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Attitudes of diverse women superintendents toward nine tenets of effective leadership

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ATTITUDES OF DIVERSE WOMEN SUPERINTENDENTS TOWARD
NINE TENETS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

**Executive Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education**

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes of Diverse Women Superintendents Toward Nine Tenets of Effective Leadership

by

Salwa Abdel-Hamid Zaki

Dr. Teresa Jordan, Advisory Committee Chair
Professor of Educational Leadership
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Current data show that approximately 65-75% of the teaching force is women, yet only 12-13% of today's public school superintendents are women. The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership styles, behaviors, and attitudes of diverse women superintendents. Nine tenets of effective leadership, taken from extant research, evolved from the WILD (Women in Leadership Development) Project, a study of women in executive leadership positions across multiple fields and disciplines (Wolverton, et.al., 2003). The nine tenets were: 1. *Effective leaders are passionate about their organizations.* 2. *Effective leaders are reflective.* 3. *Effective leaders are competent.* 4. *Effective leaders are great communicators.* 5. *Effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.* 6. *Effective leaders understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run.* 7.

Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking. 8. Effective leaders value and respect individuality. 9. Effective leaders possess credibility.

This study explored how diverse women superintendents defined, experienced, and instilled in others the nine tenets of effective leadership. In-depth interviews were conducted and cross case analyses presented for both participants and leadership tenets. The study presented three major findings. First, it confirmed previous findings of the broader literature on leadership relative to how leaders define and experience the nine tenets. The women in this study rated *passionate, competent, focused yet forward thinking, and possessing credibility* as the most critical tenets. This study also confirmed previous findings regarding the professional and personal obstacles that executive women leaders face, such as the good old boys club, the glass ceiling, domestic responsibilities, and a lack of mentors/role models but, that these women had overcome. The second major finding was that these five women superintendents consciously created opportunities for others to develop leadership skills. Third, they maintained incredible stamina, focus, and professionalism while realizing power in collaboration.

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Finally, I must thank all of the women superintendents who agreed to be participants in this study. I take from this journey an extraordinary number of lessons about educational leadership that I have put into my everyday practice. You are all mentors and role models to me. It has been a pleasure knowing each of you.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

"Women are destined to rule the schools of every city. I look for a majority of big cities to follow the lead of Chicago in choosing a woman for superintendent. In the near future we shall have more women than men in executive charge of the vast educational system. It is a woman's natural field and she is no longer satisfied to do the larger part of the work and yet be denied the leadership."

- Ella Flagg Young, Chicago Public School Superintendent (1909)

Introduction

During the early twentieth century, the first wave of feminism found pockets of women across the country fighting for equal rights and opportunities. The leadership in public education represented an exception in that the majority of school principals, 62% according to the US Government Digest of Educational Statistics (1999), were women, who stared directly through the glass ceiling. Ms. Young's prediction implied the possibility of the glass ceiling soon being shattered. However, the past 100 years has witnessed giant steps backward and small steps forward in the area of equity among public education leadership. Why has this occurred? What leadership attributes do effective educational leaders possess? What leadership practices do effective educational leaders employ? What obstacles, if any, deter women from holding proportionately equal positions of power and leadership in public education?

Statement of the Problem

Traditional research in the field of educational leadership has been done by, for, and about male leaders, while studies on women superintendents are limited (Grogan, 1996; Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1998; Chase, 1995; Wesson & Grady, 1994; Gutsch, 2001, Gamble, 2001). When female leaders have been studied, they have often been surveyed using instruments designed for men (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Gender equity among educational leaders has decreased significantly over the past century. Current data show that approximately 65-75 percent of the teaching force is women (Bell & Chase, 1993; US Census Bureau, 2000; Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000). Only 10-13% of today's public school superintendents are women (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999; Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000). According to the U.S. Government Digest of Educational Statistics (1999), 62% of principals were women in 1905, 20% of principals were women in 1973, and 48% of principals were women in 1999. These statistics represent a clear equity gap between the female teaching force and female executive level leadership. Freeman, Bourque & Shelton (2001) asked how we are to understand women's continuing inequality and limited leadership after more than twenty-five years of legislation outlawing sex discrimination. Despite the aforementioned statistics showing disproportionately low numbers of women in educational leadership, women continue to comprise the vast majority of the teaching force. Tallerico and Blount (2004) describe this as "ghettoization," (p.637); that is, as relegating one gender to the lower paid, less valued end of the occupational spectrum and the

other gender to the higher paid, more valued end. The quality and efficacy and their educational preparation with regard to academic learning, social growth, and leadership development must become a priori for today's educational leaders (Smith, 2000).

Blount (1998) asserted that continued support for schools that systematically discriminate against women sends a clear message to all students about women's value, their potential, and their place in society. She also suggested that a truly fair system for both genders will not exist until we question the patriarchal tradition of denying women power in public education.

Grogan (1996) asked where the women are, and noted that there have been significant increases of women in doctoral programs in educational administration, suggesting that more women aspire to become superintendents. However, women still only account for 20% of assistant superintendents nationwide (Restine, 1993) and only 10-13% of superintendents nationwide (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999; Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000; Tallerico & Blount, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine leadership experiences and styles of executive level women by interviewing women superintendents. The intent was to ascertain their attitudes and perceptions associated with nine leadership tenets taken from the research literature. This research study was designed to focus on ways in which women superintendents approach school district

leadership, make decisions, communicate, persevere, and lead staff. Women who hold positions of educational leadership may encounter professional obstacles rooted in racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and/or other "isms." Crucial insight can be gained by investigating the experiences of women in public school administration. While this research was initiated within a critical feminist ideological context, it was open to patterns and themes that emerged. Campbell (1996) asserted that women's values, beliefs, and experiences must be included to expand incomplete definitions of leadership based on male models or theories.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. How do the women superintendents experience the nine tenets of leadership taken from the extant literature?
2. How is each tenet evident in the women superintendents' leadership styles and behavior?
3. How do women superintendents instill these tenets in others?

Conceptual Framework

This study addressed leadership as perceived and experienced by women superintendents. The conceptual framework of this study was two-fold. First, this study explored nine tenets of leadership taken from research studies on predominantly male leaders (Management Research Group, 1999; Mintzberg, 1998; Goleman, 1998; Conger, 1998; Sorcher & Brant, 2002; Collins, 2001;

Friedman, Christensen & DeGroot, 1998; Loehr & Schwartz, 2001; Nestor-Baker & Tschannen-Moran, 2001) as they were experienced and practiced by female superintendents. The tenets evolved from the WILD (Women in Leadership Development) Project, designed by a group of researchers representing diverse discipline areas and academic institutions from across the United States (Wolverton, et.al., 2003). The rationale for the WILD Project is located in Appendix II. Several tenets include parenthetical statements that were used in the interview protocol; however only the italicized portion is used throughout the body of this paper to refer to the tenet. The nine tenets are:

1. *Effective leaders are passionate about their organizations.* (They exhibit extraordinary commitment not only to the organization but to its people.)
2. *Effective leaders are reflective.* (They are self-aware, self-disciplined, self-confident, and self-assured.)
3. *Effective leaders are competent.* (They possess the intelligence and mental capacity to get the job done.)
4. *Effective leaders are great communicators.* (They have their finger on the pulse of the organization.)
5. *Effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.*
6. *Effective leaders understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run.*
7. *Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking.*
8. *Effective leaders value and respect individuality.*

9. *Effective leaders possess credibility.* (The building blocks of credibility are trust, integrity, and power.)

Second, the study examined educational leadership of women through a critical feminist lens, which has the power of focusing on the “gaps and blank spaces of male-dominant culture, knowledge, and behavior” (Poplin Gosetti & Rusch, 1995, p. 15). This framework asserts that oppression of women, crossing race and class boundaries, spanning known history, is a constant of human experience (Cole, 1986; Maguire, 1996). Feminist researchers often refer to the systematic and effective silencing of women’s voices (Rich, 1979; Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Olsen, 1978; Collins, 1991) which is further exemplified in the field of education where Tyack and Hansot (1982) found a conspiracy of silence when researching statistical data from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) on school leadership demographics: data by gender was strangely lacking.

Chase (1995) described the contradictory experiences of power and subjection as ambiguous empowerment for women superintendents. This research communicates detailed educational leadership experiences of women superintendents by having allowed them to tell their individual stories.

Methodology

The research design for this study was a qualitative case study focusing on the information, data, patterns, and themes that are constructed from emergent interview data through a critical feminist lens. Merriam (1998) notes that

qualitative case studies are common in the field of education, but that uncertainty still exists regarding proper usage. She suggests that a case must be bounded in some way, must be an entity in and of itself, such as a person, a program, or a policy for example. Data from the case studies were compiled in table form for purposes of comparison and analysis. Findings were examined both by tenet and by participant.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of subjects for the interviews. Prominent women superintendents were personally asked to participate. These women superintendents were selected because they were either recommended by a national search firm for executive educational leaders based on reputation and practice or they currently held executive positions in large, urban/county school districts. Maximum variation sampling within the population was attempted. The criteria for participation were that the participants vary in age, ethnicity, experience, sexual orientation, and background. The participants had to have five or more years of experience as a superintendent. Next, they each had to have organizational supervision responsibilities over more than 20 individuals with at least five who reported directly to them. Finally, each had to be responsible for a significant budget of at least \$150 million.

The interview protocol (see Appendix I) for this study consisted of the interviewer reading a tenet, asking three questions about the tenet, repeating the process for the other tenets, and then asking eight follow-up questions, included to review and summarize the discussion.

The instrumentation of this research was taped interviews. Thick and rich description, clarifying the bias of the researcher, and presenting discrepant information were three strategies that were used to address the trustworthiness of the study. In addition, to ensure trustworthiness, this study utilized cross-case analysis, purposive sampling, triangulation, and a case study database. Participation was voluntary. The utmost ethical consideration was given to the participants and care was given to the sensitive nature of this research topic. Therefore, the research data remained anonymous and each participant was protected as much as possible.

The data for this research were analyzed using a database in Microsoft Excel software (Microsoft, 2002). Tables were offered to help the reader interpret findings more easily. Member-checking was also used to ensure trustworthiness. The interviews were audio taped, transcribed for accuracy, and sent to participants for revision. The interviews were analyzed for themes, patterns, and the results were compared to and contrasted with traditional leadership research findings. The coding methodology for this study was comprised of identifying themes and patterns that were then supported with numerous quotes and examples (Merriam, 1998).

Importance of the Study

The topic of leadership, historically synonymous with Caucasian, heterosexual, and male, appears very frequently in professional literature (Gutsch, 2001; Gamble, 2001). This study is important because the leadership

experiences and styles of women in executive leadership positions have been found to be markedly different than those of the dominant race and gender (Barlow, 1998; Management Research Group, 1998; Coleman, 1997). While some attempts to reveal gender differences have found none to exist between female and male leadership (Perelman, 2000; Boatright, 1998; Tibus, 1998; Braye, 2000), other research revealed that gender-based leadership traits, not leader gender, were associated with a positive work environment (Gamble, 2001). This study is important because women traditionally face racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and other prejudices, whether as leaders or as followers (Smith, 1993; DeLany, 1999; Reed-Taylor, 1998; Gostnell, 1996; Edwards, 1997; Lopez-Hansen, 1997; Peery, 1998; Imbra, 1998). This study is also important because women leaders often have neither mentors nor role models (Reed-Taylor, 1998; Edwards, 1997; Spence, 2002; Fox & Schuhmann, 2000; Gamble, 2001). Further, the public education system generally fails to recognize and address these issues, and consequently, fails to effectively prepare female youth for future leadership roles (Smith, 2000). This study is important because it illuminates the experiences and behaviors of female superintendents, who have become successful despite the obstacles noted herein, and therefore, will serve as a guide for educational leaders at all levels to more effectively prepare female youth to pursue positions of leadership.

Definition of Terms

Androcentric – Informed by white, male norms (Gardiner, Enomoto & Grogan, 2000).

Gender Equity – The set of behaviors and knowledge that permits educators to recognize inequality in educational opportunities, to carry out specific interventions that constitute equal educational treatment, and to ensure equal educational outcomes (Sanders, Koch, & Urso, 1997).

Large urban school district – A member of The Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of 66 of the nation's largest urban public school systems (www.cgcs.org).

Marginalized – To be part of the whole but outside the main body (hooks, 1984).

Single Marginalization – To be marginalized in only one category outside the dominant power-holding group (i.e.: Caucasian and heterosexual, but female) (by author, 2005).

Multiple or Layered Marginalization – To be marginalized in more than one category outside the dominant power-holding group (i.e.: not Caucasian and also not male) (by author, 2005).

Power – The ability to takes one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's own part matter (Heilbrun, 1988).

Tenet – Any opinion, principle, doctrine, or dogma held as true by members of a profession (Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1995).

Organization of the Study

The research study is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature related to educational leadership at the level of the superintendency. In addition, research on the nine tenets of leadership is presented. Chapter 3 details the methodology utilized in this research as well as descriptions of the data collection methods. Chapter 4 offers the five case studies of the women superintendents who participated in this study. Chapter 5 reports the findings of the cross-case analysis delineating themes and patterns that emerged from the interviews for each of the nine tenets and results from the follow-up questions. While the research is qualitative in nature, some data are presented in table form for purposes of comparison and analysis. This chapter offers an extensive examination and report of the findings in answering the research questions. Finally, chapter 6 reviews the purpose and significance of this study, and general findings across tenets. It presents conclusions drawn from the participants' responses to the interview protocol, and is analyzed through a critical feminist lens. Findings from existing research are woven into the discussion of the themes and patterns that emerged from this research. The final chapter offers reflections and implications for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal."

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1848)

"Away with your man-visions! Women propose to reject them all, and begin to dream dreams for themselves."

- Susan B. Anthony (1871)

Introduction

The topic of leadership appears very frequently in professional literature. This chapter examines leadership research with specific focus on educational leadership at the level of superintendent through a critical feminist lens. Over the past century, according to the U.S. Government Digest of Educational Statistics (1999), 62% of principals were women in 1905, 20% of principals were women in 1973, and 48% of principals were women in 1999. Shakeshaft (1989) reported that as of 1928, 1.6% of all superintendents in the U.S. were women and that in 1999, only 12% were women. The teaching force, however, is dominated by 74% women. A significant gender equity gap exists among educational leaders relative to the gender demographics of the teaching force.

Generally limited to traditional Eurocentric and androcentric perspectives, the current body of literature focused on leadership maintains and perpetuates the secondary status of Euro-American women, the invisibility of women of color, and

relative non-existence of lesbians in leadership roles. The topic of women in leadership, referring to Euro-American, heterosexual women, appears less frequently in professional literature and the leadership characteristics of women are very often compared with those of men. Traditionally, research about leadership characteristics, styles, and strategies has focused on Euro-American, heterosexual males. In keeping with this tradition, Euro-American, heterosexual women have been the primary focus of literature about women in leadership (Management Research Group, 1998; Goleman, 1998, 2000; Tharenou, 2001; Peery, 1998; Lopez-Hansen, 1997; Imbra, 1998; Coon, 2001; Gostnell, 1996; Edwards, 1997; DeLany, 1999; Reed-Taylor, 1998).

The topic of other or “marginalized” groups of women in leadership appears much less frequently in professional literature. Marginalized groups of women include, but are certainly not limited to, African American women, Hispanic women, Asian women, Native American women, and lesbians. For the purpose of this literature review, single marginalization refers to the experience of being Euro-American, heterosexual, and female. Multiple or layered marginalization refers to the experience of being female and identifying with more than one marginalized group.

This literature review is presented in six sections. First, nine tenets of leadership which were used for the interviews are listed, and are then cited throughout the remaining sections. Second, current trends in non-gendered and gender-neutral leadership models are examined. Third, current trends in two-factor or gendered leadership models are considered. Fourth, literature focused

on the leadership experiences of white, heterosexual women is reviewed. Fifth, the experiences of three groups of marginalized women in leadership are analyzed. Finally, literature focused on the future of marginalized women in leadership is explored.

Nine Tenets of Leadership

An extensive review of current literature on leadership reveals a wide variety of characteristics found to be common among effective leaders. Listed below are nine tenets of leadership that were used as the basis for the interviews in this study. The tenets evolved from the WILD (Women in Leadership Development) Project (Wolverton, et. al., 2003). The purpose of the WILD Project was to study leadership among women who hold or have held chief executive positions within their respective organizations. Several tenets include parenthetical statements that were used in the interview protocol; however only the italicized portion is used throughout the body of this paper to refer to the tenet. The nine tenets are:

1. *Effective leaders are passionate about their organizations.* (They exhibit extraordinary commitment not only to the organization but to its people.)
2. *Effective leaders are reflective.* (They are self-aware, self-disciplined, self-confident, and self-assured.)
3. *Effective leaders are competent.* (They possess the intelligence and mental capacity to get the job done.)
4. *Effective leaders are great communicators.* (They have their finger on the pulse of the organization.)

5. *Effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.*
6. *Effective leaders understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run.*
7. *Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking.*
8. *Effective leaders value and respect individuality.*
9. *Effective leaders possess credibility.* (The building blocks of credibility are trust, integrity, and power.)

Each of the tenets is woven throughout this chapter, albeit out of numerical order due to the organizational structure of remaining sections. Relevant research substantiates each with italicized references to the tenets included to assist the reader in making connections between specific findings and a particular tenet. However, it is noted that one-to-one correspondence between a study and a tenet is incomplete due to the multiple findings in the vast majority of studies. There exists, in contrast, a complex web of connections between findings from a multitude of leadership studies and the nine tenets that have been identified for use in this study. Therefore, findings from several sources may substantiate one or more tenets.

Non-Gendered and Gender-Neutral Leadership Models

Much research about leadership attempts to explain differences in effectiveness, not in terms of gender, race, or sexual orientation, but rather in terms of a wide variety of behavior. Most of this literature fails to address issues

of sexism, racism, classism, ageism, lookism, and homophobia/heterosexism.

Demographic data regarding class and age can be deduced as most participants are mid-level managers with mid- to high-socioeconomic status. Only some of this literature includes clear demographic data of participants, specifically information about gender and race. None of the literature reviewed in this section include data about the sexual orientation of participants. This trait-neutrality effectively maintains the status quo. Most of the research reviewed in this section is quantitative or mixed design. All of this research is grounded in realism.

Effective leaders have been found to exhibit the following behaviors. They are respectfully distant, persuasive, knowledgeable, risk-takers, have high standards, and analyze the future (Management Research Group, 1999; Conger 1998).

Effective leaders are emotionally intelligent (Goleman, 1998), loyal (Reichheld, 2001), have integrity and good communication skills (Sorcher & Brant, 2002), are inspirational (Goffee & Jones), combine personal humility with intense professional will (Collins, 2001), possess athletic endurance (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001), and know how to earn trust (Nestor-Baker & Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Kabacoff at the Management Research Group (1999) in Maine conducted a study of effective leadership with over 1100 CEOs and Senior Vice Presidents. They found that superior leaders share some common characteristics. They analyze the future impact of decisions, are comfortable in fast-changing environments, and are willing to take risks. (*Tenet 7. Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking.*) They challenge the mandates of superiors. They use effective persuasion to build commitment while they maintain a respectful

distance from others. They are comfortable being the one in charge. They maintain in-depth knowledge in their area, express their thoughts clearly and keep others informed while always setting high standards for themselves and others. (*Tenet 3. Effective leaders are competent.*) They set deadlines and monitor progress to ensure success. They seek others' input and energize others.

Effective leaders are said to have a high degree of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). Initially focusing on alternate ways of measuring general intelligence, Goleman then applied his theory to leadership. He found that leaders with high degrees of emotional intelligence possess technical skills, cognitive abilities, competency in working with others, and effectiveness in leading change. Emotionally intelligent leaders have a strong sense of self-awareness, exercise impulse control, are highly motivated, express empathy for others, and manage social interactions purposefully. (*Tenet 2. Effective leaders are reflective.*)

Goleman (2000) also describes six leadership styles, only four of which were found to have a consistently positive effect of climate and results. A coercive leadership style is described and shown to be the least effective due to inflexibility, disrespectful verbal and non-verbal interactions, pride erosion, and lack of motivation. A pacesetter style is also described as ineffective because flexibility and responsibility are reduced and work becomes routinized and boring. Authoritative, affiliative, democratic, and coaching leadership styles were all found to be effective. Leaders who exercise these strategies are able to motivate

followers, facilitate collaboration, value people, improve performance, maintain high standards, and mobilize people toward a vision.

Effective leaders stick to six principals of loyalty, according to Reichheld (2001). The first is, preach what you practice; that is, clarify values through words and deeds. Next, play to win-win; that is, both leaders and followers must win. Third, be picky, there is a difference between loyalty and tenure. Fourth, keep it simple because the world is too complex. Fifth, reward the right results by saving the best opportunities for the most loyal followers. Last, listen hard and talk straight to followers by making it safe for them to offer candid criticism.

Leadership was explained by Mintzberg (1998) as generally exercised on three levels: the *individual* level where leaders mentor, coach, and motivate; the *group* level where leaders build teams and resolve conflicts; and the *organizational* level where leaders build culture. (*Tenet 5. Effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.*) In his research on managing professionals with high levels of education and skill (such as symphony orchestra musicians), he found that covert (inspirational) leadership was more effective than overt (directive and procedural) leadership. He found that people don't have to be empowered when they are trusted.

Conger (1998) suggested that persuasion is key to effective leadership because people don't just ask what should they do, but why should they do it. He described four essential steps to effective persuasion. First, leaders must establish credibility. (*Tenet 9. Effective leaders possess credibility.*) Second, leaders must frame their goals in a way that identifies common ground with

followers. Third, leaders must reinforce their positions using vivid language and compelling evidence. Fourth, leaders must connect emotionally with their followers.

According to the research of Sorcher and Brant (2002) certain characteristics traditionally attributed to effective leaders may actually lead to the wrong person being chosen for a leadership position. Team players, those who provide hands-on coaching, those with operational proficiency, dynamic public speakers, those with raw ambition, and those with similar backgrounds and characteristics to the hiring manager are often promoted to leadership positions, but these characteristics are not necessarily those of the most effective leaders. On the contrary, effective leaders have integrity, can communicate information and expectations, can reason and analyze issues, and can manage their immediate work teams. (*Tenet 4. Effective leaders are great communicators.*)

Bruch and Ghoshal (2002) cautioned against assuming that looking and acting busy are signs of effective leadership. Their study found that 90 percent of managers waste their time on all sorts of ineffective activities. This leaves only 10 percent of managers who spend their time in committed, purposeful, and reflective activities. They describe a two-by-two Focus-Energy Matrix of leadership behavior (see Figure 1). Procrastination describes the leadership activity of those with low focus and low energy. Those with high focus but low energy are disengaged. Those with low focus and high energy are distracted. Finally, only those with high focus and high energy are purposeful.

