preparing for and broadening district level experience (94%), increasing flexibility to relocate (70%), and pursuing opportunities for advancement within the organizational structure (88%).

Increasing visibility in professional circles is consistent with many of the researchers' emphasis on networking (Craig & Hardy, 1996; Lee, 2000; Tallerico, 2000; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b). This variable also supports the findings of perceived barriers regarding not being included in the informal socialization of the Good Old Boy Network. Training, years of experience, planning for career goals, creating an effective resume and developing a strong self concept are also not surprises in the findings as they are consistent with the research found in the literature (Glass, 2000; Tallercio, 2002; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006a). Kanter (1976) would support the findings of pursuing advancement within the organizational structure as being a successful strategy. However, the findings did not conclude mentors of either gender to be considered a successful strategy. Kanter's research supported male

mentors bringing women up the chain to be of significance when females are attempting to break into a male dominated arena. The findings in this study do not support mentorship as a strategy for attaining the superintendency. It could be argued, however, that it is through this mentorship that women will find themselves breaking into the Good Old Boy Network that has been repeatedly considered a barrier. Although male or female mentorship in isolation was not perceived as a successful strategy, it would be of interest to determine if the mentor selected was well networked and connected to the Good Old Boy system, if then the mentorship may make a difference.

The lack of ability or willingness to relocate was cited as a significant barrier and increasing flexibility to relocate has been found to be perceived as a successful strategy. Thus these findings regarding relocation are consistent, with one being a perceived barrier and one being perceived as a successful strategy. Relocation, therefore, continues to be a factor to be heavily considered for women aspiring to the superintendency. Family demands and being “place bound” create barriers for those aspiring superintendents, while those who have found success deem the ability to move around and not be constrained to family demands as a successful strategy. Grogan and Brunner (2005) found that to overcome this barrier 20% of female superintendents have decided to accept commuter marriages in order to maintain their superintendency career.

Although not statistically significant, 38% of the respondents believed covert gender discrimination as a prominent barrier. This was followed by perceived gender

bias in the screening and selection process (32%) along with a perceived predominance of male candidates for the positions (32%).

Discussion for Research Question Three

Do perceptions of barriers and successful strategies differ between females employed by type of district (unified, high school, elementary)?

The data collected from the female superintendents in the various sized districts (unified, high school, elementary) did not vary greatly. To better meet the assumptions of the Chi Square Test of Association, the data from the high school respondents were included, but not during the statistical procedure for the Chi Square. The belief from others that women do not make good administrators was the only variable with a significant difference. Females from unified school districts held a much stronger belief that the perception of others about women making good administrators was a barrier than those from elementary districts. Although not statistically significant, superintendents of unified districts felt much stronger (26%) that the lack of knowledge and understanding in the political arena was a barrier than those in elementary districts (17%). This seems to make sense being that unified districts are typically larger and have greater political dynamics than smaller elementary districts. There was very little difference in describing the balancing act of demands of family and career with 50% and 46% respectively.

In searching for differences of perceived successful strategies among unified and elementary superintendents, the variance was rather small. For example, 92% of unified superintendents believed that learning to balance demands of family was an

important successful strategy, while 88% of elementary superintendents did. The greatest variance with only 9% difference was in the successful strategies of gaining access to community power groups and increasing flexibility to relocate. In both instances the unified superintendents found these variables to be a more significantly successful strategy than those in elementary districts. Conversely, 97% of unified and elementary superintendents, and 100% of high school superintendents believed developing a strong self-concept to be important.

Recommendations for Practice

1. Universities' administration programs are female dominated. It is important for these preparation programs to address the issues female administrators may encounter during the course of their careers. Administrative programs can assist women in developing a strong self-concept.
2. Professional search firms can utilize this research to better educate the school boards whom they serve. Being that search firms play an important role in the selection of superintendents, it is imperative these businesses know the disparity that exists and seek means of overcoming the gap.
3. Professional development organizations (such as ACSA, Phi Delta Kappa, etc) can use this data to better prepare females for entering leadership roles that are currently male dominated. These organizations can also serve to educate school boards who hire superintendents regarding the uniqueness and positive qualities females can bring to their districts.