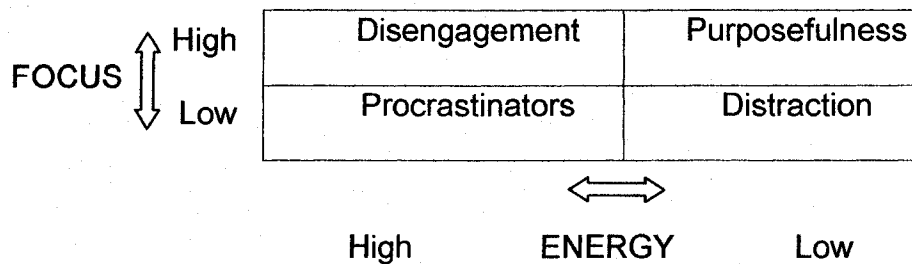


Figure 1. Focus-Energy Matrix

Why would anyone want to follow you? That was the question asked by Goffee and Jones (2000) for a decade while consulting for both U.S. and European companies. Their findings revealed that inspirational leaders share four qualities. First, they selectively show their weaknesses. Second, they rely heavily on intuition to gauge appropriate timing and course of their actions. Third, they manage employees with tough empathy. Finally, they reveal their differences and capitalize on their uniqueness.

Collins (2001) conducted a research project over five years with eleven companies set out to answer the question: can a good company become a great company and, if so, how? He discovered Level 5 leadership, the description of which is both counterintuitive and countercultural. Simply stated, Level 5 leaders blend extreme personal humility with intense professional will. (*Tenet 1. Effective leaders are passionate about their organizations.*) Even though the two characteristics seem paradoxical, it is the combination that he found to be transformational in moving good companies to great. His preliminary hypothesis was that there are some leaders who would never put their ego second to the

success of the company, and that these can never hope to achieve Level 5 leadership results.

Friedman, Christensen & DeGroot (1998) conducted individual case studies of managers who approach the work-personal life dichotomy as essentially related, not as issues that employees must keep separate. They found that these managers are guided by three mutually reinforcing principles. First, they clarify what is important about business and encourage employees to clarify what is important about personal lives. Second, they recognize and support employees as whole people, acknowledging and celebrating their roles outside of work. (*Tenet 8. Effective leaders value and respect individuality*). Third, they continually experiment with the way work is done as they seek approaches that enhance both the organization and the employees.

Loehr and Schwartz (2001) approached leadership as a function of athletic endurance and performance. (*Tenet 6. Effective leaders understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run.*) They developed a model called the High-Performance Pyramid (see Figure 2). In this model, physical capacity refers to building endurance, promoting mental stamina and emotional recovery, and is at the bottom of the pyramid. The next level is emotional capacity, which refers to the internal climate that drives the ideal performance state. The third level is mental capacity, which refers to physical and emotional energy on the task at hand. The top level of the pyramid is spiritual capacity, which provides a powerful source of motivation, determination, and endurance. Having physical capacity as the foundation of the

pyramid, these researchers suggest that effective leaders simply do all those healthy things they know they ought to do.

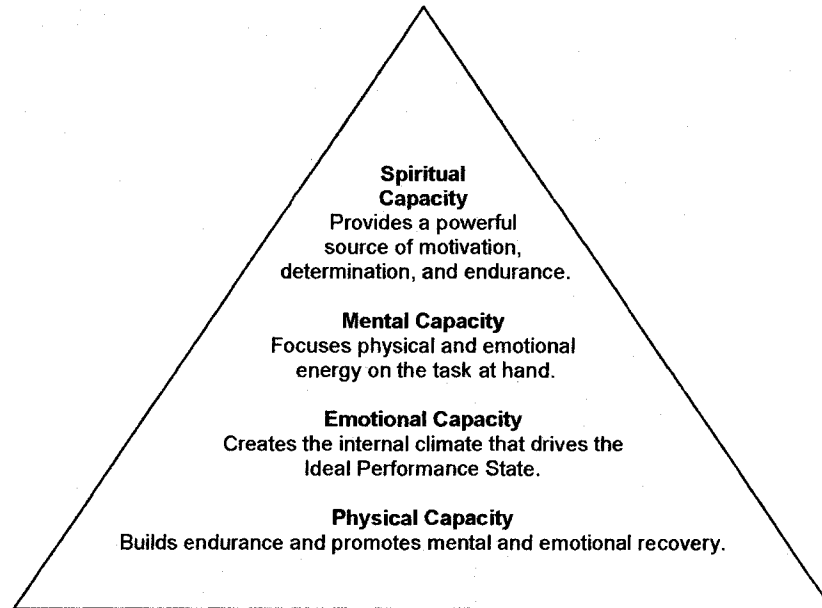


Figure 2. High-Performance Pyramid

Nestor-Baker and Tschannen-Moran (2001) conducted two in-depth case studies with middle-aged white male superintendents on tacit knowledge in trust development. The researchers found that these superintendents were able to successfully build trust by exhibiting the following leadership behaviors: vulnerability, confidence, benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. (*Tenet 9. Effective leaders possess credibility.*)

Two-Factor or Gendered Leadership Models

The previous section revealed that researchers have described leadership in terms of a diverse set of behaviors. In addition, researchers have described dichotomous leadership styles. Popular two-factor models include task versus relationship leadership, autocratic versus participative leadership, leadership versus management, and transformational versus transactional leadership (Yukl, 1999). In many cases, these two-factor models are explained using stereotypical gender differences between white, heterosexual males and white, heterosexual females. Men's leadership has been characterized as task-oriented. Women's leadership has been characterized as relationship-oriented. Researchers have placed the different leadership styles along a theoretical effectiveness continuum with traditionally male leadership characteristics being superior to those characteristics commonly attributed to women leaders. Male leaders have been found to be strategic in their approach, constrained, outgoing, competitive, autocratic, and transformational; whereas female leaders have been found to be relationship-oriented, participative, transactional, focused, expressive, empathetic, and communicative (Management Research Group, 1998; Coleman, 1997). Some attempts to reveal gender differences have found no differences between female and male leadership (Perelman, 2000; Boatright, 1998; Tibus, 1998). Still other research revealed that gender-based leadership traits, not leader gender, were associated with a positive work environment (Gamble, 2001). That is, it did not matter whether the leader was male or female; rather, the leadership style associated with women (socially-oriented) was found to be a

more significant determinant of positive school climate than the leadership style associated with men (task-oriented).

The Management Research Group is a global leader in assessment-based individual and organizational development. They utilize a network of expert independent consultants and educate them in the use of their assessments using a rigorous process that emphasizes the value of science, business, and the human spirit. In 1998 the Management Research Group conducted research that focused on differences in the leadership characteristics of men and women. They found that women tend to be more task and results focused than men. In this study, women were more likely to organize work in a structured way, to follow-up to make sure objectives were met, and to expect results. In this same study, men were found to be more likely to take a strategic approach to leadership, more willing to listen to new ideas, and more willing to take risks. Another gender-based leadership difference was on the dimension of expressiveness versus constraint. Women were found to be more expressive, demonstrating more concern for others, developing close working relationships, and showing more sincerity than men. Men were found to be more constrained, unemotional, and more effective at using language to persuade others. Finally, men were rated higher on business skills, and women were rated higher on people skills.

Other research by the Management Research Group (1998) produced similar gender-based findings about leadership. Women were rated higher on empathy, communication, and people skills. Men were rated as more outgoing and more cooperative.

More recent research by the Management Research Group (2000) exposed differences between male and female senior executives. Male senior executives were described as more restrained in emotional expression as opposed to female senior executives who were described as operating with a greater degree of energy, intensity and emotional expression, and as having a greater capacity to keep others enthusiastic and involved. Female executives were more likely to set deadlines, monitor progress, be more assertive and competitive, set higher expectations for performance, and let others know directly what they think of them. Male senior executives were more likely to take a traditional approach to problem-solving, which was defined as minimizing risk and emphasizing learning from past experience. This study also found that certain characteristics were advantageous for male leaders while simultaneously disadvantageous for female leaders, and visa versa. For example, male leaders were reported to be more effective (and female leaders less effective) if they employed a forceful, assertive, and competitive approach to achieving results. Conversely, female leaders were reported to be more effective (and male leaders less effective) if they accommodated the needs of and demonstrated an active concern for others.

Men and women in the high-tech industry were the subjects of research by Perelman (2000). Her research found very few significant differences in the way decisions are made between male and female entrepreneurs. All males and all females in this study were found to use similar decision-making styles, including

speed, flexibility, risk-taking, focus, involvement, creativity, innovativeness, insight, and intuition.

Boatwright (1998) surveyed over 1100 employees from three organizations about leadership style. Her findings showed that female and male workers both prefer leaders who show consideration for others, contradicting the notion that male workers prefer leaders who only exhibit initiating structure. She also found that females expressed higher needs than males for leaders who demonstrated evidence of being connected with followers in domains both inside and outside the workplace.

Tibus (1998) studied differences in leadership between women and men business owners and women business executives. She found no significant differences between the leadership styles and characteristics of women and men business owners.

Research examining resistance to and facilitation of power sharing in organizations was conducted by Coleman (1997). His research revealed that competitively primed subjects shared power less. Men were found to have more competitive and antiegalitarian implicit theories about power, to be less relationship-oriented, and to share power less than women.

Ashcraft (2001), in her research on a hybrid form of leadership she called feminist bureaucracy, suggested that feminist leadership promotes empowerment through personal development of self-reliance and egalitarian group relations.

Gamble (2001) examined task oriented and socially oriented leadership patterns in four female and four male elementary principals. Findings from surveys, questionnaires, and interviews showed that gender based leadership traits, rather than administrator gender, were associated with school climate. The leadership trait associated with maleness was that of being task-oriented, that of being concerned with the successful accomplishment of tasks. The leadership trait associated with femaleness was that of being relationship-oriented, that of being concerned with establishing good interpersonal relations. In addition, a needs assessment was conducted which indicated the need for strong mentoring internships and relevant coursework with practical applicability for the aspiring educational leader.

Two-factor models of leadership, the majority of which differentiate by gender, have consistently found differences between male and female leaders with few exceptions. As was revealed in the first section, in-depth studies of male leadership abound. Therefore, this current body of research reveals the need for in-depth studies of female leadership, which is examined in the following section.

Euro-American, Heterosexual, and Female:

Single Marginalization and Leadership

The literature related to women in leadership crosses institutional and economic lines. Numerous studies have examined women leaders in education, politics/government, industry, religion, and athletics. This literature reveals that women have had to deal with a number of deterrents that men do not (Olsen,

2005; Compton, 2004; Grogan, 1996). Deterrents include the good old boys club, the glass ceiling, sexism, the lack of mentors, and the lack of role models (Gardiner, Enomoto & Grogan, 2000). Women who identify as being of Euro-American ethnic descent share the experience of being marginalized in the first layer outside of the core of those Euro-American, heterosexual males who hold leadership power in this country. These women's experiences are uncovered in a body of qualitative literature that is growing rapidly. As a collective group, they face the ominous challenge of combating sexism each day as they strive to develop and grow as community, religious, political, family, educational, and business leaders (Gutsch, 2001).

Euro-American women leaders experience leadership differently than those in the dominant race and gender. Research shows that gender issues still exist and are prevalent (Gutsch, 2001). Barlow (1998) found that male hegemony prevails, that women are expected to perform multiple duties that their male counterparts are not, and that the barriers mentioned in the previous paragraph prevail. To compound difficulties for this group of leaders, there is a lack of mentors (Olsen, 2005; Spence, 2002; Fox & Schuhmann, 2000; Gamble, 2001). Regarding styles of leadership this group of women tends to exhibit a consensual style, they share power, and are participative rather than autocratic (Matz, 2001).

As if the workplace responsibilities are not sufficiently challenging, these leaders also face domestic responsibilities that are both qualitatively and quantitatively distinct from their male counterparts. Hewlett (2002) found the following about the myth of having it all: women leaders still carry the majority of

the burden of housework. In fact, their husbands actually create more work for them at home. Additionally, despite the fact that women reported being happier when they have both career and family, there are career penalties for having children (Healy, 2002).

Women in Educational Leadership

In 1905, sixty-two percent of elementary school principals in the U.S. were women. That percentage dropped continuously, dipping to a low 20 percent in 1973. Today, the percentage of women who serve as elementary school principals has risen again to about 48 percent (U.S. Government Digest of Educational Statistics, 1999).

Olsen (2005) surveyed 37 female and 37 male superintendents in Iowa, with return rates of 97% and 76% respectively, and conducted qualitative interviews with three of the women regarding barriers that women face in accessing the superintendency. She found that females accessed the position at older ages than male counterparts. She found that mentors were critical, and that overt and covert discrimination still exists. The field of educational leadership demonstrated an androcentric system with institutionalized barriers to women's ascendancy to superintendent.

Hershey (2005) surveyed superintendents in Pennsylvania online regarding personal and professional variables relating to pursuing the position of superintendent. She received 76 responses, 45 from males and 31 from females; all respondents were White and 76% were married. She found that males tended

to have linear career paths and females had non-linear career paths. She also found that the males tended to have younger children than the females. She also found that neither career barriers nor facilitators significantly affected the aspiration to become superintendents for either gender.

Twymon (2004) surveyed 100 superintendents in Texas regarding the correlation between spirituality and leadership practices. Male and female superintendents responded evenly—39 each. For both genders she found statistically significant relationships between spirituality and inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. She also found that females were more likely to use spirituality to encourage the heart.

Evans (2000) compared developmental experiences of women in corporate leadership with women in higher educational leadership. Her findings showed that, for both groups of women leaders, on-the-job experiences contributed to growth in personal and interpersonal leadership skills, knowledge, and values. These experiences further developed administrative/management knowledge and context specific skills.

Grewal (2002) conducted a study of women superintendents in California. She found that barriers such as chauvinism and prejudice among board members still exist, as well as challenges with balancing career and family responsibilities. The participants in this study reported a lack of mentors.

Colorado female elementary school principals were surveyed and personally interviewed by Gutsch (2001) regarding their perceptions on gender issues related to their careers. The collective responses to this study pointed to the

following regarding gender issues: they still exist for women in educational leadership positions, they are most prevalent in hiring, and they are prevalent in how the administrative position affects female principals, both professionally and personally. Specific gender issues noted in this study included the common experience that parents, communities, and even staff members indicated preferences for male principals, and all participants cited examples of situations where they were given social or secretarial roles while male colleagues were given more complex responsibilities.

In the Boston Globe, Healy (2002) reported that men in power at MIT routinely underpaid, marginalized, and disrespected women professors as recently as during the 1990s. Research was conducted in several departments with overall results indicating that women were often barred from high-level roles and punished for having children. Women's careers were slowed and sometimes ruined due to a results-oriented culture. After this study was released and MIT overhauled its policies, men still held most top jobs. In August 2004, however, Dr. Susan Hockfield, a noted neuroscientist, was elected as MIT's sixteenth president.

Barlow (1998) interviewed 18 women athletic directors and nine women high school principals to examine critical factors relating to the theory of male hegemony and the future roles of women athletic directors. The themes that emerged from the study were that: (1) male hegemony theory prevails; (2) athletic director appointments don't necessarily follow district hiring guidelines for pre-existing employment, experience, and successful coaching records; (3) keys

for women to obtain athletic directorship include pre-existing school employment, experience, and successful coaching; (4) women athletic directors are expected to perform multiple duties; (5) numerous barriers limit the number of women athletic directors including stereotypical gender-role beliefs, good old boys network, lack of power, and sexism; and (6) gender equity may be achieved in the next 15-20 years.

Women in Politics and Industry Leadership

Spence (2002) researched twenty-five rural white women doing feminist work in Maine's legislature to examine *their meanings* of feminist political woman. From this research, several themes emerged: gendered leadership is necessary as a guide for empowering women and children, role modeling and mentors are important factors in success, and liberal feminism, evolved from second to third wave, is the core belief directing the legislative work of these women. Spence also found that, for these women politicians, the public/private dichotomy is a falsehood. Specifically, knowledge that they had acquired in home/family situations was infused with knowledge that they had acquired in professional settings, and both the private and public experiences contributed to their leadership behaviors. She also found that these leaders developed similar strategies for carrying out feminist politics.

Fox and Schuhmann (2000) examined differences among female and male city managers' mentoring experiences. Findings indicated that there was no significant difference in number of or gender of personal mentors. However, in

the category of professional mentors, women were significantly more likely to rely on female mentors, and men were more likely to rely on male mentors. This presents an obstacle for women aspiring to become city managers because there are fewer women to act as mentors. Additional findings revealed that males were more likely to have educational mentors than females.

Sewell (2002) reported that, in the major telecom and cable provider companies, only 13 percent of top executives were women, and only three percent of all women held titles with clout. The fact that women have more years of experience makes it impossible to overlook them as viable management candidates. However, there still exists a significant discrepancy between being considered for leadership positions and securing those positions. As has been noted several times in this literature review, mentoring was noted as a vital, but oft scarce resource available to aspiring women leaders.

The Management Research Group (2002) reported that women now comprise 40-50 percent of the management ranks in U.S. corporations. However, their research revealed that the significant gains have been in middle management positions, and that women still hold only a small percentage of senior management positions. Additionally, women still earn 69 cents for every dollar earned by men in similar positions.

Hewlett (2002) conducted a survey of top executives and the myth of having it all. She reports that a startling 79 percent of men reported wanting children and 75 percent have them. Conversely, 49 percent of female corporate ultra-achievers are childless, while only 19 percent of their male counterparts are

childless. She found that the persistent wage gap between men and women is due mainly to the penalties women incur when they interrupt their careers to have children. Her research also revealed that husbands have not picked up their share of women's traditional domestic responsibilities. Women come home to a second shift. In fact, almost half of the women surveyed reported that their husbands actually create more work for them than they contribute. A related and paradoxical finding of this research is that women are happier when they have both career and family.

Sparrowe and Popielarz (1995) examined the effects of gender on the careers of 205 hospitality employees. In this study, gender had no significant effects on promotion rates. However, Sparrowe and Iverson (1999) conducted a survey utilizing a random sampling comprising 1 percent of all hospitality industry employees in the U.S. and found that gender-based income disparity does exist.

Women in Leadership in General

Stephens (2000) examined the leadership of women in church, business, and higher education. Commonalities among the women included being first generation leaders in their areas and having to negotiate room for their own voice and style within traditionally male defined settings.

Two-hundred women student leaders were surveyed by Reeves (2001). She measured the empowering leadership practices of challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. The results revealed significant statistical support for a

relationship between psychological type and leadership practices. These women student leaders scored lowest on challenging the process and highest on encouraging the heart and enabling others to act.

Matz (2001) studied styles, confidence levels, and influences of women leaders in various fields. Findings showed that followers preferred a consensual style of leadership, that women's leadership is characterized by sharing power, encouraging participation, energizing others, and enhancing other's sense of self-worth.

Barry-Oliver (1999) studied professional women who had achieved leadership positions and who had participated in women's professional organizations. Eight key career benefits occurring on three levels emerged: on the individual level, self-esteem, skills, recognition, and knowledge; on the interpersonal level, support, networking, and giving back; on the organizational level, business development.

This section revealed clearly that the common experiences of women leaders – whether in education, politics, business, industry, or in the home – include disproportionately high amounts of extra duties and domestic responsibilities, a lack of role models and mentors, sexist attitudes and treatment, unfair and inconsistent hiring practices, and lower earning potential. The next section reveals consistent findings with this section's review of research, in addition to other experiences common to women leaders who experience layered marginalization.

Other and Female: Multiple or Layered Marginalization and Leadership

The literature related to minority women in leadership also crosses institutional and economic lines. Challenges discussed in the previous section are also faced and overcome by women who experience multiple or layered marginalization, the women who are two or more identities away from the core group of Euro-American, heterosexual males who hold the leadership power in this country. The literature reviewed in this section reveals that women leaders who have other marginalized identities face all of the obstacles previously highlighted plus additional obstacles, develop alternative coping strategies, and rely on specific support systems.

Marginalized women leaders are constantly faced with issues surrounding race and gender (Smith, 1993; DeLany, 1999; Reed-Taylor, 1998; Gostnell, 1996; Edwards, 1997; Lopez-Hansen, 1997; Peery, 1998; Imbra, 1998). More specifically, marginalized women report being judged on their physical characteristics, and being pressured to defend themselves against stereotypical speculation regarding their sex lives. Further, these women leaders report that their bi/multiculturalism is disrespected, their authority is challenged, and their aspirations for career advancement are resisted. Despite these issues, marginalized women value inclusiveness and diversity in their hiring practices (Coon, 2001).

Another issue marginalized women leaders cope with regularly is the relationship between a lack of mentors and career advancement (Reed-Taylor, 1998; Edwards, 1997). Networking and having opportunities to shadow mentors

is essential for professional growth (Lopez-Hansen, 1997; Imbra, 1998). Mentors can be either formal or informal, and provide equally effective guidance (Strickling-Bullock, 2000), but there are too few of them.

Family and community play an important role in the lives of marginalized women leaders (Delany, 1999; Edwards, 1997; Gostnell, 1996; Peery, 1998). Marginalized women interpret their leadership roles in a spiritual context (Jean-Marie, 2002). They see their leadership positions as part of a legacy that was passed down to them, and they also see their leadership positions as part of a legacy which they must pass down to others.

African American Women Leaders

Smith (1993) studied the commonalities among three African American women who are considered to be the firsts on Capitol Hill. Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman to run for president of the United States and to serve in the U.S. Congress. Barbara Jordan was the first African American to make a keynote address at a Democratic National Convention and the first to represent a Southern state in Congress since the era of Reconstruction. Carol Moseley-Braun was the first African American woman to become a U.S. Senator. Smith found that all three women came from impoverished backgrounds, sharing the experience of being economically challenged. All three women had strong father figures who supported their career aspirations. All three women developed a mastery of communication, utilizing fiery and persuasive speech. All three women also experienced the public humiliation of speculation about their sexual lives. All three women dealt with issues concerning gender and race, but made

conscious choices about when and how to address these issues. Finally, all three women were members of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. This common sorority affiliation with an organization that promotes sisterhood, community service, educational development, and political activism represents a network of mentors and role models for these leaders.

Strickling-Bullock (2000) conducted an ethnographic study that focused on the facilitation of the mentoring process as a means to help advance African American women leaders. The data showed that there was a possible relationship between facilitated mentoring and career advancement of African American women. Obtaining top management's commitment to and support of a formal mentoring program was found to be essential to the mentoring program's success. Both formal and informal mentoring were identified as effective in promoting the career growth of African American women. Informal was considered as effective because it was perceived that formal mentoring was sometimes artificial in nature. One impact of mentoring was that an African American woman was likely to be promoted faster. A factor that led to the success of the mentoring program was careful selection of the mentors. Finally, participants indicated that constant communication, structured assignments, program evaluation, well defined expectations, and feedback all contributed to the success of the mentoring program in promoting African American women's careers. This study suggested that many African American women still experience resistance to their aspirations for career advancement. This

resistance appears to be related to the superficial attempt by senior management to address inequalities based on race and gender.

Jean Marie (2002) conducted in-depth interviews of 12 African American women who serve as academic leaders at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. She searched for patterns which reflect African American traditions or alternative (e.g., white male) traditions and communities. Her findings showed that these women interpreted their leadership in the context of a spiritual or religious realm, having a personal relationship with God which is the source of their strength to help them negotiate the world, and having strong social ties with their church community. They also interpreted their leadership in the context of shared community commitment. Students were viewed as children who need to be nurtured, groomed, and prayed for as next-generation leaders. These women perceive their roles as a continuation of the legacy passed to them by their former mentors (from home, school, community). A common problem expressed by these educational leaders was with their attempts to transmit historically white institutions' tradition to historically Black institutions.

Reed-Taylor (1998) examined the careers and experiences of African American women leaders in two-year colleges. Findings showed that these women followed traditional pathways to their leadership positions. Data did not show race-based career progression. Certain factors either enhanced or were barriers to career progression: mentoring, networking, affirmative action, politics, race, gender, administrative training, and credentials. The women in this study indicated that African American women who aspire to be leaders must be able to

“walk through doors that are open and push open doors that are closed” (p. ii).

Also indicated was the need to be confident, have a positive attitude, have strong familial, institutional, and community support, and understand that race and gender issues are to be expected and appropriately confronted.

Delany (1999) studied a group of 22 African American women leaders within the predominantly white female health profession of occupational therapy. Learning career paths were related to family, educational networks, and mentors. The women in this study shared the experience of hearing negative messages stemming from racism, and to a lesser extent, from sexism. Despite hearing such messages, these women were driven to leadership roles not for personal gains but for social advocacy. Most women in this study also held leadership roles in educational settings, their community, church, and government.

Edwards (1997) examined the experiences of three African American higher educational leaders. Her findings showed that racism and sexism were givens in the lives of these women. Collectively, they shared the experience of being judged on the basis of their physical characteristics rather than on their professional credentials. Tokenism caused dilemmas associated with being very visible and isolated at the same time, and professional inconveniences and indignities. The participants reported a feeling of being owned by other underrepresented campus groups, like they had an obligation to be everything to everyone. There were common feelings of being disregarded, opposed, questioned, and challenged. They felt that they had to justify their professional abilities more frequently than their white and male colleagues. They expressed a

lack of support in the form of mentors. Positive feelings were confidence in their abilities and a refusal to let false accusations about incompetence act as a barrier to success. They did not perceive racism and sexism as obstacles; but rather as challenges to overcome. The women utilized familial support and held positions of responsibility in their communities, churches, and homes. They felt an obligation to increase opportunities, make strides to reduce racism and sexism, and change perceptions for the next generation. They also expressed a desire to leave a legacy for other African Americans and women, recognizing that their actions would have an impact on future hiring decisions. Flexibility, seamless adaptation, and resistance were noted as the most powerful coping strategies.

Gostnell (1996) conducted in-depth interviews with seven African American women in education, state government, and philanthropic foundations. The common themes that emerged from these interviews were: development of psychological and emotional resilience; experiences of racism and sexism; cultivation of a spiritual or religious life; construction of a positive sense of self; and a construct of connected leadership to the community. The women in this study highlighted the need to have mentors.

Latina Leaders

Lopez Hansen (1997) examined the bicultural experiences of all 1996-1997 Latina presidents and vice presidents of the California community colleges system. The researcher found that these women utilized strategies for success that are different than the strategies traditionally described in the literature.

Adaptation, acculturation, and modification of oneself were consistent themes that emerged from this study. More specifically, Lopez Hansen found that these women recognized and worked within existing college culture power structures; recognized that their bicultural voices had limited authority due to racism, sexism, and classism of the dominant or white male culture, and recognized that their decisions would be challenged. These women also shared certain persistence strategies such as confirming racism and sexism, networking, deriving support from family, recognizing that failure does not mean incompetence, obtaining different experiences such as shadowing, and continuing despite obstacles. Finally, regarding their bicultural identity, the majority of Latina leaders reported that they adapted to the dominant culture in their leadership roles and maintained their primary culture at home. Some reported that they were in a constant state of negotiation as they struggled to maintain their primary culture both at work and at home. A small group did not acknowledge their bicultural identity at all, and reported that they assimilated fully into the dominant culture.

Peery (1998) conducted research on six Hispanic women leaders' perceptions of opportunities and barriers they faced in their career progressions. Careers included education, politics, and business. The women in this study reported receiving support from family and mentors. They identified affirmative action, language, honesty, and lookism as factors contributing to their success. Barriers to their success included lookism and not being taken seriously, family and cultural expectations, the need to be better prepared, the unwillingness or

inability to move for a job, and ethnicity. None of the women reported having mentors who were Hispanic or female.

Manuel and Slate (2003) conducted a study of 23 Hispanic female superintendents in school districts across America. They found that 78 percent of their participants reported having a strong mentor and 60 percent who had a mentor were mentored by men. Almost half of the respondents were located in the southwest or far west region of the United States. All had been or were currently married to men and 74 percent had grown children not living with them. Half of the participants in this study reported that the following six obstacles were influential in their professional careers: school boards not actively recruiting women, lack of professional networks, perception that women are unqualified to handle finances, perception that women will allow their emotions to influence administrative decision, perception that women are not strong leaders, and lack of mentoring in school districts.

Lesbian Leaders

Coon (2001) studied leadership characteristics and values common to openly gay men and lesbians in high profile positions of leadership. He examined how a lesbian/gay identity impacts leadership and identified obstacles that exist for lesbian/gay leaders. Five primary findings emerged from this research. First, coming out significantly impacted the leadership experience. It is a declaration that one is unwilling to conform to homophobic/heterosexist norms to stay closeted (e.g., *don't ask, don't tell*). Second, sexual orientation was perceived to positively impact leadership. Participants reported that they contributed trust,

authenticity, compassion, understanding, sensitivity, tolerance, empathy, courage, focus, integrity, and social change. Third, a high degree of competence existed. Ninety-eight percent of the participants had some degree of college education, with 38 percent holding a master's degree, and 40 percent holding a doctoral degree. Fourth, inclusiveness and diversity were highly valued. These lesbian and gay leaders both expected and modeled supportive and empowering behavior, ensured diverse perspectives were represented, and challenged norms when necessary to ensure equity and equality. Fifth, limitations were perceived to exist for lesbian/gay leaders. The degree of acceptance of homosexuality varies by location, industry, and organization. A glass ceiling appears to exist for openly lesbian and gay leaders. Three secondary findings also emerged from this research. First, family and community strongly impacted leadership growth and development. Second, participants perceived themselves to be role models. Third, a noticeable void existed in literature dealing with lesbian and gay leaders.

Imbra (1998) recorded the life stories of four lesbians in leadership positions in higher education. Several common themes became apparent from this research. During their adolescent years, all four women shared the importance of their grandmothers as mentors; athletics and sports played an important role in their lives; and each had some consciousness that men would not be part of their future. During their ascent to their positions of leadership, all of the women had intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and sexual relationships with other women, but did not come out publicly until many years later; most did not have plans to become leaders; all experienced both internalized and societal homophobia;

none reported having role models; and all discussed and acknowledged that privilege accompanies being male, or white, and/or heterosexual. During their years in the academy, all of the women stated that being an out lesbian is important personally, professionally, and to the groups they represent; all found themselves in situations where they were being accused of having a lesbian agenda; all experienced varying degrees of frustration with closeted lesbians; and all had experienced some form of discrimination due to gender, sexual orientation, or race. Lastly, during their lives in general, these women reported experiencing systemic oppression in the form of lack of benefits, risks of being lesbian, hetero-focused social functions where leadership opportunities occur, constraints put on lesbians, effects on partners, tenure, and being seen as single. All of the women in this study identify as feminists and each found it difficult to separate their diverse identities—feminist, lesbian, leader, Chicana, Black, etc. Coping strategies common to this group of women were working within the system, finding support, being strategic, choosing your battles, and pursuing leadership positions.

Leadership, Marginalized Women, and the Future

When using a radical feminist lens, the future should be discussed only “amid a larger conversation about hunger and nutrition, literacy, land rights, the right to seek employment outside the home, child marriage, child labor, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and the reform of rape laws” (Kolodny, 2000, p. 132). This global perspective is critically important; however, it is beyond the

scope of this study. Thus, this section will examine existing critical feminist research that is relevant for today's educational leaders in American society.

First, it is clear from the previous sections that the lack of mentors is a serious obstacle for marginalized women leaders. Mentoring and coaching programs must be created and maintained (Family Research Council, 1998; Asher, 2001; Sheldon, 2000; Johnson, 1998). As Strickling-Bullock (2000) found, either formal or informal mentors can be effective.

Second, curricular reform must begin to address the issues and challenges faced by today's marginalized women leaders. More specifically, curriculum must be more multidisciplinary, thus mirroring women's multiple and layered experiential knowledge, and all disciplines must attend to marginalized women's issues (Kolodny, 2000). One current attempt at curricular reform is a reappearance of single-gender schools. A plethora of both legal challenges and support abound; single-gender schools in the 21st century for girls are supplied with exactly the same resources as those for boys (Chmelynski, 1998; Davis, 2002). Another attempt at curricular reform is a resurgence of school racial segregation, but this time around it's voluntary. Orfield, Frankenberg, and Lee (2003) found that the socioeconomic composition of schools is strongly linked to test scores, graduation rates, the ability to attract and retain talented and experienced teachers, the range of course offerings, student health, parental involvement, and many other factors that influence educational opportunity. This has a direct bearing on how marginalized female youth are or are not prepared for leadership careers.

Summary

This review of literature showed that women educational leaders face numerous, varied, and unique challenges. How are today's educational leaders addressing these issues as they meet the responsibility of preparing today's female youth for leadership careers? Since effective leadership has traditionally been synonymous with being Caucasian, heterosexual, and male, researchers examining leadership through this lens enjoy the privileges of large populations of subjects, a wealth of historical literature from which to theorize, and support from those power holders who are willing to commit financial, political, and industrial support to maintain their power. It is important to acknowledge these privileges as well as the privilege of not having to examine leadership in the context of gender, race, class, age, looks, sexual orientation, or spirituality. What is lacking in this body of research speaks volumes to those people who lead from the margins, outside the core group of power holders. Educational leaders must also begin to attend to that which is excluded from this traditional body of research.

For marginalized women the research, albeit lesser in quantity, describes the richness of lives filled with struggles and triumphs. This literature review showed an overwhelming lack of role models and mentors coupled with a commitment to serve as role models and mentors. Obstacles of racism and sexism are faced and conquered, accepted and resisted. Family and community support are valued and nurtured. Multiple identities are managed, maintained, and mastered. Much more research about the leadership of women is needed.

There are several questions that should be asked. For example, what kinds of specific leadership behaviors do marginalized women choose, and how do those leadership behaviors compare with those in the dominant race and gender? Why are certain leadership behaviors effective for some people, but not for others? How have marginalized women with role models experienced leadership? Are there significant income differences between marginalized women with mentors and those without? How can today's educational leaders best assist marginalized female youth to be prepared to assume leadership positions in the future? What kind of federal or state policy could help even the playing field? It is clear from this literature review that much more research about the leadership of marginalized women is needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

"I would like my work to do two things: be as demanding and as sophisticated as I want it to be, and at the same time be accessible in a sort of emotional way to lots of people, just like jazz. That's a hard task. But that's what I want to do."

- Toni Morrison, African American Author & Nobel Prize Winner (1994)

Introduction

The researcher aspired to accomplish the same two outcomes with this study: sophistication of research and emotional accessibility to the findings. As was considered in Chapter 2, research using qualitative methods abounds in the current body of literature focusing on leadership, and may often carry with it both sophistication and accessibility. However, it is the *emotional* accessibility associated with naturalistic research that drove this research design.

The study addressed leadership as perceived and experienced by women superintendents. The conceptual framework of this study was two-fold. First, nine tenets of leadership taken from research studies on predominantly male leaders were explored as they were experienced and practiced by diverse female superintendents. This study was part of a broader, comprehensive study of executive women leaders, the WILD (Women in Leadership Development) Project, designed by a group of researchers representing diverse discipline areas and academic institutions from across the United States (Wolverton, et. al.,

2003). The rationale for the WILD Project is located in Appendix III. Second, a critical feminist lens, which centers on and makes problematic women's diverse situations, was used to examine educational leadership of women. This framework asserts that oppression of women, crossing race and class boundaries, spanning known history, is a constant of human experience (Cole, 1986; Maguire, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine leadership experiences and styles of executive level women by interviewing women superintendents. The intent was to ascertain their attitudes and perceptions associated with nine leadership tenets taken from the research literature. The focus was on the ways in which women superintendents defined and experienced the tenets. Women who hold positions of educational leadership may encounter professional obstacles rooted in racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and/or other "isms." Crucial insight was gained by investigating the experiences of women in public school administration.

Naturalistic Research Design

This study employed an interpretivist multi-case study design (Merriam, 1998). The "units" of study for this research were five diverse women superintendents; thus, this study is bounded by the criteria and selection established by the WILD Project Participant Selection Criteria.

In this study, several of the features of naturalistic inquiry were utilized: it involved human subjects, purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, and procedures to insure trustworthiness. Interpretive findings from this study were grounded in the data, allowing for the natural emergence of patterns and themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

According to Merriam (1998), the descriptive data in interpretive case studies “are used to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering,” (p. 38). In this study, the a priori theoretical assumptions were based on nine tenets of effective leadership, as defined by the WILD Project (Wolverton, et.al., 2003), which “synthesized the disparate ideas about effective leadership into a set of tenets...that...capture the essence of existing writings” (see Appendix III). The WILD Project research team conducted several multi-case studies on executive level women leaders across various disciplines, such as education, medicine, business, sports leadership, and law to name a few. This researcher’s rationale for using the WILD Project protocol, including the pre-established tenets, was to contribute findings about K-12 executive level women leaders (i.e., superintendents). Creswell (2003) suggests that qualitative research yields some themes that readers would expect, some themes that are surprising, and other themes that address larger theoretical perspectives. Findings from this study revealed all three types of themes.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. How did the women superintendents experience the nine tenets of leadership taken from the extant literature?
2. How was each tenet evident in the women superintendents' leadership styles and behavior?
3. How did women superintendents instill these tenets in others?

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the instrument in naturalistic research. The researcher's presence was that of interviewer, asking interview questions and recording the responses provided by each superintendent. The researcher taught elementary education for five years before moving into elementary administration. She served as an elementary assistant principal for two years and an elementary principal for over three years. Prior to entering the field of education, the researcher managed a retail thrift store operated by a shelter for battered and homeless women and children. In this capacity, she also provided vocational training to resident women and dating violence seminars for teenage girls. She was a mother of two children and identified as a lesbian of color.

Data Collection Methods

Individual interviews were the primary method for gathering data for this study. Described as “the process of getting words to fly” (Glesne, 1999), the individual interview is common to qualitative methods. Interviews allow the researcher to gather a large amount of data quickly. Interviews also allow the researcher control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2003). In addition, selected artifacts were requested and examined for the purpose of triangulation, such as curriculum vitas, job descriptions, organizational charts, family profiles, published articles, awards, lists of memberships and leadership positions within professional organizations, district vision/mission statements, district initiatives for which participants were responsible, and district accountability reports.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was provided by the WILD Project (see Appendix I). It was developed by first conducting an extensive review of the literature, which generated the nine tenets of leadership. Questions were then developed by a research team of six women professors from diverse disciplines representing three different Western universities whose research interest was women in leadership. The questions were validated for content and refined by an additional group of women professors who worked within the three universities. Finally, the interview protocol was field-tested and further refined by the WILD Project research team members and graduate students.

Participant Selection for Interviews

Unique purposive sampling was used in the selection of subjects for the interviews. Prominent women superintendents, found in a number of ways, were invited to participate. Some were recommended by a national search firm for executive educational leaders based on reputation and practice. Some were chosen by the researcher through personal knowledge. Some were found by consulting state superintendent organizations. Criteria for participation included holding the title of superintendent in large, urban school districts with at least five or more years of experience, organizational supervision over more than 20 individuals with at least five who reported directly to them, and significant fiscal responsibility. Maximum variation sampling within the population was attempted. The participants varied in age, ethnicity, experience, sexual orientation, and background.

Each woman superintendent was invited to participate in the interview process. Each was sent a copy of the participant interview packet which included a project participation consent form, the purpose of the study, the rationale for the study, the nine tenets of leadership, and the interview questions. In addition, each participant was asked to provide a curriculum vita, a current job description, an organizational chart, a brief family profile, and copies of featured articles, speeches, and/or community activities.

Interviews were arranged at the convenience of the participant and conducted at a time and location most convenient for the participant in order to provide rich, narrative descriptions for this study. In all cases the researcher traveled to meet

with the superintendent, and in some cases, subsequent interview sessions were conducted on the telephone. All interviews were recorded via audiotape to ensure accuracy. In each interview, the researcher adhered to a highly structured line of questioning. Merriam (1998) describes three types of interviews, along a continuum, that move from highly structured to semi structured to unstructured. The interviews for this study were highly structured in that both the wording and the order of the questioning were pre-determined. First, a leadership tenet was read to the participant. Next, the researcher asked each of three questions about the tenet. After the participant responded to questions for each tenet, eight follow-up questions were included to review and summarize the discussion. If requested throughout the interviews, the participants were provided with more detailed explanations concerning the tenets.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher used the utmost ethical consideration in all contacts with participants. At all times, each participant was fully informed of the study, the purpose of the research, and the importance of her contributions. Confidentiality was maintained and the names, locations, and other identifying information of the participants were withheld. The participants were given fictional names: Alice, Isabel, Kristine, Myra, and Rachel. Each was asked to submit written consent to participate. Appropriate consent forms were filed with the Human Subjects Review Committee and the UNLV Institutional Review Board. Participants were informed of all data collection devices and activities, and were offered transcriptions, written interpretations, and reports.

Transforming the Data

Once the data were gathered, they were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted. According to Wolcott (1994), describing the data may include excerpts from the transcribed interviews, analyzing the data may include systematically identifying key factors and relationships among them, and interpreting the data, while not as convincingly “scientific,” may follow from either the description and/or the analysis. The transformed data helps the reader to better understand the stories being told.

The intent of this research was to allow the reader to hear the voices of the participants. After the transcribed and edited interviews were returned by the participants, the researcher wrote each of the case studies in chapter 4, which had the effect of immersing the researcher in the data and reliving the interviews. The participants’ stories illustrated, supported, and challenged the nine tenets. Similarities and differences between and among participants’ responses were kept in the form of notes throughout this phase of data transformation.

Multiple case study design involves collecting and analyzing data from several separate sources and leads to greater variation (Merriam, 1998). In this study, multiple cases allowed the researcher to present findings both across participants (as described in the previous paragraph), and across tenets as described here. For the cross-case analysis offered in chapter 5, the researcher literally used scissors to cut apart the interviews by tenet and used a letter/number system for keeping track of the segmented interviews. Next, the researcher highlighted and coded key terms, phrases and concepts used by the

participants for each tenet. A concept map was constructed as the researcher analyzed themes and patterns specific to each tenet and each follow-up question, as well as general themes and patterns across all tenets and follow-up questions,. (Miles & Huberman,1994). A case study database was created for the purpose of further analyzing themes and patterns, determining which were specific to a tenet and which were general across tenets, and for identifying outliers. The case study database ultimately served as the basis for the summary tables and the narratives found in chapters 5 and 6.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research addresses both validity and reliability type issues. The criteria for trustworthiness include: 1) credibility (internal validity) which can be accomplished via peer debriefing, triangulation, or member-checking; 2) transferability (external validity) which can be accomplished by cross-case analysis, thick description, or purposive sampling; 3) confirmability (internal reliability) which can be accomplished by triangulation, reflexivity, or an audit trail; and 4) dependability (external reliability) which can be accomplished by overlapping material, chain of events, or a case study database (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

In this study *credibility* was achieved through triangulation and member-checking. Triangulation – the use of multiple sources – was achieved by reviewing such documents as curriculum vitas, district mission/vision statements, district initiatives for which the participants were responsible, and district

accountability reports. Member-checking – having individuals review statements made – was achieved by sending transcribed interviews back to participants both in electronic and hard copy form for their review and editing. *Transferability* was achieved via cross-case analysis (chapter 5), thick and rich description (found throughout chapters 4, 5, and 6), and the purposive sampling described previously.

Confirmability was achieved by an audit trail, which is documentation of the research process. For this study, the audit trail included the signed consent forms, the WILD Project emails (interview protocol, rationale, etc.), the original audio cassettes, the transcribed interviews and the bills from the professional transcriber, the edited transcriptions, and all coding pages and notes.

Dependability was achieved through the case study database described previously.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that only women who have been successful in obtaining superintendent positions were included, rather than including women who applied for but were not hired for superintendent positions. Additionally, female educational administrators at the school site level and those at the district level were not included. Therefore, the study is limited to women at the superintendent or assistant superintendent level. As a result, it may underestimate the barriers faced by potential women superintendents. Secondly, it may not represent how female educational administrators in leadership

positions other than superintendent experience the nine tenets of leadership examined in this study.

Another limitation of this study concerns generalizations regarding experiences of demographically diverse populations. Participants included two Caucasian women, two African American women, and one Latina. This group included one woman who self-identifies as a lesbian. No male superintendents were interviewed.

The main instrument for data collection and analysis was the researcher. As an elementary classroom educator for five years, an elementary assistant principal for two years, and an elementary principal for three years, the researcher was familiar with the topic of educational leadership. The researcher taught in both California and Nevada, and currently serves as an educational administrator in Nevada. Experience lends credibility in being familiar with a topic; however, it can also add bias. The researcher maintained the role of recorder and observer to minimize the effect of bias. In addition, the researcher had the analyses reviewed and discussed by members of the dissertation committee.

Summary

Lack of structure in qualitative research presents both rewards and challenges; therefore, the goal was to maintain a meaningful balance between allowing the superintendents' voices to be heard while permitting the themes and patterns that emerged to be revealed within a coherent framework. Again, the

researcher aspired to produce both academically rigorous and emotionally accessible research.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES

"Find something you're passionate about and keep tremendously interested in it!"

- Julia Child, Famous American Cook and Author

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership experiences, styles, and behaviors of women superintendents by ascertaining their responses to nine leadership tenets taken from extant literature. It was designed to focus on ways in which women superintendents approach school district leadership, make decisions, communicate, persevere, and lead staff.

Participants

Five women superintendents were selected based upon currently or previously held executive positions in large, urban school districts spanning from east to west coasts. Each had a minimum of five or more years of experience as a superintendent, organizational supervision responsibilities over more than 20 individuals with at least five persons reporting directly, and significant fiscal responsibility ranging from \$157 million to \$17 billion. Three of the five held doctorate degrees; two held masters degrees. One of the five had attained a county superintendent position, three had attained district superintendent

positions, and the remaining had attained a mid-level superintendent position in a large, urban districts that was divided into smaller zones. Had these zones been school districts, their size would have made them eligible to be members of the Council of Great City Schools.

All five participants served on numerous boards, and had received a wide variety of awards and honors both within and outside the field of educational leadership. All five participants' career paths began in the classroom and included teacher leader responsibilities. Four of the five moved on to the building administrator level, and then to central office administration. All five participants' careers spanned at least 25 years at this writing.

The participants varied in race and family background. Two of the participants were African American, two were Caucasian, and one was Latina. Four were or previously had been married to male partners, and all four of these participants had grown children. One openly identified as lesbian, was in a long-term relationship with a female partner, and did not have children. The researcher had worked with two of the participants in the past, but did not at the time of this research study. All five agreed to participate in the study with the understanding of anonymity. Table 1 provides case study database information about the participants' education, career path, district size, and fiscal responsibility at a glance.