Recommendations for Female Aspirants

Based on the finding of this study in combination with a review of the literature, the following are recommendations for women aspiring to the superintendency:

1. Seek support for meeting family demands. Balancing the superintendency and a family has been considered the main barrier for women. Learning how to cope with this will enhance the chances of success in attaining and maintaining the position.
2. Be willing to relocate or commute in order to have the position. Being place-bound limits one's opportunities to apply, therefore limiting access to the superintendency. There are approximately 1,000 superintendent positions in the state; therefore, being willing to move to access a position is obviously advantageous.
3. Network. Networking is a consistent theme and cited over and over from the respondents of this study. This networking will increase your chances of breaking into the Good Old Boy Network. Visibility in professional arenas is important.
4. Develop a strong self-concept. Have confidence in your abilities as an educational leader. Women must be perceived as strong leaders willing to take on the monumental role of the superintendency. Plan accordingly.
5. Obtain a doctorate degree. The research results of this study suggest women traditionally have had to be better educated, and the expectation that the superintendency requires a doctoral degree is increasing. Many out of state

positions require the Doctorate degree. The degree may also provide unintended opportunities, such as teaching at the university level.

6. Strategically plan for your next career move. Seek a broad level of experiences and pursue opportunities within education for advancement. Along with this, prepare an effective resume/vita that highlights your uniqueness and experiences above others.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study surveyed two hundred forty nine female superintendents in the state of California. Data were collected once, during May of 2007. Findings from this study revealed other areas that need to be explored further. The following are recommendations for future research.

1. Further investigation as to the causes of the gender disparity in the superintendency needs to be explored. A study of assistant superintendents would be appropriate for seeking data regarding the gender make up of those in that position as well as the aspirations of those currently in the assistant superintendency.
2. Investigate the number of current administrative credential holders in the state. Determine why those credential holders have not sought administrative positions or, if they have, what have been their barriers to attaining a position.
3. An investigation of the gender make up of school boards and their hiring practices for recruiting and selecting superintendents. Being that schools boards hire superintendents, the influence they have over the gender composition in the

position is great. Compare the number of attempts for the superintendency women have had to make before securing a position to that of men.

4. A replication study of perceived barriers and successful strategies of men in the superintendency would help aspirants understand if there are any significant differences in perceptions of men versus women.
5. A comparative study of salaries and duties of male superintendents versus female superintendents. This may assist in determining if there is a difference in the responsibilities assigned and/or salaries paid that could be another factor for the lack of females in the superintendency.
6. A study of minority superintendents' perceptions of barriers and successful strategies. Their numbers are very small in the superintendency, and two of the respondents in this study alluded to additional and varied challenges they face by being minority women.
7. A study of university preparation programs to assess how women are being prepared for entering the superintendency. Being that developing a strong self concept was the most prominent successful strategy, determine how university programs can assist women in developing this. With females dominating the administrative programs, universities need to continue to ensure that their qualifications and expertise are perceived equitable to that of men.

Conclusions

There exists a disparity between the number of men who are public school superintendents versus the number of women who are superintendents both across the nation and in the state of California. This study explored women's perceptions of the

barriers they encountered as well as successful strategies suggested or utilized in attaining the position of superintendent. Surveys were sent to all female superintendents in the state of California; however, the results can be utilized by females aspiring to the position across the nation. Females perceived demands of family, lack of ability to relocate and exclusion from the Good Old Boy Network to be significant barriers to the position. In contrast, the female respondents had many suggestions for successful strategies which should be considered by females seeking the superintendency.

This study's findings should also assist university doctoral programs in educating and preparing women for attaining the superintendency. Professional organizations should promote professional development for women to overcome the perceived barriers and pursue the successful strategies listed in the results of this study. Clearly, women aspiring to the superintendency should utilize the recommendations in their own development to pursue the superintendent position.

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APPENDIX A.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS IN
CALIFORNIA



Ceres Unified School District

ADMINISTRATION

WALT L. HANLINE, Ed.D.
District Superintendent

DENISE WICKHAM
Director, Curriculum & Instruction

April 20, 2007

Dear Superintendent:

You are invited to participate in a research study which will attempt to determine the perceptions of barriers and successful strategies females have used to attain the superintendency in California. This survey should take **no more than 10 minutes** of your time to complete. Please return completed surveys in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by **May 15, 2007**.

I am currently a doctoral candidate at the University of the Pacific, Benerd School of Education. This research will assist me in completing my dissertation requirements. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because **you are a female superintendent** of a public school district in California. Please do not complete this survey if you are male. I anticipate this study will provide valuable information to aspiring female superintendents in the state.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. There are no risks involved for participants. All female superintendents in the state of California have been invited to participate. Your input will enhance our knowledge of how females perceive barriers and strategies during their ascent to the superintendency. This information will assist female educators and provide information for aspiring female superintendents.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Complete anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. You have the option of including your name and contact information if you choose to receive an abstract and details of how to access the findings of this study. At no time will any identifying information be used in connection with the data collected. All responses to the survey will be translated into an Excel spreadsheet and no identifying information will be attached. Questionnaires will be destroyed once the data has been entered.