The remainder of this chapter tells the stories of the attitudes and experiences of these diverse women superintendents toward the nine tenets of effective leadership that are delineated in the research literature. The stories that make

Table 1 Participant Information

Superintendent Name Ethnicity & Family	Education	Career Path	Budget & District Size
ALICE African American Male partner, grown children	EdD Administration, Planning and Social Policy MA Education MEd Administration BA Elementary Education	37 years public education, ES & MS classroom teacher, MS Principal, Program Director for at-risk HS, Asst. Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent/ Chief Academic Officer, Superintendent	\$340 M 60,000 students
ISABEL African American Male partner, grown children	MEd Special Education, Administrative Endorsement, BA Elementary Education	30 years public education, Special Education teacher, Special Education coordinator, ES Principal, Personnel Director, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education, Superintendent (regional level)	\$224 M 57,000 students
KRISTINE Caucasian Male partner, grown children	EdD Educational Administration/ Secondary Education Specialist, Administration Supervision MS Secondary Education BA Political Science Philosophy	37 years public education MS classroom teacher, Director of Professional Development Asst. Superintendent, ES/MS Education, Superintendent, Consultant, Superintendent in Residence	\$183 M 25,000 K-12 students and 23,000 adults
MYRA Caucasian Female partner, no children	MEd Educational Administration BA Liberal Arts	31 years public education ES classroom teacher ES Principal, Staff Development Director, Instructional Leader (equivalent to regional level Superintendent), Superintendent	\$ 157 M 28,000 students
RACHEL Latina Male partner, grown children	PhD Educational Policy & Administration, MA Education, BA History	34 years public education MS ESL teacher, Attendance Superintendent K-12, Bilingual Education District Coordinator, ES/MS Principal, Asst. Superintendent, District Superintendent County Office of Education Superintendent	\$17 B 1.7 million students 94 School Districts

this chapter represent a plethora of interactions between the researcher and each of the five participants as trust was built and relationships grew. For example, during the first interview with Alice, the researcher was seven months pregnant and out of her home state. Alice was very considerate in checking on the researcher's comfort level throughout the day. With Kristine, the researcher communicated much of the time via U.S. Mail. Kristine addressed every envelope with "(almost Dr.) Zaki" as a means of support and encouragement. Myra and the researcher both happen to identify as lesbians, which, as a similarity like this often does, created a basic foundation of trust which seemed to allow for Myra's candid criticism of the interview protocol.

Alice

At the time of this writing, Alice had been in public education for 37 years. She began her career as an elementary and middle school classroom teacher. After moving into Middle School administration, she served as a program director for an at-risk high school. Central office administration was her next career step, where she served at the Assistant Superintendent level, as a Chief Academic Officer, and eventually as a Superintendent. Responsibilities in her current position in an urban district included overseeing the education of 60,000 students and a \$340 million budget.

Alice holds a Doctorate in Administration, Planning and Social Policy, two Masters Degrees, one in Education and one in Educational Administration, and a

Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. At the time of the interview, she was married to a male partner and had grown children. Alice is African American.

The interview process with Alice was conducted in two sessions. The researcher traveled to meet with Alice for the first session, and spent most of the day shadowing her in her daily duties. The day began with Alice arriving about 30 minutes late to work due to a serious asthma attack. Within about 30 minutes of her arrival, however, she invited the researcher in to begin the day. Alice's corner office overlooked a tree-lined, busy street in the heart of this major metropolitan city. It was September and the fall-back-to-school aroma was in the air.

After initial introductions were made, Alice and the researcher went into an Executive Leadership Team meeting. Agenda items included discussions about the chain of command, side bar meetings, department updates, and some district-specific issues. Alice was observed by the researcher asking numerous questions of her staff, including, "What's best for kids?" and "Is this decision fiscally solid?" After this meeting, she met with a legal department representative briefly. Next, she fit in a brief interview with a local university graduate student reporter, who asked about her goals for the district. Alice replied, "Diversity, inclusion; to work with an organization with a good reputation for developing youth leadership."

A "working lunch" followed; however, the researcher was not privileged to attend. After the "working lunch," Alice actually ate lunch during the next meeting, which was Instructional Support and Operations. Topics in this meeting included grant writing, magnet schools, No Child Left Behind, a local festival, new

principals, human resources, and student enrollment. During the two-hour meeting, Alice was called out for one 45-minute phone call.

A continuation of the meeting with the legal department representative followed for about one hour. Alice was interrupted during this time for a 15-minute side bar, the topic of which was unknown to the researcher.

Finally around 4:00 P.M., the researcher began the interview. Alice was visibly tired, rubbing her eyes and taking deep, long breaths. Alice allowed another shadow from a local university graduate program to silently observe the interview with the researcher. During this interview, the first four tenets were discussed and tape recorded.

In response to the first tenet, *effective leaders are passionate about their organizations*, Alice discussed commitment:

For me it means I'm making a difference, that it's the passion that keeps me going. So, I mean I think I'm committed. I think I exhibit that in every way. There's nothing I would ask my staff to do that I wouldn't do. I want them to be committed. The other thing, though, is to be committed not only to the work of the organization but to the people.

Alice gave examples of how her personal leadership experiences reflect this tenet. She shared that when talking to parents and teachers, she thinks they "feel" her passion. Doing home visits, teacher roundtables, and principal meetings are other ways Alice expresses her passion for education. She said that "people have to be able to believe you when you say something."

At this point in the interview, after discussing only one tenet, Alice appeared even more tired. She shared, "This has been a really hard day. There's a lot

going on in my life right now.” However, despite her visible exhaustion, she made a waving motion with her hand, indicating that the researcher should press on.

Tenet number two, *effective leaders are reflective*, prompted Alice to discuss the development of self-discipline:

I mean you may want to scream and holler and, you know, throw things, but you can't, you know. You want to call names, but you can't. I think one time I just did my—put my fists like this on the table, I was so mad, and it scared everybody in the room, but that was the most that they had seen in terms of me express real gut-wrenching anger. I don't remember what it was, but it was something that had happened. I was so upset. But I think that you have to learn how to discipline yourself, not only in terms of your behavior but in terms of your thoughts, in terms of your actions. And I think that takes a lot of self-discipline, to know when to act, when to be quiet, when to listen, when to get mad.

Alice went on to describe a school board divided by politics and personal issues alike. She related that upon her arrival, the board “sat with their hands folded” and did not even “sit near each other.” Alice had to “learn how to be self-disciplined” in how she dealt with them, even when they upset her. She saw her job as needing to “repair and bring people together.”

Reflection, Alice told the researcher, is also achieved by “analyzing what's happening.” She related a number of common reflective questions she asks cabinet members, such as, “So, what happened here? Why? What are we doing inside of our department that either hinders this process or makes it better?”

Alice both began and ended her response to this tenet by mentioning her “humanness.” At the beginning she said, “First, I see myself as a human being, and like everybody else, I have hopes and dreams and I don't want to fail.” Toward the end of discussing this tenet, she repeated, “I'm human, so there are times when I'm like doubting myself.” To this she added, “I have a deep religious

faith and I believe that God puts me in places and I won't fail. He won't let me fail."

To tenet number three, *effective leaders are competent*, Alice stated, "It just means that you're always learning, that learning is a lifelong process." She went on to distinguish between leaders and learners, stating that she sees herself as a "learner first." She shared that in her basement she has "bookshelves of books about leadership, not just about teaching and learning but about how to be a good leader." Alice listed a number of "Women in Leadership" conferences she had attended, a variety of boards on which she had served, and degrees she had earned—all in the pursuit of more knowledge about "how to be a better educator, how to be a better leader."

Alice talked about maintaining high expectations for herself and her subordinates. She said, "You don't want them just to meet the bar." In fact, she suggested that the word *competent* "is too weak" and that, rather, "You're looking to be highly competent."

Ironically, at the end of this very busy day, tenet number four, *effective leaders are great communicators*, was the topic. Alice responded, almost as if to herself alone, "I don't know. Am I a great communicator? I come from a family of eight ministers. I don't think I'm a great communicator. I see my preacher relatives as good communicators. That's interesting." She continued her response by stating that she does not "try to dazzle people with words;" conversely, she makes a point to "speak and write in very plain English." The first interview session ended here.

A second interview session with Alice was conducted over the telephone approximately two years later, using an audio recording device. Since the first interview, Alice had resigned from the school district and had also gotten divorced. She had been traveling extensively for some time, but was at home packing for another trip during this telephone interview.

The interviewer revisited tenet number four. Alice attributed good communication to leaders who “get across their ideas and their vision and get people to share in that vision.” She stated that effective leaders must “be able to motivate people, inspire them, so that they want to work for the common cause.” In order to do this, Alice said that leaders must be “really clear” about their own belief systems. In her most recent position, she and her cabinet had created a five year strategic plan for seeing the vision come to fruition. “Communicating [the vision] in various ways to all the stakeholders” was the key, according to Alice.

Tenet number five, *effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead*, elicited two examples of tough but necessary “culture” changes Alice made when she first began with the most recent district.

Due to extreme traffic congestion, the existing culture in Alice’s district upon her arrival allowed central office personnel to arrive at work around six in the morning and leave as early as three o’clock in the afternoon. This facilitated the commuting experiences of central office staff members. However, as Alice shared, most schools started around eight or nine and got out around three or four o’clock.

So people in the central office were leaving at three. They weren't there at the crucial times when school people could get to the central office. And that was the norm. I mean it was just expected, you know, people got to choose their own times to come to work. It was all around their schedule in getting across [town] before the thick of the... heavy traffic. One of the first things that I did was to set regular hours that conformed with the times that school people needed to use our services. So changing that norm, you know, which was the standard practice was a big deal.

A second change Alice made in the culture was sending all 150 plus teachers with central office assignments back into the classroom to fill the 150 plus vacancies. Alice said, "Both of those changes sent a signal that central office was about to change in culture to be one of service and support to the schools as opposed to, you know, serving the adults that worked there."

To the sixth tenet, *effective leaders understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run*, Alice responded with vigorous optimism. She said that those in charge must be "positive," that they must perceive "the glass always as half full," that they must see "challenges as opportunities," and that they must "believe that it can be done even in the face of...roadblocks [or] distractions."

With all the difficulty she had had with her previous board, it seemed inevitable that she use that situation as an example in responding to this tenet. "There were times when we had really, really difficult board meetings, and I don't care how difficult it was, the next day I came back and said, 'OK, we've been through this and we can do it.'"

As this researcher reflected on the first interview session, it was clear that Alice embodied this tenet on that September day two years prior: she recovered

from a severe asthma attack only to endure countless meetings, interruptions, side bar conversations, minimal nourishment, at least two shadows, and a doctoral candidate's dissertation interview.

Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking, is tenet number seven.

Alice responded to this tenet by quoting her grandmother as saying, "You got to know where you want to end up or any road will do." Alice was more figurative in her language in responding to this tenet than to any other. She went on to assert that effective leaders see "the forest and they see the trees... [thus] appreciat[ing] that not all trees grow at the same time, not all trees look the same, but the goal is to have a forest." Again, she referred to her five year strategic plan, noting that she was very clear about outcome goals, but she allowed the people and the organization "multiple pathways to get there."

In order to instill this tenet in others, Alice delegated big projects to others, so that they could experience the entire process:

[A]llowing people to lead and having to sort of walk in my shoes, to be able to see a project from the beginning to the end, to be able to see the pieces, to understand that you have to be flexible was really important to me, and I think everybody who worked with me knew that at some point they were going to be leading something major, and that...the expectation was that they would be able to—they would be able to do both.

Tenet number eight states that *effective leaders value and respect individuality*. Alice noted that effective leaders understand that "people bring very different...skill sets...and personalities" to the workplace. She clearly expressed her appreciation for the wealth of experience and diversity a staff brings to a school district, likening them to the musicians in a symphony orchestra:

You have all these musical instruments...[and] the goal of the conductor is to bring all those instruments together to make this beautiful sound, this beautiful music. And that's what you're doing when you are a leader in an organization. You have all these different people, all these different personalities, all these different skills and levels of expertise, and your job is to get people to work together so we can make beautiful music together.

Alice attributes the success of an organization to her "ability to bring people together to use those skills in a way that benefits the whole." She "mobilized" other people to come together and work for the common goal.

To the last tenet, *effective leaders possess credibility*, Alice repeated her conviction that effective leaders always do what they say they are going to do.

Going back to the challenges she faced with her board, she described:

[T]he last eighteen months when my board was just really rude and nasty and mean-spirited, and people counted on me to behave in a certain way, no matter what, and at some point they knew I wasn't going to get on that [low] level, at some point they knew I was going to continue to protect them from the craziness, so I think again—actions speak so much louder than words.

She went on to list integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, and high standards as part of a leaders' credibility. Alice also noted that she would never ask anyone to do anything that she would not do herself. In addition, she always provided the necessary resources, fiscal, human, or otherwise, to support people in their efforts toward common goals.

During the follow-up questions portion of the interview, Alice was asked to rank order the top three tenets in order of importance. She listed them in the following order: number seven, *focused yet forward thinking*, number three, *competent*, and number one, *passionate*, tied with number nine, *credible*, for third.

With regard to opportunities for women in educational leadership, Alice made reference to the many opportunities that women her "age and older" had that opened the doors to positions of leadership. She suggested that the responsibility for women aspiring to attain positions of educational leadership is "to go for it and...decide what it is you want...and create a plan for getting there." She went on to assert that there are "tremendous" opportunities, but warned women not to "get stuck" in traditionally gendered leadership roles such as curriculum and instruction. Rather, Alice advised, women must seek leadership roles in the areas of business and personnel. She said, "[A]nything that you want is possible. You have to work for it and you have to realize that, you know, it is different for women than it is for men. [Y]ou are playing in a game that doesn't necessarily want you there...and so you're the anomaly, and you have to understand that."

Alice acknowledges that challenges exist for women as well. She stated blatantly, "Oh, I think it's still a man's world." She went on to make a statistical reference to the disproportionate number of women superintendents and even more disproportionate number of women of color in the superintendency. She repeated, "[I]t's still a glass ceiling and it's still a man's world."

Alice gave a short, but telling reply to the question about her worst decision ever made. She simply stated, "I don't know whether it was a conscious decision but I think it certainly was problematic for me: the fact that I was so focused on the work that everything else became secondary." This researcher wondered if Alice was referencing her recent divorce, but did not pose the potentially rude

and invasive question. To the question about her best decision, Alice gave an even shorter, albeit more transparent answer: "I think to go into education."

Alice described the typical educational leader as collaborative, as enjoying the collaborative process with others. She described herself in the same way, adding that she sees herself as a situational leader, as a visionary, and very focused. This self-evaluation of leadership style is consistent with her ranking of the top three tenets—focused, yet forward thinking being number one on her list.

On the subject of power, Alice laughed and said, "It's about who has it and who wants it. It is. That's the bottom line. There's the power or the perceived power and who wants it. And if you're in a leadership role, it's how you use it."

Finally, Alice shared that she has been "really, really lucky" because she as had "lots of mentors, men, women, Black, [and] white." She offered some of her own advice for women aspiring to hold educational leadership positions: do not step on people, surround yourself with people smarter than you, and without integrity, you will get "knocked out."

Isabel

At the time of this writing, Isabel had been in public education for 30 years. She began her career as a special education teacher, moved into a special education coordinator position at the central office level, and then served as an elementary school principal. She then moved back to the central office as a personnel director and assistant superintendent of special education. Isabel now serves as a regional superintendent in a large district divided into smaller units.

Responsibilities in her current position in an urban district included overseeing the education of 57,000 students and a \$224 million budget.

Isabel holds a Masters in Special Education, an Administrative Endorsement, and a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. At the time of the interview, she was married to a male partner and had grown children. Isabel is African American.

The interview process with Isabel was conducted in three sessions, all in person. All sessions were held at Isabel's office in her conference room and all were tape recorded.

The researcher had also observed Isabel implement a forum for teachers to serve as liaisons between the schools and her office. In one of her responses during the interviews for this study, Isabel stated, "I believe you can be powerful without exhibiting power." This statement describes her leadership style. During those meetings, the researcher observed Isabel's leadership style to be self-assured, extremely professional, collaborative, generous, serious, and thoughtful. Isabel is over six feet tall and when she walks into a room—any room—her stature alone seems to command respect, but in a most undemanding way. At those meetings, Isabel rarely spoke. She enlisted Principals' leadership to create the agendas, run the meetings, and do most of the talking. When she did speak, however, everyone listened—and listened carefully. She did not mince her words, nor did she seem the least bit interested in pontification. She was clear, concise, and on point. The researcher felt both intimidated and awestruck as she observed Isabel in those meetings.

The first interview session for this study covered the tenet number one and two, the second interview session covered tenet number three, four, five, and six, and the third interview session covered tenet number eight, nine, and the follow-up questions.

In response to the first tenet, *effective leaders are passionate about their organizations*, Isabel immediately made her high expectations—for both herself and for others—very clear. She said, “It’s not just status quo, it’s not just, ‘everyday is the same.’ You have to have that enthusiasm about what you’re doing.” She went on to state, “I don’t care if you don’t feel good when you get up in the morning, you are sending a message by what you say and what you do.”

She also discussed commitment:

Even in adversity, you have to come across as though you really, really are committed to the organization, not just your staff but even the people that you work for. [I]f you have the commitment, drive, and passion you can overcome those diverse points. If I ever lost that commitment and dedication, then I would choose to do something different.

To the second tenet, *effective leaders are reflective*, Isabel responded, “I am not a great talker, never was, but I’m an observer and I try to analyze. So when I do talk, people will listen.” This was consistent with the leadership behaviors the researcher had observed during meetings with teachers and staff.

Isabel went on to suggest that followers should not “have to second-guess.” She said that effective leaders must be “confident in knowing that you are the leader and will have some difficult decisions.”

In order to instill this tenet in others, Isabel related a story of how she did not agree that a principal’s idea would work, but knowing that it also would not cause

a problem, she allowed him to try it. She had a series of conversations with the principal, and approached those conversations with reflective questions to help the principal figure things out for himself. Isabel shared that by observing situations rather than doing all the talking, she formulates many reflective questions. Earlier in her career, she had many questions for people and for leaders in her field. And, she didn't hesitate to ask them.

Isabel responded to the third tenet, *effective leaders are competent*, by saying,

Well, it means that you better know what you're doing in order to accomplish your tasks on a daily basis. In my position, you can't fake it. You have to know the job. It's OK to let people know that you may not have all the answers and that you know where to go to get the answers, but you have to have the skills along the way in order to accomplish your task.

Isabel explained that she does a lot of reading, especially "current literature in the field." In addition she routinely reads material that might be "divorced" from her thinking. She makes a point to discuss what she has read with colleagues. She challenges herself to always become more competent by keeping in touch with people who are skilled in the field. She was told by a parent once, "[Isabel] is a gentle lady and a scholar."

At this point in her career, Isabel shared that she rarely attended conferences any more because of the "hit-and-miss" information. Rather, she sent assistant superintendents and principals—those who could attend then train others. Again, her thoughtful and generous leadership style was evident.

Effective leaders are great communicators, tenet number four, elicited a very personal response from the stoic Isabel. She said simply, "I am a shy person. I'm

not one who's going to be very verbal but I am going to be one who is listening and observing. I've had this said to me, 'I can be intimidating,' and that just throws me for a loop."

She went on to explain that she much prefers "one-to-one" communication. She stated, "I am not a public speaker. I don't like to speak publicly. It goes with my job. I do it because I have to do it. I am not one that will stand in front of a group and just talk and talk because I love to hear myself talk. I think my job is to be very, very observant." She reiterated that effective communication does not mean that one is talking, but again, listening and observing. She opined that by doing so, effective leaders are much more likely to have their finger on the pulse of the organization. She said, "I can hear very clearly what the person is saying to me and what they're not saying."

Tenet number five, *effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead*, inspired Isabel to describe her childhood as an African American minority in a predominantly white suburb.

I'm an only child, so my mother and father shaped who I am. I had such a close extended family of aunts and uncles, good friends of my parents that I called an aunt and uncle. I lived in the suburbs of [major east coast city], which was a middle-class African American community. However the school that we attended was predominantly white. And now that I look back on it, teachers were not very nice to some of us. But then you would come home and you'd hear your parents say, well, forget what the teacher said, how mean the teacher was to you. You have to learn. You have to go back. You have to put up with the discrimination, or the teacher pulling your ear and throwing you on the floor. You go back. You have to get your education. And so whatever they would throw at us, it didn't matter because we knew we were there for one purpose and one purpose only.

She shared that the racism she endured coupled with her parents' strong emphasis on education still impact her decisions today. She stated, "I will not allow anyone to be mean to a child. I will not allow them not to teach a child, because that is their job." In hiring principals, she looks for "compassion to lead a group of teachers in such a way that they're going to do the very best for kids." Isabel shared the book *Children of Poverty* with her principals at the time because, as she stated, "[M]any of our employees come from a middle-class perspective. They didn't understand poverty."

Isabel expressed a strong commitment to fairness, also stemming from her experiences as a child. She shared a story of how she had observed a bulletin board at a school with a predominantly African American student population and staff which was "not inappropriate for that setting and that culture," but was nevertheless inappropriate because kids must "be able to integrate anywhere." Also with regard to fairness, Isabel stated that she will never allow "anyone who is conducting an investigation to put their own bias into it." She warned against ever showing "favoritism," and suggested that effective leaders must always be impartial when handling different situations.

Her response to tenet number six, *effective leaders possess the physical and emotional stamina, the energy, and the resilience to persevere in the long run*, again evoked Isabel's self-assurance and self-reliance. She said, "I think you have to motivate yourself." She described a typical week which included late meetings every night, early meetings every morning, gobbling down lunch while on the phone and on the computer, taking vitamins to ward off sickness because

there is simply not time to be sick, and working on the weekends rather than spending quality time with family or even recuperating herself just so she feels caught up and ready to begin the next week. That only described the physical stamina that effective leaders need.

As far as the emotional stamina, Isabel suggested that effective leaders must pace themselves by knowing which “land mines” to take care of “before they blow up,” by knowing when to ask for help, by knowing how one’s staff is doing emotionally, by holding staff accountable, and by training staff to understand what and how to share with you. She said, “You have to definitely have your emotional stamina. Otherwise you’d break in two. The pressure is absolutely incredible. And I’m so used to it now that it doesn’t faze me. Nothing shocks me anymore.” Giving up or showing weakness is not an option, according to Isabel:

You can’t fall apart. You can’t be in a position where because it becomes a little tough or challenging, that you’re going to fall apart. And the higher you go, the more pressure you’re under. And the more public you are. And the closer you are to the news media. So if you do something wrong, it becomes front-page news. And it doesn’t go away. But still, knowing all of that can happen, you have to figure out how do you work through that and still keep your head on your shoulders and be very positive and be a leader and be strong, because all of those things are required.

Isabel shared that she assists others who may be struggling to develop the necessary stamina by sitting them down and straightforwardly counseling them about how whining and negativity just do not belong in this profession. She also trains others to make sensible decisions, and then be strong enough to be accountable for those decisions. She laughingly concluded, “I mean you can’t die on the sword for something that makes no sense.”

Tenet number eight, *effective leaders are focused yet forward-thinking*, truly describes Isabel. She said,

I lose a lot of sleep, not over where we *are* but where I know we need to be and how we're going to get there. And it's always a puzzle in my mind. There are pieces of this puzzle or mural that you're trying to put together, and all the pieces should not fit because if they do, then that means you don't have any vision. You're not thinking far enough into the future. I'm all the way into next year, but if my staff knew that, it would be very, very overwhelming for them. So as a leader, you have to know how to roll that vision out.

When the time is right, however, Isabel shared that she purposely shares new ideas and expectations. For example, she often has conversations in the spring so that subordinates will "have think time over the summer." Come August, Isabel expects them to be ready for the new challenges. An alternate approach she sometimes takes is to "throw things out that are so wild [that] it's like shock treatment." This approach is used to get folks to think about solutions that are outside the box.

Isabel explained that she surrounds herself with forward-thinking people. She noted two important reasons for doing so. First, these other forward-thinking people can have an impact on others, and this in turn supports Isabel's long-range vision. Also, in her current position she delegates the responsibility of supervising the principals to her assistants so she can oversee the "total operation of the region" due to the fact that it requires her attention in so many diverse areas.

Isabel's response to tenet number eight, *effective leaders respect and value individuality*, showed her deep-rooted sense of fairness. She said, "It means that you can accept the people that work for you. You may not like [some of] them,

[but] you have to reach within yourself and take the high road and really study them, know who they are, so that you can work with them.”

In keeping with the idea of fairness, Isabel shared an experience she had with a principal who knowingly did something wrong. In their conversation about the incident, the principal was honest, and admitted knowing the decision was wrong but went on to explain the rationale behind the decision. Isabel asked herself, “Well, is it really that wrong?” She took into consideration that the principal would not repeat the action and also the specific circumstances in the situation. When she does have to discipline a principal, even an outstanding leader, she acknowledges that “no one enjoys doing that, [b]ut it’s the right thing to do.”

Tough decisions, Isabel shared, can cause people to dislike her. To this reality she responded simply, “I don’t care. That’s not my job. My job is to be fair. My job is to be professional. My job is to make sure that we are moving forward in teaching children.” To this end, she related a story about a conversation with an individual that lasted well over an hour. Isabel knew that the individual was not being truthful, but controlled her anger in order to show respect toward the person. Of course, she still took the necessary steps afterward to rectify the situation.

To the last tenet, *effective leaders possess credibility*, Isabel stated, “The credibility issue is critical for me and that has always been the case. [I]f you lose that, and you can lose it in an instant, if you lose that, you don’t regain it.” She believes that credibility is earned, not just because of a title, but because of a leader’s actions. For example, she stated very clearly, “I will not stand for one

staff member talking about another. I don't participate in gossip with staff. People don't gossip with me. I'm going to be the last one to hear it because I don't engage in that." Isabel shared that she models and demands professionalism at all times. If someone begins a conversation with her by saying that the information must be kept confidential, she stops them immediately and says, "I'm sorry but I can't tell you it'll be confidential because I have to make the decision on what to do." If the person chooses to continue, s/he is aware that Isabel will be the one to decide how to proceed with the information.

She also mentioned integrity and building trust, explaining, "[I]f I give you my word, it's my word." According to Isabel, trust is "probably the most powerful when you look at leadership." One way she builds trust is by being reasonable, but never "soft," which is consistent with her commitment to fairness noted previously.

Isabel suggested that effective leaders build credibility by not overreacting to situations, which in turn "keeps the staff calm." She related this to how she was raised.

[M]y father never talked much. My mother [was] just very verbal. I remember saying to [my father] as I was a teenager, "Dad, you just don't talk very much. Why is that?" And he said, "[Isabel], I just want you to know that I run my business while other people are running their mouths." And I thought that was so powerful, at his funeral I talked about that because this man was so insightful but he wasn't verbal.

This, too, is consistent with Isabel's tendency is to listen and observe, rather than to do all the talking.

During the follow-up questions portion of the interview, Isabel was asked to rank order the top three tenets in order of importance. She listed them in the

following order: tenet 3, *competent*, tenet 9 *credible*, and tenet 4, *great communicators*.

Isabel shared that the best decision she ever made was to implement an initiative among her school promoting the high expectations that all students would not only graduate, but also seek higher education. She said, "Hopefully this will be my legacy. Nothing I do matters unless it takes effect in the classroom." Her worst was a hiring decision that "didn't work out." Isabel shared that the situation became public and was disheartening, but that she did everything to still protect the person's dignity.

With regard to the typical leadership style of senior leaders in educational leadership as compared to her style, Isabel discussed gender differences. She referenced the competitive nature of men versus the collaborative nature of women. She went on to acknowledge that "some things are different" for her than for her male colleagues. She cited domestic responsibilities, such as cooking, ironing, and caring for aging parents, as examples of her heavier load relative to male counterparts.

Isabel described opportunities for women in educational leadership as "endless." She opined that women are "very conscientious, ethical, patient, and loyal. She cautioned women, however, to "be careful not to control everything," and instead, "guide, lead, and support." She also cautioned women not to talk too much, and to listen more. Isabel described challenges faced by women as "trying to balance everything—work, home, elderly parents, children." Again, she

cautioned women that with “only so many hours in the day,” they must try not to do too much or do everything perfectly” because they risk “burning out quickly.”

Consistent with her reserved personality, Isabel responded to the question about power by simply stating, “I believe you can be powerful without exhibiting power.”

Kristine

Kristine had been in public education for almost 40 years at the time of this writing. She began her career as junior high school science teacher in the Midwest. She soon assumed leadership roles such as department chair and staff development specialist. In contrast with most of her contemporaries, her career path took her from the classroom to central administration, bypassing any school site administrative positions. She maintained her focus on curriculum and instruction as she moved quickly into the superintendency.

Kristine holds a doctorate in Educational Administration/Secondary Education, which she earned during the beginning years in central office administration. Her master’s degree is in secondary education and her bachelor’s is in political science/philosophy. Her professional affiliations, presentations, published articles, and awards are far too numerous to list, spanning the length of her career and more than five typewritten pages. She is married with grown children. Kristine is Caucasian.

The researcher met with Kristine at a conference. Before the interview began, the researcher observed Kristine at a session. The meeting room in a large

conference venue was typical: presenters' tables and chairs in the front, a podium, a microphone, and copies of the book in front; white linens, half-melted ice in perspiring water pitchers with accompanying glassware filled the center of the audience tables. The room seated approximately 100 people. Kristine and her colleagues were presenting their respective sections of a recently published book about leadership. They fielded numerous questions and comments from audience members. Kristine was articulate and passionate. She and her co-authors did not agree on all points, and Kristine maintained a professional demeanor.

After the session concluded, the researcher conducted the interview with Kristine in the same meeting room. The huge emptiness provided quiet isolation from the buzz of conference-goers just outside in the hallway coupled with the gentle clinking sound of wait staff diligently preparing for the next session. Kristine's longtime assistant, Marie (fictional name), was present for most of the interview. During this sitting, all but one of the tenets was discussed. The final tenet was discussed during a follow-up interview conducted over the phone.

Kristine responded to the first tenet, *effective leaders are passionate about the organization*, by stating that, "there's a very narrow line between work and play." She expanded on this point by describing how effective leaders "have to live it and ...[that there is nothing] subtle about it at all." For example, Kristine shared that she routinely rode the buses throughout the first week of school, greetings students, parents, teachers and administrators at each site. She suggested that effective leaders make passion for the organization a part of

everything they do, that they “make it, in a sense, [their] ‘lifestyle’ [and] the lifestyle of the organization.”

In her response to the second tenet, *effective leaders are reflective*, Kristine reiterated her commitment of self-as-role model. She said, “You consistently study all the ways that you can demonstrate and bring about the focus of the organization. It’s a very planned thing. There’s nothing accidental about it.” She went on to suggest that everything a leader does must be an example of her/his ideology. She cited the example of purposely placing student achievement at the top, rather than the bottom, of meeting agendas. Kristine further modeled reflective practice by calling for an audit of educational effectiveness to be conducted by an outside agency.

Her longtime assistant, Marie, shared another example of how Kristine’s leadership style is reflective. She related a story of how Kristine invited a number of diverse community leaders to provide professional development to her team. She remembered that Kristine’s “expectation was that [her team] be sensitive to the needs of the changing community and diversity within the district.” Marie also shared that Kristine was present at school site meetings, along with principals, teachers, and custodians, all of whom had the opportunity to reflect on their practice and its impact on student achievement.

To the third tenet, *effective leaders are competent*, Kristine proposed that leaders must be “grounded in both an academic knowledge and an experiential and performance-based knowledge.” She shared that she has gained both types of knowledge over the years and views herself as more competent now than

when she began her administrative career. Each step in her career as a superintendent was in a larger and larger district, until she moved from a district with 160,000 students to a “racially charged, politically-driven district” with only 25,000 students. She cited the competence, both in knowledge and experience, which she had gained in the larger districts as a major factor in her success in the smaller yet more challenging district.

Tenet number four states that *effective leaders are great communicators*. Kristine agreed. She listed four critical purposes for effective communication between home and school. First, she explained how communication is critical for student achievement, because “students perform better when they have a sense that families and schools are working together.” Coupled with this was her second purpose for communication which is to increase parental involvement at all levels. Third, Kristine suggested that effective communication builds and maintains high levels of trust between and among stakeholders. The fourth aspect of great communication, Kristine noted, is being aware of “both language and cultural differences.” Beyond the obvious, she noted that home-school communiqué must be “free of technical jargon.”

In response to the fifth tenet, *effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way we lead*, Kristine referred repeatedly to building a “culture of success.” This she accomplished in a number of ways. First, she helped the state superintendent of education and her district’s board members all become more visible to community members through avenues such as speakers’ bureaus. In addition to their increased visibility, they also had increased

opportunities to recognize success in the schools. Another example she cited was adding to each board meeting agenda a time for board members to share brief highlights of success that they had personally witnessed while visiting schools.

"I absolutely agree!" was Kristine's reaction to the sixth tenet, *effective leaders possess the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run*. She repeated part of her responses to previous tenets:

If you love what you do, there's a very narrow line between work and play. Some people could just say you're obsessed, but I think that there is an appropriate obsession that you must bring to the leadership role. The obsession is realizing that you must continuously recognize and identify great performance, continuously set goals that are higher and higher, help people, and give them the tools, whether it's the physical tools or the inspirational tools to do their work, and then recognize their success.

She added, "I think I have pretty much boundless emotional stamina." The researcher certainly got the impression that was an understatement.

Amidst even the busiest of times, early morning and late afternoon meetings, she "recognized the importance of balance and individual wellness," again being a role model for others. She shared that she tries to model "balance, personal health, appropriate regard for family responsibilities, high energy, [and] positive attitude." Kristine shared with great enthusiasm and pride that she has a favorite saying, "If you're near the broom, pick up the broom!"

Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking, the seventh tenet, elicited more about the "culture of success." Kristine shared that she consciously recognized and celebrated staff members' efforts toward the culture of success

and how it all related to the big picture of vision and mission. She stated, "As focused forward-looking leaders you are looking at what is that next thing I need to do." To enhance their leadership development and help create future educational leaders, Kristine not only included student council officers in board meetings, but also provided training for them to be active participants.

To tenet number eight, *effective leaders respect and value individuality*, Kristine related the statement to the responsibility of a teacher helping her/his students to reach their potential. She suggested that effective leaders must truly get to know their team members. Conducting individual talent profiles with staff members, Kristine asked questions such as, "What are you good at? What motivates you? How can I help you achieve your goals? What's the best way for me to give you praise? How can I let you know you've done a great job and that I appreciate all you're doing?" Kristine suggested that respecting and valuing individuality could be accomplished, even with consistent performance expectations for everyone, by working with individuals to coach them to a higher personal performance standard.

"People must know they can count on you, that you're serious that you will follow through, whether it's in the promise or a small detail," was Kristine's response to tenet number nine, *effective leaders possess credibility*. "Team members," said Kristine, "expect you to be able to be trusted for your word. It is a congruence issue." She went on to suggest that subordinates are both consciously and unconsciously looking for credibility—and quickly notice a lack thereof. "As a professional when we act in an incongruent way—that is, our

beliefs, words, and actions do not match, people are quick and appropriately so—to criticize.” Kristine also suggested that effective leaders must notice and recognize credibility among staff members.

During the follow-up portion of the interview, Kristine ranked the top three tenets as number one, *passionate*, number seven, *focused yet forward thinking*, as the second most important, and numbers five and nine, *culture and credibility*, as tied for third most important. She stated that, without passion, “you can not get others to embrace your focus and vision,...you will never get to successive layers of implementation by others.”

Her best decisions were all based on an analysis of positive impact for students. For example, she said,

Whether it was going to be popular, whether I was going to be held in high regard as a result—I think that the best decisions have always been, how does this action, whatever it is, whether calling off school for snow or, dismissing a staff member, hiring a staff member, how is this decision going to positively impact what must happen for our students?

Conversely, her worst decisions lacked “analysis and consideration” and her most difficult “often focused on ethics or ethical outcome.” She did not elaborate with specifics.

When asked about opportunities and obstacles faced by women in educational leadership, Kristine shared her “disappointment” regarding the disproportionate number of males versus females at the level of superintendent.” She advocated more “coaching and mentoring for aspiring [female] superintendents,” and shared that, “Given any opportunity I’ve always tried not to just mentor women, but also to be sure that their excellent performance and

potential is recognized.” She acknowledged that there are opportunities for women; however, she suggested the critical issue is what women choose to make of those opportunities.

Kristine described the typical leadership style of senior educational leaders and discussed the question about power together. She said most senior leaders use the “power over” model. She expanded, “I think that power is something that comes from both a knowledge of what needs to happen and how to bring it about. Knowledge is not about a power-over, I believe it’s about a power-*with*.” She noted that, “Politics can and will always have an impact,” but that keeping students’ best interest in mind is the ideal. Kristine opined that unfortunately, “sometimes in the industry, survivors think first of themselves, their longevity, their tenure and paycheck.” She compared her leadership style with that of others by stating emphatically, “It’s just incomparable.” She described her style as collaborative, inclusive, and more of a “power-*with* model.”

Kristine ended the interview with a contrast of the strengths of female and male superintendents. She made an interesting point, particularly in the context of the current era of accountability. She suggested that women educational leaders tend to be “much more comfortable in curriculum and instruction and school improvement than are men [because] it’s where we spent our time.”

Myra

At the time of this writing, Myra had been in public education for 32 years. She began her career as an elementary classroom teacher and went on to

elementary administration. From there she moved into central office administration as a director of staff development for a large urban district and then to a position of instructional leader (in that district equivalent to an area superintendent). Since the interview, she attained a district superintendent position. She holds a master's in educational administration.

The researcher met Myra several years prior to conducting the interview for this study. She had the opportunity to observe Myra numerous times in her role as elementary school principal. During that time, Myra was a pioneer among her peers in another large urban district. She led a typical school in an atypical manner. According to Myra, students were more likely to thrive in a multi-age environment and students were either placed in first-second grade or third-fourth-fifth multi-age classes. She withstood much criticism from her superiors, colleagues and faculty members for this unique educational setting. Myra valued teambuilding activities. For example, she offered faculty and staff members the opportunity to participate in a two-day teambuilding session, with much success. Her governance system was both hierarchical and collaborative in nature, dependent upon teacher leaders who formed a steering committee. She recognized and encouraged teachers with potential to pursue educational leadership positions. Myra was also known among her faculty and staff as one of the few principals in their experience who ate lunch in the lounge everyday, creating opportunities for further teambuilding as well as pedagogical conversation. Consistent with her commitment to being an educational leader—as opposed to a mere manager—Myra modeled lifelong learning. She

maintained a library of current educational research, shared such research with her staff, and created opportunities for dialog about current educational issues.

The interview with Myra was completed in one sitting. Myra's office was in a central administration building made up of a series of cubicle offices, and hers was situated in a corner at the top of the stairs, just behind the second floor receptionist. Myra, an open lesbian, kept pictures of her partner and their dogs on the walls, as well as quotes, papers, and other important items all held up with tacks. A large collection of professional books also adorned the small space. Her colleagues were also housed in this central office administrative building. Myra's administrative assistant sat in a cubicle with shorter walls nearby. Myra suggested that the interview be conducted in one of three "conference" rooms (cubicle walls went all the way to the ceiling). A significant pattern that emerged from Myra's answers was her candid critique of the verbiage of the tenets, the parenthetical explanations listed in chapter 1, and the researcher's questions.

In response to tenet number one, *effective leaders are passionate about the organization*, Myra stated:

Passionate about the organization. Although I wouldn't agree with that necessarily, I think they're passionate about the job they do within an organization, but I don't believe that it's necessarily vested within the physical organization itself. So as an educator, I'm passionate about urban education. I'm passionate about developing strong leadership skills in my principals and my vice-principals. I'm passionate about elevating teachers' knowledge in content and pedagogy. I'm passionate about the kids. I believe that the organization in which I'm working currently allows me to express those passions, but I've been in other organizations where those passions have not been allowed full expression. And so I leave the organization because passion drives me, not the organization.

Myra shared that she spends a lot of time “getting people to really analyze their belief systems and the structures in which their beliefs are held, so that they know where the line in the sand is for themselves.”

To tenet number two, *effective leaders are reflective*, Myra replied, “Well, I think effective people are reflective, and yet I don’t think that everybody can be totally self-aware.” She suggested, rather, that effective leaders must find “people outside” of the self to help look at the world “through a different lens.” She went on to state that effective leadership is dependent upon seeing reality as it is, not as one would like to believe.

Tenet number three, *effective leaders are competent*, elicited a similarly critical response to the verbiage. Myra said,

[W]ell, competence and intelligence and mental capacity are not necessarily the same thing; so there’s a problem with the subheading. See, you can be competent and not possess intelligence or mental capacity. So I think effective leaders are highly intelligent and I think intelligence is about mental capacity. I think effective leaders are learners, and in their capacities to learn, they either manifest competence or they manifest growing competence. I mean I think the semantics here are pretty important.

Further, Myra suggested that effective leaders are both learners and doers at the same time. In other words, being “book-smart” is not enough. Myra opined that “competence is judged in relationship to a leader’s ability to know what matters and what doesn’t matter.”

When the researcher asked how she might instill this tenet in others, Myra stated, “Well, I would never state it this way.” Rather, she explained, “[F]or me it is about walking side-by-side...coaching through professional development, walking side-by-side as we go in and out of classrooms.” Myra, if she believes

the person she is coaching does have the knowledge and capacity, very specifically tailors her questions and her processes in order to help take the person to the next level of understanding.

Myra retorted to tenet number four, *effective leaders are great communicators*, with, "I think being a great communicator and having your finger on the pulse of the organization are two different things. You can have it all figured out but have no ability to articulate it in a way that is going to move people." She went on to explain that effective leaders must constantly articulate their beliefs and passions, not just by voice, but by everything they do and say. In support of this, she routinely talks to principals about their belief system and works with them to make sure what they are doing is consistent with what they are saying.

Myra's reaction to tenet number five, *effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way we lead*, was,

I think it would depend on what you mean by 'effective' then. I think that there have been outstanding leaders throughout history that have lead against the role that culture currently played, but because they did not get what they wanted, may not have been termed effective. I think there are spiritual leaders, I think there are political leaders who have fought against current cultural norms, and it may have been because of their leadership that down the road eventually something changed, but not as a direct result."

Myra then referred to her previous position as principal of a multi-age school, which reverted to traditional grade configured classrooms after she left. She said, "I have to question my level of effectiveness as a leader." In contrast, she also then referred to her record of recognizing leadership potential among teachers

and that there are at least a dozen of her previous teachers who are now principals.

With regard to the need for a leader to understand culture, she shared a story about a male principal being “crucified by a small segment of the parent population because he’s gay...and happens to have flamboyant characteristics.” Myra helped this principal understand that regardless of any personal or physical characteristics, he had to understand the culture of the school community and work hard to build trust.

Effective leaders possess the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run is tenet number six. Myra agreed, “Well, I think the key to that statement is resilience, and I think resilience is emotional, physical, and probably certainly energetic.” She went on to discuss the “human” factor; that is, effective leaders do not “beat up” themselves or others when mistakes are made. Myra’s example was a principal with a life-threatening illness whose “staff rallied as incredibly warm, loving human beings, but they were not in the right place for the kids.” When the principal got better, Myra “had to remind her about who she was leading and what she was leading, and that it was going to be very emotionally hard to tell people who had helped you survive that they weren’t doing what they needed to do for the kids and there was going to be risk involved in that.”

To tenet number seven, *effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking*, Myra was also in agreement. She said that the “forward part” means “knowing exactly what it is that you want to achieve, down to such levels of specificity, not

in vague, general terms. And then the focus is sort of the benchmark steps that you're going to take that are going to lead you to that place." Myra also requires the principals she supervises and the teachers they supervise to be focused and forward thinking. Principals are expected to tell her where they "want teacher practice to be at the end of the year...[a]nd what are the benchmark steps?" Teachers are expected to "set end-of-the-year goals in, say, reading for their students that are minimally at grade level standards but at least a year from where the kids really are."

Myra also referred to herself as a "storyteller" because "one of the effective ways that people learn is through metaphor." She shared that she tries to look for an analogy that will illustrate her point.

In response to tenet number eight, *effective leaders respect and value individuality*, Myra related a story from 1902 about teachers and principals. The essence of the story was that "everybody's got their own little tinkling, little bell that tinkles, and that if you stay quiet and listen, you'll get attuned to that tinkling, and when you're attuned to that tinkling, you can get your little bell to tinkle in accord." She rephrased, "We all have our own idiosyncrasies and it's being mindful of that." She went on to emphasize that "it takes all kinds."

Myra did not quite agree with the parenthetical part of tenet number nine, *effective leaders possess credibility*. She said, "I'm not sure the building blocks of credibility are—if power is a building block of credibility. I certainly don't think it's power. I think it's actually trust, integrity, and competence, but it's not power. It's competence." She did go on, however, to describe credible leaders as ones who

are “able to make mistakes, stand up, shake themselves off, and keep walking without being beaten up.”

Myra also related this tenet to tenet number seven about being a storyteller. She suggested that effective leaders build trust with subordinates by storytelling because “personal stories are ... a window into who you are,...and when that happens, when you’re vulnerable and I’m vulnerable together, then there’s a much greater chance that we’ll trust each other.” Myra held that trust takes time to build, and that “just one or two missteps could create a lack of trust that could be irreparable.”

After a short break and brief tour of the second floor, the interview resumed with the follow-up questions. Myra shared that her best decision was also “the biggest risk” she ever took in her career which was a “huge personal leap of faith.” She left the district she had been in for over twenty years where she was a respected principal, and she took a significant cut in pay to pursue her dream. She said, “I had learned everything I was going to learn....and I was just drying up.” Her perception of how other people felt about her was, “I was the irritant. I was the pebble in everybody’s shoe. I was the sand that was caught in their underwear. And I didn’t find that helpful to me at all.” She also shared that she was “totally supported by [her partner], which was fabulous.”

Myra’s worst decisions were made “out of fear.” She cited hiring decisions when she felt afraid of not finding enough teachers to fill open positions. She shared that she has come to learn that the “other side of fear is hope, and all you

have to do is flip it to that side.” She uses her intuition and patience more now than earlier in her career.

Myra ranked her top three tenets as tenet 1, *passionate*, tenet 7, *focused yet forward thinking*, and then tenet 3, *competent*. She felt that women do not experience “a lot of limitations” and that any discrimination she may have experienced because of her gender has been “very rare and subtle.” However, she viewed motherhood as a huge challenge for women, stating, “I think it’s very difficult to be a great leader and a great mother at the same time. I don’t think that they’re mutually exclusive, but I think it’s very difficult.”