If you have any questions about this study, please e-mail Denise Wickham at jdjwickham@clearwire.net and/or advisor Dr. Dennis Brennan at dbrennan@pacific.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, please call the Research and Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific (209) 946-7356.

By completing and returning this survey you are indicating you have read and understand the information provided above, that you are willing to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at anytime and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled and that you are not waiving any legal claims, right or remedies.

Sincerely,

Denise Wickham
Doctoral Candidate, University of the Pacific

APPENDIX B:

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS AND
STRATEGIES IMPACTING WOMEN SECURING THE SUPERINTENDENCY**

FEMALE SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY

Dear Superintendent: Thank you for taking a few minutes to respond to the following 41 questions regarding female superintendents. This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and your survey results will remain completely anonymous. Part I of this survey asks about your background and the make up of your district. Part II asks you to consider your perceptions of barriers that exist for females aspiring to the superintendency. Part III asks you to consider your perceptions of successful strategies females can use in securing the superintendency. Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope to enclose your completed survey. Surveys should be returned to: **Denise Wickham**. Please return the survey by May 20, 2007.

Part I: Demographic information

Please circle the most appropriate answer.

1. What is your age:
 - a. Under 30
 - b. 30-39
 - c. 40-49
 - d. 50-59
 - e. 60 or over
2. Marital Status
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Widowed
 - d. Divorced or separated
 - e. Partnered
3. Number of Children in School (K-12)
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. 4 or more
4. Age of Youngest Child
 - a. no children
 - b. under 5 years old
 - c. 5-12
 - d. 13-19
 - e. >20 years
5. Racial/Ethnic Origin
 - a. Native American
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Black/non-Hispanic
 - e. White, non-Hispanic
 - f. Multi-racial
6. Highest Degree Earned
 - a. Bachelor's
 - b. Master's
 - c. Doctorate
7. Type of School District
 - a. Unified
 - b. High School
 - c. Elementary
8. ADA of your district
 - a. Under 3,000
 - b. 3,000-9,999
 - c. 10,000-39,999
 - d. 40,000 or above
9. Number of years in education
 - a. 10 years or less
 - b. 11-15 years
 - c. 16-20 years
 - d. 21-25 years
 - e. 25 years or more
10. How were you hired (present position)
 - a. From within
 - b. Friend/colleague recommended
 - c. Professional Search Firm
 - d. Sought position yourself
 - e. Other: _____
11. Previous position held immediately preceding this superintendency (be specific): _____

Part II:

PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS

Please circle the number on the scale that best describes your perception of the possible barriers that women must contend with when attempting to secure the superintendency.

		NOT A Major Barrier			MAJOR Barrier	
1.	Conflicting demands of career and family	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Lack of ability to relocate as a result of personal commitment	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The belief from others that women do not make good administrators	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Inappropriate/wrong career path experiences	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Societal socialization to "proper" roles for men and women	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Predominance of male candidates for administrative positions	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Lack of a male mentor/sponsor	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Gender bias (Board members, personnel depts., etc) in screening and selection process	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Overt gender discrimination	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Exclusion from informal socialization process of the "Good Old Boy Network"	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Lack of knowledge and understanding within political realm.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Lack of motivation by women to compete for top jobs	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The belief by others that women must be better qualified than men	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Covert gender discrimination	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Professional search firm's role in selection process	1	2	3	4	5

Please cite other barriers that you perceive to impact women on securing the superintendency.

Part III: **PERCEPTIONS OF STRATEGIES**

Please circle the number on the scale that best represents your perception of each strategy as it relates to women securing the superintendency.

		NOT A Successful strategy			HIGHLY Successful	
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Increasing visibility in professional circles	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Obtaining a Doctorate degree	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Formulating and adhering to a plan of action to achieve career goals	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Preparing an effective resume/vita	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Utilizing a women's network similar to the "Good Old Boy Network"	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Gaining access to community power groups	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Enlisting a male mentor/sponsor	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Developing a strong self-concept	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Obtaining family support	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Learning coping skills to balance conflicting demands of career and family	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Enlisting a female mentor/sponsor	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Strategically preparing for and broadening District level experience	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Increasing flexibility to relocate	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Seeking out Professional Search firms	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Pursuing opportunities for advancement within the organizational structure.	1	2	3	4	5

Please cite the top three strategies you believe helped in attaining your position.

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

Optional: Name: _____

Contact information: _____

☐ Check here if you would a copy of the abstract and a link for the full dissertation.