When asked about the typical style among senior leaders in education, she replied, “I think unfortunately that it’s very top-down.” She suggested that power is displayed by withholding information. When asked to compare her leadership style to the leadership style of others, Myra reflected,

I’m sure I do too much preaching, but I hope I coach more than I preach. I believe that I am a teacher foremost, and so my style is that of a teacher. I’m always trying to determine what it is you know and what you need to know. I’m told that—they say that I am tough, but everybody grows with me.

Rachel

Rachel had been in public education for 35 years at the time of this writing. Much of her career has been spent in bilingual education. She began her career as a middle school ESL teacher, and then moved into central office administration as a bilingual district coordinator. After serving as both an elementary and middle school principal, she moved to assistant superintendent,

superintendent, and currently is a county superintendent in one of the nation's largest counties. Rachel currently oversees a budget of \$17 billion and 94 school districts.

Rachel earned her doctorate in Educational Policy and Administration, a Master's in Education, and a Bachelor's in History. She has earned numerous awards and is involved with a variety of professional organizations. Rachel is married and has grown children. She is Latina.

The interview with Rachel was conducted in one sitting. The building in which Rachel's office is housed is quite old, reminiscent of the architecture of the sixties. As the researcher walked down the narrow halls (seemingly pre-ADA), the bare walls highlighted the notion that the county office of education was even further removed from students than a typical district office (i.e.: no student art or other work decorating the halls). Rachel's office was tucked safely in the corner of a larger office space, consisting of five visible receptionists, one of whom was the assistant to Rachel's administrative assistant. Another three offices were for assistant county superintendents.

Rachel came out to greet the researcher personally and escort her into her private conference room, which was adjacent to her large office. The high ceiling and accompanying large wall behind her desk were covered with artifacts from her many years in education, starkly contrasting the bare walls in the hallways of the building. The office seemed to declare a sense of positive, colorful energy, which Rachel herself exuded throughout the interview. Rachel made it clear that she did have a very busy schedule, but that all her attention was focused on the

interview. The interview was completed in one sitting. The interview with Rachel conveyed humility, from the moment she came out to the lobby personally, to the numerous examples she gave in response to the tenets.

To tenet number one, *effective leaders are passionate about the organization*, Rachel replied, "Well, first of all, I love the word 'passionate' in that it really speaks to the core of any leader's role. If you're not passionate about what the organization stands for,...then you're going to really just be more of a caretaker." She likened a leader's passion to that of a loving family member: "look for the hidden strengths of individuals,...tap the human potential,...[be] willing to take the hard things and deal with the tough problems." She likened passion to excellence, saying an effective leader "won't bend for the status quo" and "challenge[s] people to be their best." She reiterated, "[W]e're not going to settle."

Tenet number two, *effective leaders are reflective*, reminded Rachel of a book she had recently read about being mindful. She stated that effective leaders must be mindful of the long-term impacts their decisions, statements, and written communications will have. Further, she offered that women leaders must be more mindful than men leaders because for women, "the fallout is, either more critical or second-guessed or just viewed in a different way." She gave an example of an information packet going to the board with an error and how, even though it was a subordinate's responsibility, being a reflective leader meant that she also looked at what role she had to play in the mistake being made.

Tenet number three, *effective leaders are competent*, elicited another humble response from Rachel. She said plainly,

Well, I think when you get to the point of being superintendent, you are competent, but what we have to do is always remember that there's going to be new situations that arise. None of us is ever going to have experienced every situation. So being intelligent, to me, and competent means to know when you have come to a point where you need to go for additional help, additional resources, [and] additional staff. [T]he word ego...gets leaders in trouble.

Further, Rachel advises her subordinates that not knowing the answer should not be perceived as incompetence. Rather, an effective leader simply admits to not having the answer and then promptly gets the answer.

Effective leaders are great communicators, tenet number four, prompted Rachel to share other examples of her humility as an educational leader.

According to Rachel,

Great communicators know their organization, know the issues, keep their ear to the ground, and have lots of people they can go to for information. I feel very comfortable asking the custodian, what do you think of this event? Asking the secretary, how did you feel? And asking my assistant sup[erintendent]s. They all view it from different eyes.

Rachel also shared a story about having to eliminate a program that was going to impact over 50 people. She could have easily sent a subordinate to relay the news, but instead she went herself, stating, "[I]f my employees are going to lose their jobs, I'm the one that has to say it, not somebody else."

To facilitate communication, Rachel holds "town hall" type meetings all over the 4000 square-mile county. She shared that sometimes people are rude and disrespectful, but that she appreciates that they feel comfortable enough to speak directly to her.

Tenet number five states that *effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead*. Rachel exclaimed, "That's big! Culture

is huge. [I]t's the way you've always done it." She likened the culture of an organization to an "ecosystem [which] will always do what it can to maintain itself." Rachel described her leadership style as one in which she does not make massive change quickly, otherwise "there's a shock to the system." In her previous position, Rachel used the term "reculturing" to describe her vision for change. She did not want to imply that the existing system was bad; rather, that the recent extreme shift in student population demanded that the system adapt. Rachel discussed respecting the existing culture, but making the culture itself one of improvement.

Rachel laughed when she heard tenet number six, *effective leaders possess the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run*. She explained, "The non-faint-of-heart!" She compared a principal's jobs now with when she was a principal, reflecting how the long hours have always been part of the reality. She declared, "[Y]ou just can't be exhausted. I mean you've got to be able to be balanced and it's hard to do." She admitted that she does not do well with "people that complain or talk about it." She opined that most educational leaders are "Type A" personalities who are "trying to do it all" so she prioritizes and tries to help others prioritize too.

In response to tenet number seven, *effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking*, Rachel said, "You're changing the tire while the car is moving, so you're paying attention to the day-to-day and then still looking forward to how you want to get better." She described examples of working with the school board and the members getting so bogged down with small details, she would have to remind

them to remember the mission, the vision, and focus on the end result. Even in her position, she shared that she has to remind herself not to get “mired in the day-to-day of returning phone calls, dealing with problems, working on the things that need to get done today.” Returning to an example of Rachel’s humility, one of her “strategic opportunities” (long-range goals) is customer service—from her office all the way to every employee in her organization.

Tenet number eight, *effective leaders respect and value individuality*, meant to Rachel, “[T]hat just kind of goes without saying—that you respect people.” She mentioned the customer service goal again and shared this story:

[T]here was a scenario where the secretary was very pleasant to the administrator but ignored the custodian, ignored the receptionist, you know, kind of invisible people. And it was just a reminder for us that all work has dignity and everybody brings their value to an organization. [All must] acknowledge that in saying good morning, saying hello, being respectful, and treating people as individuals, regardless of title, regardless of position. I jokingly say when I have a problem, if this is the way I’m being treated as superintendent, I can only guess how bad others are being treated. [W]hat about others who don’t have any leverage?

Rachel shared that she personally dealt with the above situation in much the same way she handled the loss of jobs mentioned in tenet number four. It was not pleasant news, but she was the one who had to deliver it.

To tenet number nine, *effective leaders possess credibility*, Rachel quoted a respected colleague as saying to her once, “[A]ll you have in your position is your integrity. Once that’s gone, it doesn’t matter what you do.” Rachel noted that the straightforward situations are easy; it is the ones that are not “black and white” that pose the most challenge. Her litmus test is whether she can publicly defend decisions or not. If not, she does not go forward with the decision. She suggested

that others “may not like the way you look or you talk, but if they can see you’re consistent and you’re fair and that you’re credible and that you’re trustworthy,...that’s all you can ask for in terms of being a leader.” Again showing her humility as a leader, Rachel added that she demonstrates integrity by adhering to her philosophy of, “I’ll only ask you to do what I’m going to do myself.”

Rachel rated her top three tenets as follows: tenet 9, *credibility*, tenet 1, *passionate*, and tenet 5, *understand the role that culture plays*. Rachel responded to the follow-up question about her best decision by relating the story of moving from a “comfort-zone” position to one in another state with a whole new set of challenges. She and her husband decided that she would commute during the eight years she ended up staying in that position. Her worst decisions, she stated, were not moving fast enough on some personnel issues.

Rachel sees limited opportunities and many challenges for women at the level of superintendent, and even more so for women of color. She mentioned the “glass ceiling,” stereotypes about women not being able to make “tough” decisions, and the “good ol’ boy network.” She described the typical style of senior leaders in education as traditionally hierarchical and that even the women do not support other women. Her response to the question about power was that it “comes by title, position, and background” and that “people will use it when it suits them.” In describing her own leadership style in comparison to others, she said, “I think my style is more easygoing, approachable, which makes it...easier for people to come and approach me to bring me issues or concerns and

problems and things to help the organization.” She shared that she had recently given a presentation and the evaluations stated, “She’s so real, she’s so down-to-earth.”

Summary

In listening to their responses and reviewing the transcribed interviews, the researcher was struck by the passion with which these women told their stories. She even adjusted her own leadership style to emulate much of what she learned from the women superintendents. In summary, the five women superintendents’ responses to questions about the nine tenets of effective leadership were, on the one hand, unique in that they represented a diverse grouping of background knowledge, experiences, circumstances, and core ideologies. On the other hand, these women’s responses revealed themes and patterns consistent with the extant literature on effective leadership. These data are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

"I note the obvious differences between each sort and type, but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."

- Dr. Maya Angelou, American Novelist and Poet

Introduction

The findings of this research study are organized in ten sections. The first nine sections present themes and patterns that emerged from participants' responses to each of the leadership tenets. In the final section, participants' responses to follow-up questions are presented.

Tenet #1: Effective Leaders are Passionate About Their Organizations

Three significant patterns emerged from the participants' responses to tenet number one. First, passionate educational leaders are committed and it is evident. Second, it is a leader's passion for the organization that helps triumph over negativity. Third, all the participants linked passion with high expectations.

Alice, Isabel, and Kristine each responded to this tenet by stating that passion was synonymous with commitment. They said, "I'm committed," "you have to come across as though you really, really are committed," and "You make...commitment a part of everything you do," respectively. Rachel similarly

suggested the connection by saying, "if you're not passionate...you're going to really just be more of a caretaker."

Three participants suggested that it is passion that helps push effective leaders further than most. Alice said, "[I]t's the passion that keeps me going when there are challenges and obstacles in the way." She added that on "down days," it was the passion that helped her "get back up and fight for what [she] believe[d]." Isabel stated, "[I]f you have that...passion, you can see beyond...to overcome those diverse points." Myra challenged the tenet statement. She distinguished between passion for the organization and passion about the job and the goals one is trying to achieve within an organization. She said, "I'm passionate about urban education,...developing strong leadership skills in my principals and vice principals,...elevating teachers' knowledge in content and pedagogy,...[and] kids. I've been in organizations where those passions have not been allowed full expression, and so I leave because the passion drives me, not the organization."

All five participants linked passion with high expectations for performance. Alice said, "I have high demands." Isabel said, "[I] just keep pushing them and pushing them and never let up." Kristine said, "[I] continually talk about...expectations for high performance." Myra said that she always tries "to take it to the next place." Rachel said, "[I] challenge people to be their best." Isabel and Rachel repeatedly referred to not settling for the "status quo." Isabel shared that she has even "overlooked for promotions" people who "did not have

the passion;” whereas, Rachel stated that she looks for the “hidden strengths of individuals, the people who can bring the same passion.”

Tenet #2: Effective Leaders are Reflective

Several themes and patterns emerged from participants’ responses to tenet number two. They all suggested that reflective leaders use analysis and discussion—both before and after making decisions—to correct mistakes, celebrate successes, and plan for future decisions. Self-discipline was another theme that emerged. To develop reflective leadership practices in others, four out of five participants reported utilizing research-based outside expertise.

All five of the participants agreed that analysis and discussion are keys to being a reflective leader; although, Isabel did suggest that “sometimes one can go overboard in analyzing.” Reflection is accomplished, “I think by analyzing,...by getting them to talk about it, especially after the fact,” said Alice. Kristine stated a leader must “examine virtually everything...in terms of priorities and value statements.” Myra took this notion one step further and said that reflective leaders “have to constantly ask...what’s the lens through which I’m looking?” Rachel asked, “[I]f I write this, how’s it going to be perceived by all of the audiences?” Alice and Isabel also suggested that reflective leaders’ analysis and discussion empowers subordinates to make decisions in their absence. Alice stated that she wants subordinates to “be able to pretend that I’m there and think the way I would about the situation.” Isabel stated that if one of her subordinates was out in the field, s/he should “know how I think.”

The analysis and discussion, for all five participants, includes reflective questions, some they ask themselves, and for others they seek subordinates' feedback. Examples of Alice's reflective questions include, "[W]hat did we do well? What could we have done better? [W]hat are we doing inside of our department that either hinders this process or makes it better?" When subordinates come to her for help, Alice models reflective leadership by asking questions like, "[H]ow did you get here to ask me? How did it get to me?" giving them the opportunity to "self-correct." Isabel shared that she is "not a great talker." Rather, she asks reflective questions, then observes and analyzes. Similarly, Kristine stated that she asks, "[H]ow did we do—and how can we do it better together?" Myra shared that she asks herself, "What did I enable the teacher to be able to do that she couldn't do when I started [the conference]?" Rachel shared that she tries to model the questions to help subordinates "go deeper." She also suggested that effective leadership requires reflection before action is taken, that reflective leaders must be "mindful of what decisions, what statements, what written communications, of the long-terms impacts" they are going to have on others. She suggested that, with written correspondence, it is critical to ask how "it's going to be perceived by all of the audiences."

All participants shared the tendency to be harder on oneself than on others, as well as a commitment to self-discipline. Alice shared, "I see myself as a human being... I have hopes and dreams and I don't want to fail. I want to be successful at what I do." She went on to state that reflective leaders must be "self-critical," and that, "it takes a lot of self discipline, to know when to act, when

to be quiet, when to listen, when to get mad, so people see you angry.” Isabel echoed the need for self-discipline, sharing that even though she may want to be with her family on the weekends, there are things she must do for her job. She said, “There’s nothing worse than having a supervisor that’s lazy. [S]o I make it very clear I’m going to work just as hard as they do, if not harder.” Kristine said, “...you take on a higher responsibility which impacts who you are and how you can behave and values you must embrace.” She suggested that reflective leaders must be aware that subordinates are watching to see what time leaders arrive and leave, and what do leaders spend their time doing at work. Myra stated that it takes “discipline not only to look at your own practice—it requires time to do that and it has to be a priority.” Vital to being a reflective leader opined Rachel, is taking responsibility for mistakes. She shared a story about a subordinate who made an error in a report to the school board to illustrate her point: “One thing, my leadership style is to own it, not to blame. It was also my fault. I should’ve not let it go in the board packet without me seeing the document first. So now we own it.” Rachel also shared that she was currently reading a book about being a mindful leader.

A final theme that emerged from participants’ responses to this tenet was a common strategy they use to develop reflective leadership in others: research-based outside expertise. Alice, Isabel, and Kristine utilized some form of “book talk.” Alice said, “We’ve read books and talked about them, one on transition, managing transition, early on we took the whole year to look at that.” She also shared that she brought in experts on managing transition to train staff. Every

year she gives her principals each a copy of a recently published book about educational leadership. Similarly, Isabel stated that she purchased books for her staff, and “it’s OK to even read material that might be divorced from your thinking,” as long as you know “what the current authors are saying” and you “discuss it” with staff. She expects principals to then share the books with their administrative teams. Kristine brought in an independent research group to conduct an “Audit of Educational Effectiveness” which looked at resource systems, district programs, testing, and organizational structures. She stated, “[A]ligning practice to research is essential and part of our teaching performance.” Myra distributed current educational research articles to subordinates, with the expectation that articles would be read and kept in individual research binders.

Tenet #3: Effective Leaders are Competent

Recurring themes emerged from the participants’ responses to the third tenet. First, competence in educational leadership is accomplished by being a lifelong learner. Second, competence is manifested in a broad set of job skills. Third, participants hold themselves to high personal expectations for competence.

Four participants stated explicitly that competent leaders are lifelong learners. Additionally, as stated in the introduction of this chapter, three of the five hold doctorate degrees, the other two hold one or more masters degrees. Alice stated, “It just means that you’re always learning, that learning is a lifelong process.” She added that, “anytime I’m at a conference or anytime I can go someplace and

learn, I'm there." She went on further to say that she encourages subordinates to "grow and seek opportunities to become lifelong learners." Isabel stated that she does "a lot of reading...of current literature in the field." Kristine shared that during one superintendency, she and her board "endured ninety hours of training together" for the sake of developing more effective leadership. Myra simply stated that, "effective leaders are learners...[but] it's not just being a learner, it's being a learner and a doer at the same time."

The second theme that emerged among all five participants was that competence is manifested in a broad set of job skills, most of which have to do with knowing—not necessarily knowing specific details, but rather, knowing *when* to do *what*. Alice stated that competent leaders must "possess a set of skills to do the job." Isabel said that "you better know what you're doing...you can't fake it." She expounded by suggesting that competent leaders must know: the job, that you may not have all the answers, but you know where to go to get the answers. She added that, to build confidence in staff members, sometimes "you don't want to come across as though you know everything. I don't think any leader can act like they know everything. I think that would be a grave mistake. Grave mistake." Kristine stated clearly that competent leaders must be "grounded in both an academic knowledge and an experiential and performance-based knowledge." She stated that competent leaders must know: the work, your school board, the talents and expertise of others, and how to model for others. Myra stated that "execution is everything." She opined that competent leaders must know: how to translate book knowledge into action, what matters and what does

not, and what it looks like when kids are performing at high levels. Rachel stated that competent leaders know: how far you can go, when you need to ascertain additional resources, how to maneuver bureaucracies, how to get around things, how to work with boards, and how to surround yourself with competent individuals. Especially when addressing the school board, Rachel reiterated that a competent leader must have “the basic core knowledge of [an] issue” so that s/he is “knowledgeable enough to feel confident.” She echoed Isabel in stating that competent leaders “don’t guess, don’t give information that’s half.”

High expectations for their own professional competence level was a theme that emerged from the responses of three participants. Alice suggested that “competent is too weak...[y]ou’re looking to be highly competent,” echoing a theme that emerged from tenet #2. Isabel stated, “I had a quest for learning. I always thought I could do better. I’m very hard on myself in this area. Very hard.” Myra said that effective leaders must “set themselves up as being the chief teacher...[and] understand the full range of pedagogy that’s necessary to create ideal classrooms.”

Tenet #4: Effective Leaders are Great Communicators

Participants’ responses to this tenet generated three major themes. The first was that great communicators know their audiences. Second, all participants imparted that effective leaders clearly communicate their own vision and core ideology. Third, participants agreed that effective communication builds trust.

Knowing one's audience is important, and the avenues of communication are complex. Leaders both give and receive communication, and the participants offered examples of both. At the time the interviews for this study were conducted, all participants worked for school districts with diverse student populations, and dealt with the accompanying challenges in communicating in different languages with parents and families. Alice and Kristine stated explicitly that they deliberately did not use "educationese" as part of effective communication with this audience. Rather, Alice stated, "I speak and write in very plain English...I don't use educational jargon." Alice also stated that she communicates with "the various stakeholders in multiple ways," again paying attention to her different audiences. Further, she shared that she holds long meetings, sometimes all day, for the purpose of getting information so she won't be "surprised" later. Kristine stated that parents want "information about how they can help that's what I would call 'free of technical jargon.'" She also noted that one of her priorities is to "look at both language and cultural differences" among the various stakeholders so that they can maximize their engagement in the home-school partnership, supporting her belief that "students perform better when they have a sense that families and schools are working together." Isabel stated that her job is actually to be "very, very observant" so she will know how to communicate purposefully with unique individuals. Similarly, Myra stated that being an "effective individual communicator is...reading people" and Rachel stated that "great communicators...keep their ear to the ground." Rachel shared

that she routinely asked support staff such as custodians and secretaries to share their perspective on events, as well as maintains an “open-door policy.”

The second major theme for this tenet is that effective leaders communicate their vision and ideology in all their actions and words. Alice said that leaders must be “really clear about...belief systems” and “get across their ideas and their vision and get people to share in that vision,...motivate people, inspire them, so that they want to work for the common cause.” Isabel made expectations known without demanding specific action. She related a story about how she did not mandate her subordinates’ attendance at board meetings, but made it clear that they would be responsible for knowing “what’s going on in the whole system.” Kristine stated that the “bottom-line message has to be about...our responsibility as a district, as a community, as a school to improve student and school performance.” She expounded, “[Y]our drumbeat every single day,...even if it’s...attitude in the cafeteria, it’s still about student performance.” Myra held that, “[Y]ou must be very clear, and your belief and your passion have to be articulated constantly, not just by your voice, but by everything you do and say.” Rachel shared that she leads an annual event at the beginning of the school year during which she shares her vision with over 2,000 staff members.

Participants alluded to the importance of trust-building as they responded to this tenet. Alice suggested that people must feel “comfortable enough with [a leader’s ideology]...to work toward the common cause.” Isabel believes word choice and timing are critical to building trust, suggesting that if she were to “say the wrong words to an individual, that [that] will stick with them for the rest of their

life.” Kristine views communication as a “vehicle between [stakeholders]” and is part of “developing a sense of trust.” Myra stated, “[G]reat leaders are people that are very congruent in their actions and the words that come out of their mouth. You have to be able to gain the trust.” In relating a story about a time when she opted to be the bearer of very bad news (rather than delegating the responsibility), Rachel stated, “[T]he more that people can see you being responsible and taking ownership and communicating,...there’s more of a relationship with you, and more of a trust. Not that they’re not going to be angry, but there’s still trust.”

*Tenet #5: Effective Leaders Understand the Role that Culture Plays
in Shaping the Way They Lead*

Tenet number five elicited a wide variety of responses from the participants, and produced one common theme: All but Isabel stated that the key to effective leadership is understanding the current culture and then understanding how to go about creating positive change within that culture. Isabel’s response focused more on how her minority ethnic status (culture) affects the way she leads.

Alice said that effective leaders understand the “environmental context,...the historical and institutional practices,...[the] untouchable...things... at least for a while, and some things are untouchable forever.” She shared that when she first arrived at a district, the current culture was that central office employees came in late and left early to avoid difficult traffic situations in the city. She immediately changed the culture to be one where central office staff worked regular hours,

staggered to accommodate early morning and late afternoon needs of school site employees. This “sent a signal that central office was about to change in culture to be one of service and support.”

Kristine related a story of how she built “a culture of success.” When she first arrived at a district, the current state superintendent of instruction happened to have relatives in the district, and had been displeased with the current “culture of seclusion and low expectations.” Kristine proceeded to invite the current state superintendent to “be in the district, to be part of recognizing our success, to be part of recognizing our new goals, to be visible, to get a chance to meet our community.” She took this strategy further and “initiated a speakers’ bureau of board members” as well. During all of these “town hall” type meetings she asked poignant questions about culture and led discussions about how to “change or instill a different culture.” She encouraged board members to “come up with measures of success that they had observed.” She stated that it became institutionalized, it “became a mantra for behavior and attitude.”

Myra stated, “[T]o be effective, you must pay attention to culture, but it is not in that that makes you effective. I think that’s just part of your reality, and you have to know your reality.” Her response to this tenet focused intently on the meaning of “effectiveness,” including, “If I lead something, and when I am gone, it ceases to exist, I would have to question my effectiveness.” She shared a story of an attempt to change culture that was unsuccessful. While serving as a principal in a different state than her current assignment, she “fought for a K-8 school.” She tried numerous avenues—the local university, the superintendent, assistant

superintendents—but was unable to get support for the idea. Her level of effectiveness, however, is still unknown in that she believes she “planted a seed that later was able to grow but at that time was not.” As she related, “[T]here have been outstanding leaders throughout history that have led against the role that culture currently played, but because they did not get what they wanted, may not have been termed effective.”

Rachel stated that “culture...will always do what it can to maintain itself.” She went on to say, “So when you have a culture within a system, it’s real important to know it and to value it and to acknowledge what good it does.” She shared a story of arriving at a district whose English Language Learner population had recently increased dramatically. The current culture of the school district was not meeting the needs of these students. She sought to create a “culture...about improvement,” rather than a “culture...about status quo and protecting the work of adults.” She described her change process as thoughtful, and that she decided not to “demand and scold and yell.”

Isabel responded by sharing her story of growing up as an African American girl in a predominantly white school, and how the “teachers were not very nice to some of us.” With the support and encouragement of her parents, she overcame the obstacles that racist attitudes created and went on to be very successful. “I don’t want any child to face some of the mean things that occurred in my life, because they may not have a parent at home to help them understand.” She also noted that her job is to help principals understand different cultures, “to give them resources in order to handle...situation[s] better, or to help them understand why

they offended a parent of a particular culture.” With regard to working with principals, she stated, “you have to look for win-win situations always.”

Tenet #6: Effective Leaders Understand the Physical and Emotional Stamina, Energy, and Resilience Needed to Persevere in the Long Run

Four clear themes emerged from the participants’ responses to tenet number seven. First, effective leaders exude a positive and optimistic attitude, and maintain it in a variety of ways. Second, the job is never-ending, so multitasking is necessary and inevitable. Third, they view their job as one of facilitating others’ work. Fourth, they use key coping strategies effective leaders use to persevere.

Three participants suggested that effective leaders maintain and model a positive attitude. “[P]eople want to believe, when you’re in charge, that you are positive, that you see the glass always as half full, that you see challenges as opportunities,” said Alice. Isabel said that “it’s critical to acknowledge the excitement.” Kristine talked about how subordinates look for “high energy [and] positive attitude.” She also said, “[T]his is work of passion! If you love what you do, there’s a very narrow line between work and play.”

All five participants explicitly referred to the enormity of the job, and the inevitability of having to be a good *multitasker*. Alice stated that “as a leader...whatever you do, you have to pretend, even if you’re feeling overwhelmed, that you have this under control.” Isabel said, “[Y]ou’re constantly running. You’re gobbling down lunch while you’re on the phone and on the computer. [Y]ou got to keep going, got to keep moving.” She and Kristine also

mentioned the reality of early morning, late afternoon and evening meetings. Kristine stated, "[E]arlier in my career I may not have possessed the drive, determination and stamina to have stood for what was right for students. [Now] I think I have pretty much boundless emotional stamina," and went on to say that effective leaders must model energy, stamina and resilience. Myra said, "[I]t's sort of like one of those Pong games where everywhere you turn around, something's flying at you." Rachel said, "[Y]ou're going to work long hours and can't be shy, you can't be—you just can't be exhausted." She added, "[W]e didn't get to this position if we weren't all Type A and trying to do it all."

The third theme that emerged from participants' responses to this tenet is leader as facilitator of subordinates' jobs, including tending to their emotional needs as well. Alice said, "I always felt like my job was to make sure that my staff could do their jobs." She mentioned being mindful of their workload, protecting them so they could get their work done, and even buying earrings and hats for a woman who had lost her hair due to chemotherapy. Similarly protective, Isabel stated, "[Y]ou don't tell everyone what you're thinking. Mentally I have a timeline of where I want to be. It's not something that I share. I make sure that people are going to do what needs to be done." She also mentioned knowing "which administrators are emotionally drained," and dropping by just to see how they are doing or to offer counseling. Kristine suggested that effective leaders "never place themselves at the top of the list," and should always look for ways to "energize [the] team." She routinely asked her subordinates, "What can I do to support you?" and then gave "them the tools, whether it's the physical tools or

the inspirational tools to do their work.” Myra stated, “I see my job as being the support. It’s not power-based. It’s about, what are my skills and how,...when I’m scaffolded to yours, [am I] going to give you enough stretch so that you can go to the next place?” She shared a story about a principal who had a life-threatening illness and whose staff was rallying around her, rather than making sure they were doing what was best for students. Myra tended to her emotional needs until the principal was well enough to hear the truth about her staff and help them take the focus off her and put it back on student achievement. Rachel said that she tries to help subordinates get their work done. She said, “I want to be a teacher. I want to help and facilitate if I can.”

The final theme that emerged regarding this tenet is that these participants use coping strategies to maintain their pace. First, three participants mentioned the need to confront subordinates’ negativity head-on. Isabel has sat down with principals who “whine” about nothing ever being right and asked them where they will be next year since they are so unhappy. Kristine said, “If someone is too tired to demonstrate being a good leader, you may have to help them find another way to contribute or pursue other professional opportunities.” The story the Myra shared, noted in the previous paragraph, about the sick principal falls into this category as well. She also said, “[I]t’s always a constant struggle...knowing when I push without breaking, and how hard to push without breaking, and sometimes I’m better at it than other times.” Other coping strategies that were mentioned include: “motivate yourself,...pace yourself,... crash and sleep hard,” (Isabel); “model balance, personal health, appropriate regard for family responsibilities,”

(Kristine); don't "beat yourself up every time you make a mistake," (Myra); and "be balanced,...[and] prioritize," (Rachel).

Tenet #7: Effective Leaders are Focused Yet Forward Thinking

Tenet number seven generated two main themes. The first is that effective leaders must know where they are going and how to get there. Second, the participants all hold subordinates accountable for their part in achieving the long-range goals.

All five participants agreed that effective leaders have a clear vision of their goal and offered analogies, rather than true life stories. Alice stated, "[Y]ou have to know where you want to end up and where you want the organization...to go." She quoted her grandmother as saying, "You got to know where you want to end up or any road will do." This, she said, was her philosophy, or else she would be, "sort of wandering." She added that effective leaders see "the forest and they see the trees." Isabel said, "Well, certainly you have to keep your eye on the mark." She related this tenet to "the pieces of this puzzle or mural that you're trying to put together, and all the pieces should not fit because if they do, then that means you don't have any vision." In other words, if all the pieces fit that would imply that the status quo was acceptable. Rather, Isabel was suggesting that dissonance was necessary and healthy to move an organization forward. Kristine stated, "[Y]ou just keep focus by saying, 'So what's the next hurdle? What's the next goal?'" She added, "You are always looking around the bend to know what is next." Myra explained that this tenet means "knowing exactly what it is that you

want to achieve, down to such levels of specificity [and]...knowing where you want to go with this level of specificity. And then the focus is sort of the benchmark steps that you're going to take that are going to lead you to that place." She shared that she helps her principals learn "through metaphor" and that she always looks for "the analogy that's going to illustrate it so that people can own it." Rachel spoke of having a "strategic direction [and]...focus on the target," asking, "Where are we going next? What's our long-range plan?" She referred to obstacles in achieving the long range plan as "just blips on the radar screen."

Holding subordinates accountable was the second theme that was generated by participants' responses to tenet number seven. Alice suggested that effective leaders are "flexible enough to allow multiple pathways," that "not all trees grow at the same time, but the goal is to have a forest." Isabel said, "I cannot forget a directive that I've given or a...suggestion, because ...if they don't take that suggestion, I have to make sure I follow up to find out why." She said that sometimes she is directive in her approach, and sometimes, even though "it takes longer," she leads subordinates "along through questioning." Kristine shared that her principals must get "adequate direction [and] time to plan for implementation." Myra requires her principals to "set end-of-the-year goals" in September. Like Isabel, she uses questioning techniques to lead them through the goal-setting and self-evaluation process. Isabel asks principals to use the same process in holding their teachers accountable. Rachel echoed this notion in her statement, "Well,...it's holding people accountable so that the people that

report to them are also held accountable.” She added that she expects her subordinates to “keep...focused...and get rid of any excuses.” She requires her direct reports to write into their own evaluations “what role they play” in achieving the organization’s long-range goals.

Tenet #8: Effective Leaders Value and Respect Individuality

One common response among the participants with regard to tenet number eight was that people’s differences add richness to the organization. Another was that effective leaders treat everyone with whom they work respectfully, regardless of their differences and/or ability levels.

All five participants suggested that people’s differences were more positive than negative. Using another analogy, Alice likened the different people in the workplace to a symphony orchestra. She said, “You have all these different musical instruments but you have to—the goal of the conductor is to bring all those instruments together to make this beautiful sound, this beautiful music.” She went on to say that if she were to make a list of her own successes, most things would be attributed to her being able to “mobilize...a diverse group of people to...work for the common goal.” Isabel suggested that even an employee labeled as the “rabble-rouser” adds to the organization because the dialogue s/he inspires is “really healthy.” Kristine sat with staff members and did “individual talent profiles” by asking questions about their talents and motivators. Myra shared an oral story she had recently heard, which suggested that, “everybody’s got their own little tinkling, a little bell that tinkles, and...if you stay quiet and

listen, you'll get attuned to that tinkling, and when you're attuned to that tinkling, you can get your little bell to tinkle in accord." Rachel shared that "all work has dignity and everybody brings their value to the organization, a value added."

All five participants gave examples of how they show respect to people with whom they work, even if it is difficult at times. Alice stated that "the success of the organization is dependent upon my ability to bring people together to use those skills in a way that benefits the whole." Isabel stated that it is acceptable for an employee to think that the leader does not see her/him as effective, "[b]ut never should a staff person feel that we don't like them as a person and as an individual." She also said, "You...accept the people that work for you. You may not like...their personality, [but] you have to reach within yourself and take the high road and really study them." Kristine, during the individual talent profiles meetings, also asked subordinates to identify the best way to receive praise, so that she could respect their preference to receive it publicly or privately. Myra said, "We all have our own idiosyncrasies and it's being mindful of that." About respecting individuality, she added, "I think you have to walk [the walk] when you interface with [your subordinates]. [A]ction speaks louder than words." Rachel shared that she makes a point to speak to all people by saying good morning, hello, and thank you. She also acknowledges their service to the organization. She said, "They know if you walk the talk or not." She even implemented a critical list of "strategic opportunities," respectful customer service being number one on the list.

Tenet #9: *Effective Leaders Possess Credibility*

The last tenet generated two major themes. First, according to all the participants, credibility is an unambiguous concept. Second, four participants made explicit reference to how professional behavior is linked to credibility.

All of the participants suggested there are no grey areas—credibility is all or nothing. Alice said, “There’s no guessing about, ‘what does she really mean?’” She added, “[Do] what you say you’re going to do.” Isabel stated that, “if you lose [credibility], and you can lose it in an instant, if you lose that, you don’t regain it.” Likewise, she shared that if someone breaches confidentiality with her, “the trust is over. You can’t rebuild that with me.” Further, she advised, “Never burn bridges. I don’t care how much I may dislike a particular person, I’d rather stay as far away from them as possible, but I will never burn a bridge.” She even offered, “So this [tenet] is probably the most critical.” Kristine stated, “People must know they can count on you, that you’re serious that you will follow through, whether it’s in the promise or a small detail.” Myra said that, “just one or two missteps could create a lack of trust that could be irreparable.” Like Isabel, she also offered, “[I]ntegrity is the number-one thing.” Rachel quoted one of her mentors as saying, “All you have in your position is your integrity.” She added that, “[credibility] follows you.” She said, “You can’t be asked to be loved by every body,...but if you can face people and look them straight in the eye,...that’s all people can ask of you.”

Professional behavior is critical to a leader’s credibility. Alice shared that while she endured “eighteen months when [the school] board was just really rude and

nasty and mean-spirited,” people still counted on her to “behave in a certain way.” Isabel suggested that effective leaders “carry the burden everyday” of being “professional at all times.” She shared that she refrains from gossiping, knowing that even though she’s the “last one to hear it,... eventually it’ll get to me what the truth is.” She added that she even values her credibility over her position: “I’d rather have people respect me for who I am rather than what my title says.” Kristine stated, “I think that professionals will look for credibility.” Myra suggested that even in a professional setting, “personal stories are important, because it’s a window into who you are.” She linked the vulnerability resulting from sharing personal stories with a greater level of trust in the professional setting. Rachel shared that she had a situation in her professional career in which she was “asked to do something that [she] could not ethically do.” She ended up leaving that position to maintain her credibility.

Three major themes emerged across tenets and follow-up questions. They are discussed in Chapter 6. Table 2 summarizes the themes and patterns that emerged from the case study interviews.

Follow-up Questions

In this section, the participants’ responses to the follow-up questions are presented in narrative form and summarized in table form. Responses to opposing questions’ (i.e.: best/worst decision) are presented in the same table for purposes of comparison.

Table 2 **Summary of Themes and Patterns Across Tenets**

TENET # <i>Effective leaders:</i>	Themes & Patterns
1. <i>are passionate about their organizations.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed and it shows • Passion helps triumph over negativity • Link between passion and high expectations
2. <i>are reflective.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of analysis and discussion to correct mistakes • Self-discipline required • Utilize research-based outside expertise
3. <i>are competent.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplished by being life-long learner • Broad set of job skills • High personal expectations
4. <i>are great communicators.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your audience • Clear about vision and core ideology • Essential for building trust
5. <i>understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must understand current culture • Must understand how to create positive change • Minority ethnic status affects leadership behavior
6. <i>understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exude positive attitude and optimism • Multitasking is inevitable • Must facilitate others' work • Must utilize key coping strategies
7. <i>are focused yet forward thinking.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must know where going and how to get there • Hold subordinates accountable for their part
8. <i>value and respect individuality.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences add richness • Treat everyone with respect, regardless of differences
9. <i>possess credibility.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All or nothing • Professional behavior critical at all times

Participants were asked to rate three tenets as most important to their careers, summarized in Table 3. Tenet number one, *passionate*, was rated number one by two participants, and was named in the top three by four of the five participants. Tenets three, *competence*, seven, *focused yet forward-thinking*, and nine, *credibility*, were named in the top three by three of the five participants. Tenets two, *reflective*, and six, *physical and emotional stamina*, did not make any of the participants' top three lists.

Table 3 Top Three Tenet Rankings

PARTICIPANT	Alice	Isabel	Kristine	Myra	Rachel	Times in TOP 3
TENET # Effective leaders:						
1. are passionate about their organizations.	3 RD		1 ST	1 ST	2 ND	4
2. are reflective.						0
3. are competent.	2 ND	1 ST		3 RD		3
4. are great communicators.		3 RD				1
5. understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.			3 RD		3 RD	2
6. understand the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to persevere in the long run.						0
7. are focused yet forward thinking.	1 ST		2 ND	2 ND		3
8. value and respect individuality.			3 RD			1
9. possess credibility.	3 RD	2 ND			1 ST	3

Participants were asked about their best decisions, summarized in Table 4. Alice said, "I think to go into education." Isabel said, "To implement an initiative promoting the high expectations that all students would not only graduate, but also seek higher education." She stated further, "Hopefully this will be my legacy. Nothing I do matters unless it takes effect in the classroom." Kristine phrased her answer in the form of a question: "How [is] this action...this decision going to positively impact what must happen for our students?" Both Myra and Rachel cited taking professional risks as their best decisions. Myra said, "[T]o leave

[current city] and go to [new city] because it was the biggest risk I ever took in my career, and it was a huge risk.” Similarly, Rachel stated, “[M]oving from my district in [current city] to [new city]. It was a great personal and professional decision to move out of my comfort zone.”

With regard to worst decisions, Alice eluded to a lack of balance between career and family: “I was so focused on the work that everything else became secondary.” Kristine countered her best decision response by simply stating her worst were “[a]ny that didn’t include analysis and consideration.” The other three all referred to hiring decisions. Isabel stated, “A hiring decision that didn’t work out. It became public and was disheartening, but you still try hard to protect the person’s dignity.” Myra shared, “Every time I made a mistake hiring, it was because I hired when I got afraid. So when I’ve made decisions out of fear,

Table 4 Best and Worst Leadership Decisions

PARTICIPANT	Best Decision	Worst Decision
Alice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To go into education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imbalance of career and family
Isabel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote high expectations that all students will seek post-secondary education/training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring a person that did not work out
Kristine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considers positive impact on students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not analyze or consider impact on students
Myra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional risk—moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring out of fear
Rachel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional risk—moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring/personnel issues

they've always been mistakes." Rachel said, "[N]ot moving fast enough on some hiring and personnel issues, trusting that they would improve over time, and taking too long to deal with it."

Participants were asked to describe the typical leadership style of senior leaders in educational leadership and also to describe their own leadership style as it compares to others'. In describing typical leadership, three superintendents discussed collaboration. Alice opined, "I think most of us are collaborative. We like to work with people." Isabel made reference to both collaboration and gender differences. She stated, "I think it has to do with men growing up and sports and competing with one another. Certainly women are in sports and they're competitive, but women are also collaborators. They like having someone to share things with." Kristine said, "[L]eaders who are inclusive, who understand that collaboration is more than just asking for input, who understand that if you really believe in affecting kids and student achievement, then one of your roles is to also set up adults for success." Myra shared her experience as, "I think unfortunately that it's very top-down. I think it's very, very top-down. I haven't been anywhere where it hasn't been that." Rachel referred to gender differences: "I think for males, there's still an old-boy network. And for women, we can tend to be that way. I think still women do not support other women."

In describing their own leadership style the superintendents again discussed collaboration. Alice shared, "I think I'm a situational leader. I'm visionary, I'm collaborative, I can communicate well,... I am very focused." Isabel described this scenario:

I'm always the one coming into a meeting and [telling others what I've done]. I didn't realize that until one day one of the gentlemen said to me, "You're always sharing things." [M]en are a little bit laid back. I don't know whether it's the way my brain operates or whether it's being a woman, but I think the attention to detail and knowing what's important [without micromanaging] is critical.

Myra also cited her collaborative approach. She said, "I hope I coach more than I preach. I believe that I am a teacher foremost. I'm told that—they say I am tough, but everybody grows with me." Rachel's response was related: "I'm more open and more approachable and more accessible from those that I've seen or heard of. [A recent] evaluation says...she's so real, she's so down-to-earth. So I think my style is more easygoing."

Table 5 **Perceptions of Leadership Styles**

PARTICIPANT	Leadership style of other senior leaders in educational leadership	Participant's description of own leadership style compared to others'
Alice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most are collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational • Collaborative • Communicative • Visionary
Isabel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men are more competitive • Women are collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women tend to be more collaborative • Professionally generous • Attention to detail
Kristine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders who are collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Benefited from quality mentors
Myra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down is the most prevalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach rather than preach • Teacher first • Tough, but people grow
Rachel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men maintain old boy network • Women do not always support each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible • Approachable • Down-to-earth • Easy-going

Kristine proclaimed, "It's just incomparable. I've enjoyed the good fortune through several organizations and leadership roles to interact with some of the greatest leaders."

The follow-up question regarding power and how it is displayed in educational leadership evoked a wide range of responses from the participants, summarized in Table 6. Alice stated simply, "It's about who has it and who wants it. And if you're in a leadership role, it's how you use it." Myra offered an equally uncomplicated response, "Withholding of communication. Who holds information is where power resides. [P]ower has never played into my determination of...credibility." Kristine distinguished between different approaches to power. She said, "I think that the power is something that comes from both a knowledge of what needs to happen and how to bring it about. Knowledge is not about a power *over*; I believe it's about a power *with*." Rachel reflected, "I think power is about position. [I]t's part of this culture that power comes by title, position, and background. And people will use it when it suits them."

Isabel's physical response was as telling as her verbal response. She uncharacteristically shook her head and said sternly,

I have to talk around power because I have a hard time with that word. I'd rather have people respect me for who I am rather than what my title says. I have a real problem with power. I believe you can be powerful without exhibiting power. I think just when you have staff members that want to get into a power struggle with you, you have to back down, and in just about all cases I have, because it's not important to me that I come across in an authoritarian manner.

Table 6 Leadership and Power

PARTICIPANT	How is power displayed in educational leadership?
Alice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is about who has it and who wants it• And, how those in leadership roles use it
Isabel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can be powerful without exhibiting power
Kristine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of what needs to happen & how• Not power <i>over</i>, rather power <i>with</i>
Myra	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information is power• Who holds information: withholds communication
Rachel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is part of our culture that power comes with position• Positional power used when it is of benefit to the individual

The women superintendents were asked to talk about both opportunities available to and challenges facing women in educational leadership. Their responses are summarized in Table 7. Regarding opportunities, Alice stated strongly, "I think there are tremendous opportunities. I think people have to go for it...and create a plan for getting there. [A]nything that you want is possible. You have to work for it and you have to realize that...it is different for women than it is for men." Isabel's response was cautiously optimistic: "Oh, endless! Women are very conscientious, ethical, patient, and loyal. But, women must be careful not to control everything; they must guide, lead, and support. Women must not talk too much; they must listen more. Women don't know everything. There is room for others." Kristine said decidedly, "What they choose to make of it. I believe that there has to be coaching and mentoring for aspiring superintendents. There have to be unique opportunities to support and select women leaders. One of those is

the AASA Women's Conference." Myra's response echoed Kristine's. "I think that there are generally not a lot of limitations on us. I suppose I have experienced discrimination because I'm a woman, but it's been very rare and subtle. I don't feel that I've been terribly hampered in any way, shape, or form by my gender." Rachel was not as optimistic as the others. Her response was, "Very limiting right now. We have to give women in principal roles and coordinator roles and central office roles experiences in lots of different areas, not just that they've come up to curriculum, give them experiences in budget, in HR, in facilities."

With regard to challenges facing women in educational leadership, three superintendents explicitly referred to the existence of the glass ceiling. Alice stated, "It's still a man's world. Ninety-four percent of the...superintendents in the country are men, and only six percent of them are white [women] and only two percent [of them] are women of color, so it's...still a glass ceiling and it's still a man's world." Similarly, Kristine said,

"I think one distinct challenge is not admitting that there continues to be issues of access. I am personally still disappointed that the number of female superintendents is so outweighed by the number of male superintendents, and that in the last successive one hundred years there has been minimal change. [I]n both the superintendency and in our school district roles of leadership, the diversity of our students is not yet reflected."

Rachel used statistics in her response:

"I'm going to speak of women of color. [I]n terms of Latinas, we're only about 1 percent in the country. Maybe 2 percent, 3 percent if you think of African Americans and other women of color. So, it's still a glass ceiling. There are still stereotypes...that women can't lead complex organizations, that they're not tough, they can't make tough decisions. I think men leaders don't [reflect] as often because the fallout isn't as great, where for women the fallout is, either more critical or second-guessed or just viewed in a different way."

Table 7 Opportunities and Challenges for Women Educational Leaders

PARTICIPANT	Opportunities for women in educational leadership	Challenges for women in educational leadership
Alice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tremendous opportunities • Women must go for it • But it is different for men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass ceiling • Still a man's world
Isabel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endless opportunities • Women must be good listeners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family obligations, specifically chores and caring for aging parents
Kristine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique opportunities available to support women • What women choose to make of them • Mentoring and coaching critical for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass ceiling – limited access • Minimal change over time • Lack of diversity – women of color
Myra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few limitations • Gender has not hampered me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any discrimination rare and subtle • Family obligations – specifically motherhood
Rachel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limiting now • Women have more opportunities on academic side of organization (i.e.: staff development, curriculum and instruction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass ceiling • Access for women of color • Female stereotypes • Women need opportunities to experience non-academic side of organization (i.e.: budget, HR, and facilities)

The other two superintendents responded to this question by discussing the challenges that family obligations pose for women in educational leadership.

Isabel reflected,

"I can see where some things are different for me versus some of the men that I work with. For example, when I go home at night, I don't have dinner waiting for me at the table. I have to iron my own clothes and take care of the chores within the home. And my colleagues don't have to deal with any of that. Or if they have an ill parent, it's their wife taking care of them. For me, it's me taking care of an ill father and an ill mother."

Myra, the only one of the five women superintendents without children stated,

"I still think there [are] huge challenges with women due to motherhood. I think it's very difficult to be a great leader and a great mother at the same time. I don't think that they are mutually exclusive, but...I think the pull to be a great mother for most good educators is so strong that the time that's required...is a hugely problematic situation."

Summary

While the preceding chapter told the stories of the five women superintendents and how each responded to the nine tenets of effective leadership, this chapter presented findings of specific themes and patterns that emerged across the tenets and to the follow-up questions across participants. An in-depth discussion of general themes and patterns that emerged across the tenets and follow-up questions aligned with an additional lens for analysis is offered in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Our country needs women's idealism and determination, perhaps more in politics than anywhere else."

- Shirley Chisholm, first African American woman to run for president of the United States and to serve in the U.S. Congress

Introduction

Ella Flagg Young, the first woman superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, predicted in the early twentieth century that women were destined to rule the schools. This study of five diverse women superintendents' leadership styles, experiences, and behavior was undertaken in the early twenty-first century. Almost one hundred years later, Ms. Flagg Young's vision has yet to be realized. In fact the findings from this research indicate that, despite these women superintendents' incorporation of nine tenets of effective leadership and the high levels of leadership they have attained, they are still outnumbered approximately nine to one by male superintendents, and they still see significant challenges for women aspiring to become superintendents. The researcher maintains that a critical feminist framework, which asserts that oppression of women, crossing race and class boundaries is a constant of human experience (Cole, 1986; Maguire, 1996), is the gestalt lens through which their stories must be viewed. However, a second general lens is necessary—the plethora of leadership

theories which generated the tenets of effective leadership. Used in concert they provide focus.

Chapter 2 was organized in just this way. First the researcher reviewed a wide variety of leadership theory, done by, for, and about male leaders in a variety of fields. The second tier of leadership theory reviewed in that chapter compared male and female leaders. Even at that level, the acknowledgement that experiences, styles, and behaviors might be different based on gender suggests basic feminist ideology. The third set of literature reviewed in that chapter narrowed the focus even more by looking at qualitative studies about white women leaders. The final section of Chapter 2 reviewed a limited body of research focused on women leaders who were marginalized in other ways as well, such as race, class, or sexual orientation. This study is important because it adds to the limited body of research by, for, and about diverse female educational leaders.

Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership styles, experiences, and behaviors of five diverse women superintendents. Feminist researchers often refer to the systematic and effective silencing of women's voices (Rich, 1979; Blenesky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Olsen, 1978; Collins, 1991). Feminist researcher Blount (1998) asserted that the gender inequity among executive level educational leaders sends a powerful message about women's value, potential, and place in society. By sharing the richness of true life

stories that illustrate their leadership styles, experiences, and behavior, these five women superintendents' voices were heard loud and clear. Glesne (1999) described the individual interview as a means for getting "words to fly." The data presented in Chapters 4 and 5 clearly support the nine tenets as essential components of effective leadership. However, their experiences are not like formulas or recipes that can be put together in specific sequences or configurations. Rather, three major themes, what Creswell (2003) referred to as larger theoretical perspectives, emerged as data from all tenets and follow-up questions were analyzed (see Figure 2). The findings from this study revealed that these women have experienced oppressive attitudes and pressures—the glass ceiling, the good old boy's network, disproportionate domestic responsibilities, and a shortage of mentors—but that these obstacles were not insurmountable. In fact, the second major finding was that these five women superintendents created many opportunities for others to develop leadership skills. Third, they maintained incredible stamina, focus, and professionalism while realizing power in collaboration. This chapter offers an in-depth discussion of these wide-ranging leadership experiences, styles, and behaviors among the participants. At its conclusion, the author offers recommendations for further study.

Overcoming Obstacles

All five women superintendents responded to the follow-up question about challenges facing women aspiring to become superintendents with passionate

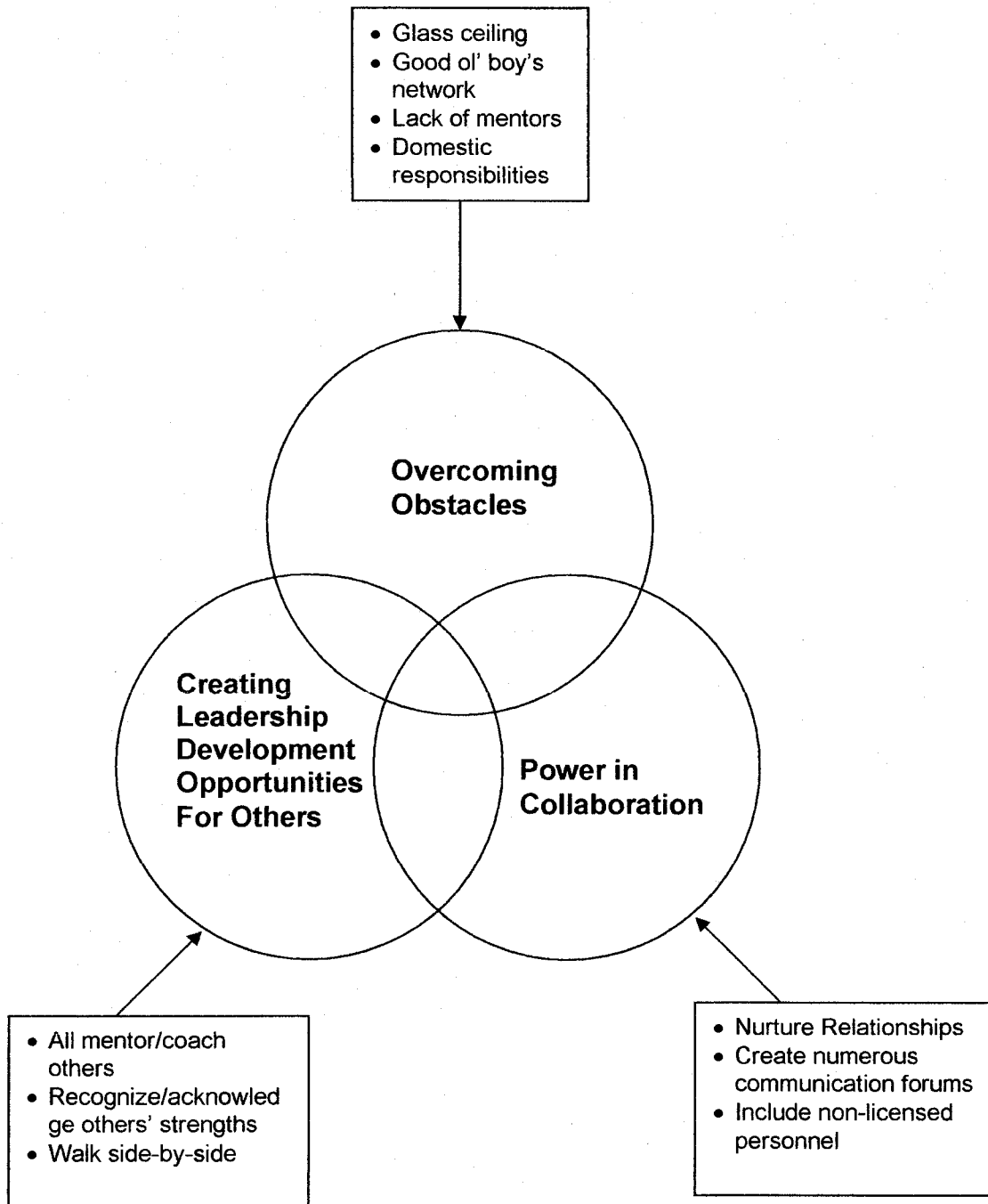


Figure 3. General Themes and Patterns

statements referring to the glass ceiling and good old boy's network. They cited off-the-cuff (yet relatively accurate) statistical data about the gender inequity among male and female superintendents. The implication is that each fully acknowledges the existence and prevalence of these obstacles for women. However, none of them rendered the obstacles as central to their own career path. Instead these women showed incredible perseverance, courage, and pioneering spirit as they ascended to the position of superintendent. They found ways around and/or over the obstacles.

Repeatedly, participants shared that they instilled tenets in others by modeling and/or leading by example. Three participants shared that they were fortunate to have had great mentors, and all five implicitly or explicitly stated that they made conscious efforts to mentor others. The participants offered a plethora of real-life examples of their own leadership behavior that supported their responses. The anecdotal stories underscored these women superintendents' commitment to provide mentoring and role modeling for other women, which research has found to be so lacking (Olsen, 2005; Reed-Taylor, 1998; Edwards, 1997; Spence, 2002; Fox & Schuhmann, 2000; Gamble, 2001). They understood from their own developing experiences the importance of women leaders mentoring women and made a professional commitment to do just that.

Participants were asked to rate their top three most important tenets. Data revealed that these women superintendents viewed *passion*, *competency*, *focused yet forward-thinking*, and *credibility* as the most important among the nine. The absence of any top-three ratings for tenet number six, *physical and*

emotional stamina, resilience, and perseverance, illustrated that this characteristic of effective leadership, from their perspective, was a given, a basic starting point. In fact, the omission suggests that to these women, without physical and emotional stamina, resilience, and perseverance, the attainment of a superintendency would be an impossibility. All five were unanimous in describing the magnitude of the job expectations and how the work day routinely extended beyond regular hours. They came in early and stayed late; they worked on weekends and holidays. They also made references to the many family obligations they maintained. Two women superintendents cited family obligations as the biggest challenge for women educational leaders. They made reference to the double standard for men and women in the workforce with regard to domestic responsibilities. Myra noted the challenges of balancing motherhood and a position of educational leadership, while Isabel noted the challenges of balancing domestic chores and caring for aging parents with career obligations. Healy (2002) found that, despite women reporting being happier when they have both career and family, there were still career penalties for having children. This is consistent with the sexist assumption that women, regardless of level of leadership position attained, are expected to manage both career and home with relative ease (Hewlett, 2002; Delany, 1999; Edwards, 1997; Gostnell, 1996; Peery, 1998). Myra and Rachel both shared stories about leaving one position for another in a different state. Rachel shared that for the several years after she took the new position, she and her husband lived in different states and

commuted. Myra shared that she probably never would have taken the professional risk without the support of her partner.

Creating Leadership Development Opportunities for Others

The second general theme that emerged across tenets is that all the participants created opportunities for others to develop leadership skills. This was manifested in different ways, but the goal was the same. Alice stated, "I'm giving people opportunities to lead,...to use their expertise." To that end, she welcomed interns, and offered custodians and aides professional development days. Isabel stated, "You want your people to make the right decisions and you want to help guide them to do that." To accomplish this, she repeatedly shared that she listens more than she speaks, and then asks questions that guide people in the direction of finding solutions for themselves. She said effective leaders also "mentor people along the way." Kristine said, "I had the opportunity to work with some great mentors. Given any opportunity I've always tried not just to mentor women, but also to be sure that their excellent performance and potential is recognized." This came in the form of intensive school board training, a speaker's bureau, and moving highly qualified principals into central office administrative positions so that they could have a greater impact on student achievement. Myra shared that approximately one dozen of her former teachers are now principals, and that "there's something about how I led the school that elevated people to...see themselves as teacher leaders, which then allowed them to see themselves as possibly leaders of other teachers in school settings." Rachel "learned the hard

way” that modeling is not enough. She said, “I’ve had to learn over time that I have to name it, say, ‘I’m doing this. Observe.’”

Alice not only expects herself to be “highly competent,” she also expects her principals to be highly competent. To this end she provides “opportunities for them to have professional development, opportunities for them to grow, to develop their skills.” Similarly, Kristine sets “others up for success...[by] recognizing their talents and expertise and the individual nature of that, and then you’re putting them in positions to do the best things for kids.” Akin to these two is Myra, who stated, “So for me it is about walking side-by-side and coaching through professional development.” She tailors her questions and processes to meet the individual developmental needs of the principal. Isabel allows subordinates to make important decisions that she, herself, does not necessarily agree with, and then coaches them as they work through the consequences. She stated, “[Y]ou don’t help train people and mentor people if you always make the decision. It’s longer. It makes your job tougher.” She said that this approach helps “others to gain skills in the area, so that they rely on you but they rely on you more as a mentor, as a coach, as someone they can brainstorm with, rather than someone who’s just making all the decisions.” Similarly, Rachel shared a story about a direct report who “wants to be seen as the expert” with regard to a certain school board agenda item. As his mentor, she coached him on how to effectively “frame the conversation” rather than exactly what to say and how to say it.

Power in Collaboration

The women superintendents defined power in collaborative and thoughtful ways, which is consistent with previous findings on women and power (Brunner, 2000; Management Research Group, 1998; Coleman, 1997; Ashcraft, 2001). For example, both relationships and achievements were valued. These women superintendents placed high value on building and maintaining relationships. The participants showed that working as hard or harder than subordinates was a key to earning respect, which in turn fostered relationships. They modeled reflective practice through collaboration with others. These women superintendents valued relationships with the community as well. They nurtured relationships by creating forums in which all stakeholders could be heard. Achievements were also valued. The women superintendents shared stories about creating leadership development opportunities for others, celebrating others' accomplishments, and holding folks accountable. These women superintendents spoke with pride about programs and policies that would be their legacy. Edwards (1997) examined the experiences of three African American women in higher education, and found that women all desired to leave a legacy for the future.

Alice stated, "I rarely will make top-down decisions. I will sit in there and include them...[and] they will always have an opportunity to share in the shaping of that decision or even the final decision." She shared, "I did round tables for parents, for teacher, for principals. I did community meetings." Likewise, Isabel created an advisory group of principals. She told them, "[T]here are some decisions that I will make and there are many decisions you will make. [O]nce a

decision is made in this room, we all move forward as one voice.” Similarly, Kristine organized roundtables for the community to meet with both her and the state superintendent of instruction. She provided training for and included student council members at board meetings. In order to renegotiate the teacher contract, she “organized a team [to]...examine every section. We...looked at cost to achieve continued harmony. For about seven months we would engage members at a board workshop...to study the contract.” Myra also shared information about a collaborative project. “[A]s a community of learners we’ve developed... documents...to know exactly what teacher practice will look like when it’s spectacular, across all domains, to levels of questions would sound like this, children’s responses would look like this,” she said. Rachel stated that she spends “time with staff in asking them have they thought of all the dots.” She added, “I feel very comfortable asking the custodian, what do you think of this event? Asking the secretary, how did you feel? And asking my assistant sup[erintendent]s. They all view it from different eyes.”

Participants described the typical leadership style of senior leaders in educational leadership and then compared their leadership style to their perception of “typical”. Two of the five participants’ responses indicated that they perceived similarity between typical leadership style of senior educational leaders and their own style, while three indicated they perceived major differences. Alice, Isabel, and Kristine all perceive the typical leadership style of senior educational leaders as collaborative, while Myra and Rachel perceived it to be top-down and lacking in woman-to-woman support. All five participants perceived their own

leadership style to be collaborative. This split is supported by Gamble (2001), who found little correlation between gender and perception of leadership style.

The women described their perceptions of how power is displayed in educational leadership. Participants' responses revealed that all five participants described power in terms of *how* it is used and/or misused by individuals.

Coleman (1997) found that women were found to have more egalitarian theories about power, and were found to share power more than men. Matz (2001) also found that women's leadership is characterized by sharing power. Interestingly, none of the participants responded to this question in terms of collective power. Feminist researcher Ferguson (1998) suggests that only by gaining public power can women have the collective power to demand that the feminine values of caring and contextual moral decision-making be incorporated into the rules of the game.

All five participants expressed this sentiment sometime during the interviews. "There's nothing I would ask my staff to do that I wouldn't do," reported Alice. Isabel stated, "My staff knows that I run just as hard as they do, if not harder." Kristine said, "We had a favorite saying, 'If you're near the broom, pick up the broom!'" Rachel said, "It's that old adage, I'll only ask you to do what I'm going to do myself. [I]f I'm going to ask people to suck it up, roll up their sleeves, I'm willing to do it too."

Conclusions

Even as they told their stories, these women superintendents were exhibiting the tenets of effective leadership, which in itself is an example of credibility: congruence between their words and their actions. Other evidence was found as the researcher reviewed the audio tapes (which can be merely described—not heard—in this paper): the passion in the women's voices came through as they reflected on their practice and experiences. Further, they were excellent communicators: four out of five had little or no revision to their initial responses in the transcribed interviews upon review, indicating that they were articulate and clear the first time. Physical and emotional stamina was evident in several cases as they stayed longer than requested to ensure the interview got completed, even though they all had extremely busy schedules and multiple demands on their time.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study was but a beginning in exploring how diverse women executive leaders define and practice the nine tenets of effective leadership taken from the extant literature. Future research that analyzes leadership among women superintendents should be expanded to include case study comparisons of women superintendents with candidates who have applied for superintendency positions but not attained them. For example, how do these aspiring women superintendents experience the nine tenets of leadership? Are there factors in their history that are significantly different from those women who have attained

the position of superintendent? The inclusion of women who have been unsuccessful in their aspirations to become superintendents may provide insight into personal/professional barriers, leadership style, track record, career path trajectories, and/or experiences with discrimination. More in-depth research should be done with women superintendents relative to the concept of power. This may expand understanding of how women leaders understand, use/misuse, share, wield, manage, and create collective power. Cross-case analyses of case studies of both diverse men and women may provide further insight into how individual leaders define and operationalize the nine tenets. A final recommendation for future study is in the area of culture and change. More research is needed about how diverse women superintendents understand and effect change in an organization's culture. In our evolving schools, this may provide valuable insight for educational leaders aspiring to the superintendency.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is directly related to the problems discussed in chapter 1. First, this study contributes to the relatively small body of research done by, for, and about diverse women educational leaders. Second, it reinforces the critical need for mentors and role models for women aspiring to leadership roles. Third, findings suggest the critical need for women aspiring to top-level educational leadership positions to have experiences and gain knowledge on the non-academic "side of the house" (i.e.: budget, human resources, transportation, facilities). Finally, this study assists school districts in developing better

understanding of how diverse women superintendents experience and define nine tenets of leadership, therefore providing valuable insight for how to better prepare female youth for future leadership roles.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Question #1: How do women superintendents experience the tenet?

Interview Question #2: How do women superintendents reflect the tenet in their leadership behavior and style?

Interview Question #3: How do women superintendents instill the tenet in others?

Follow-up Question #1: Rate your top three tenets.

Follow-up Question #2: What is the best decision you ever made?

Follow-up Question #3: What is the worst decision you ever made?

Follow-up Question #4: Describe the typical leadership style of senior leaders in educational leadership.

Follow-up Question #5: Describe your leadership style and how it compares to others'.

Follow-up Question #6: How is power displayed in educational leadership?

Follow-up Question #7: What opportunities do you see for women in educational leadership?

Follow-up Question #8: What challenges do you see for women in educational leadership?

APPENDIX II

PROJECT PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Date

Participant Name
Address

Dear Participant,

General Information:

I am Salwa Zaki, a doctoral student in UNLV's Educational Leadership Department. I am a researcher on a project designed to explore whether women subscribe to the leadership principles deemed necessary for effective leadership by males, particularly white males. Participants in the study are women who hold chief executive positions in organizations in a variety of industries. Due to the success you have achieved as a leader in your field, you are invited to participate in this study.

Procedure:

If you agree to participate in this *Women in Leadership Development* study, you will be asked to answer questions about nine essential components of effective leadership as well as provide your own insight into what aspects have been essential to your success. You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview. Your total time commitment to this study would be a maximum of 3 hours.

Benefits of Participation:

By participating in this study you will be helping to identify the essential leadership principles for successful women. Uncovering the principles that are significant for women executives will provide a basis for professional development of women who aspire to chief executive positions and may, in addition, provide further insight into the explanations for the under representation of women in executive leadership positions. Furthermore, you will be able to see what other key female executives consider important for their success.

Risks of Participation:

While none of the interview questions are invasive, you may not want to answer some questions. I am available to provide additional detail about the reasoning behind the questions as well as clarify any of your concerns.

Voluntary Participation:

However, you should remember that your participation in this research project is completely voluntary and you may terminate your involvement at any time.

Confidentiality:

All information gathered in this study will be kept confidential. However, if and only if all participants agree, we may on occasion identify participants. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 3 years upon completion of the study. After that time, all documents related to this study will be shredded.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about the study or if you believe you have experienced harmful effects as a result of participation in this study, please contact me at XXX-XXXX. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, feel free to contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at (702) 895-2794.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

Participant Name (Please print)

APPENDIX III

WILD PROJECT RATIONALE

This is a study about leadership and more specifically about women who hold (or have held) chief executive positions within their organizations. Unlike some studies, we are not trying to compare women in the study to each other, nor are we attempting to determine whether women who participate in the study are effective leaders. In fact, we have chosen women for this study who we judge to be effective at what they do.

We used two very crude estimates of effectiveness, reputation among peers and longevity in position, to make this determination. In some instances, participants or colleagues unattached to the project suggested individuals they believe to be effective leaders. In others, we looked at length of time in the position. We believe that, especially for women, longevity in the position suggests effectiveness. We also added two criteria designed to restrict our pool of potential participants to positional leaders within organizations: each participant must either currently (or have in the past) supervised more than 20 individuals with at least five direct reports, and each must have control over budget issues for the organizations as a whole.

We've taken what the literature says about effective leadership as the starting point for this study. Two threads run through the articles, books, and research. One, in sum, this body of knowledge is disjointed with one author or researcher investigating and writing about a particular aspect of effective leadership and another about something completely different but equally important and crucial to leadership. And two, much of this literature is written by men about men, particularly white men. To address these issues, we first sought to gain a more holistic perspective on effective leadership and then attempted to design a study that would get at any differences in the way women, as opposed to men, interpret effective leadership.

As a starting point, we synthesized the disparate ideas about effective leadership into a set of tenets or principles that we believe capture the essence of existing writings. Even though we could collapse the literature into this series of tenets, we suspected that women might define some of them using terminology not currently reflected in the tenets, that some of these tenets would carry more overall relevance, and that others would vary in importance over time. This underlying current defined our primary research question: do women differ from their male counterparts in how they interpret what each tenet means? This

question, in turn led to related questions. What relevance do women attach to each tenet, how important are these tenets as they pertain to their personal approaches to leadership, and does the level of relevance and importance change over time?

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