Nationally recognized superintendents: Perceptions on how they lead in relation to the characteristics of effective schools research

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NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SUPERINTENDENTS: PERCEPTIONS
ON HOW THEY LEAD IN RELATION TO THE
CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE
SCHOOLS RESEARCH

by

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Bachelor of Science
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1988

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1995

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Education Degree
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

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ABSTRACT

Nationally Recognized Superintendents: Perceptions On How They Lead In Relation To The Characteristics Of Effective Schools Research

by

Warren P. McKay

Dr. Patti L. Chance, Examination Committee Chair
Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The purpose of this study was to increase the knowledge about the qualities, attitudes, and behaviors of public school superintendents in relation to the effective schools research. It also sought to further investigate the relationship between the role of the superintendent and the creation of effective schools and effective school districts. Finally, this research described how a recognized population of public school superintendents perceived themselves to incorporate effective school methods in their leadership strategies. This ultimately provided the opportunity to validate the findings of the effective schools research through the investigation of the superintendents office.

This study employed what Creswell (1994) called a two phase/dominant less dominant design (p. 177). The two phase approach used the triangulation of results from mailed questionnaires and telephone interviews as a means of studying the perceptions of superintendent behavior related to the effective schools research. The data obtained from both methodologies were then used to identify the conclusions of the study.
Recognized AASA superintendents of the year for 1999 were mailed a 70 item questionnaire of which 42 out of 49 superintendents responded. Five telephone interviews were also conducted which were used to enrich the data obtained from the mailed questionnaire. These data collection techniques focused on superintendent perceptions of their own leadership behavior in relation to the effective schools research.

The analysis of the obtained data revealed that the responding sample of recognized superintendents perceived themselves to make efforts in the effective school areas of: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly environment; (d) clear and focused mission; and (e) climate of high expectations. Superintendents were not found to be a driving force in the areas of (a) providing opportunities to learn and time on task and (b) encouraging positive home and school relations.

Questionnaire results in the areas of instructional leadership, positive home and school relations, climate of high expectations, and a clear and focused mission indicated that superintendents tended to answer general questionnaire items more strongly than action specific items. Arguably this finding could indicate that recognized superintendents perceive themselves to behave in one way while their actions may not support those perceptions as strongly.

Notable differences were found between the superintendent perceptions from larger and smaller school districts in the effective schools areas of: (a) instructional leadership; (b) providing a clear and focused mission; and, (c) maintaining a climate of high expectations. Responses to the mailed questionnaire found superintendents of larger districts tended to be more focused on bureaucratic behaviors and less on instructional leadership strategies, while superintendents from smaller districts relied less on bureaucratic efforts and more on instructional leadership types of behaviors.

This research study also generated many questions. Are superintendent perceptions consistent with their behavior? Can superintendents be expected to provide leadership in
the areas of creating positive home and school relations as well as increasing opportunities
to learn and time on task? Are superintendents from larger districts more bureaucrat and
politician than instructional leader? Are superintendents from smaller districts more hands
on while possibly providing less vision? These questions provide rich areas from which
further research is recommended.
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In Memory Of

Dr. Edward Chance

Scholar, Mentor, Teacher, and Friend
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of providing an equitable and basic education to all populations of American children has never been focused on with such scrutiny as it has been in the last twenty years (Guthrie & Kirst, 1988; Murphy, 1990; Underwood 1990). The focus on students, the greater number of reform actors in present day education, and the increase in mandates from state judicial and legislative branches of government have all been cited for this increased attention (Guthrie & Kirst, 1988; Underwood 1990). It is for these reasons that the research on effective schools and effective school districts is of increased importance. At its core, the philosophy of effective schools research is "learning for all" and its goal is to teach all children a set of basic educational skills (Lezotte, 1994).

Research on the superintendent of public schools has been stated to be in its infancy compared to the educational leadership studies of the school principal (Hord, 1990). Nonetheless, a review of the research seemed to indicate a linkage between the attitudes and behaviors of the superintendent and effective schools (Hord 1990, 1994; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). Therefore, this study was primarily concerned with the superintendent and his/her use of the research from the body of literature known as effective schools. The basic question being asked was, "Are nationally recognized superintendents incorporating the postulates of effective schools research in the way they lead their districts?"

Background of the Study

Effective schools research has been concerned with many issues related to...
American education. These issues included such concepts as educational outcomes, effective leadership, positive home and school relationships, and high expectations for performance (Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte, 1994; Purkey & Smith, 1983). The research on school effectiveness is part of the long history of American educational reform (Wincek, 1995).

Public school reform has been described as having gone through three critical periods which have highly influenced American education (Tyack, Kirst, & Hansot, 1980; Warren 1990). These periods include: (a) the common schools movement of the nineteenth century; (b) the early twentieth century progressive schools movement, and; (c) the current period of reform (Tyack, Kirst, & Hansot, 1980, p. 256). Additionally, another time frame frequently mentioned in the reform literature on public schools is the period following World War II and the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik (Carlson, 1996; Chance, 1992; Wincek, 1995). Each of these four periods or movements in the history of American public education will be discussed.

The common schools movement grew from the more populated urban areas outward to the rural areas of the nation (DeYoung & Theobald, 1991). Its goals according to Warren (1990) were to provide teachers throughout the young country where there were none and to make schools and their systems more comparable (p. 64). These goals, however, were not the true driving force of the period. Political and religious fear of a young nation trying to find its identity were the main forces driving the common schools movement (DeYoung & Theobald, 1991; Warren 1990). Warren (1990) explained that from the nation's founding years, political leaders worried about the revolutionary threat of regional loyalties to the new republic. Additionally, the nation's predominantly Protestant population began to feel threatened by other religious groups such as Irish Catholics. For these reasons it was felt that a common school system would be able to weld its many sections into a union (Warren, 1990).
Toward the end of the nineteenth century, problems associated with an ever increasing industrial society were having an effect on the public school system (Button & Provenzo, 1989). This time period was known as the progressive movement, and its main focus was initially on the physical conditions of the city. At the school level, the progressive movement inspired such goals as: (a) the cleansing of politics from schools; (b) the organization and management of schools according to sound business principles such as efficiency, scientific methodology, and professionalism; (c) to provide a system which was responsive to student interests and abilities; and, (d) the use of schools to dispense a wide range of social services based on the perspective that students could not sufficiently learn if their basic physiological needs were not met first (Warren, 1990, p. 72).

After World War II and the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik, American education came under attack as lacking rigor and sound teaching methodologies (Carlson, 1996; Wincek, 1995). The "space race" produced fear across the nation that students were not receiving the quality of instruction that would make them competitive with other rival nations. Reform came in the form of changes in the content of math and science (Tanner & Tanner, 1990). Simultaneously, there was also a focus on the concept of equal educational opportunity. In 1954 the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education changed the way Americans thought about education and propelled the movement in the direction of equality in education (Cremin, 1988; Lutz & Merz, 1992; Ravitch, 1983; Wincek, 1995). The goals of this charge were not just to assure equality in such things as facilities, teachers, and curricula, but to also include an equity dimension in the form of student acquired knowledge and skills (Allen, 1992).

The current reform movement was noted for both its longevity and its effects on public education (Chance, 1992; Murphy, 1990). Unlike past reforms, the current reform movement has been unique in many regards. First, the concern for education as a whole seems to be greater than at any other period in history, focusing on the general student
population rather than any single target group (Underwood, 1989). The sustaining force of the reform period was also different. According to Underwood (1989) there was greater public attention and a larger number of reform actors than there were in the past. Guthrie and Kirst (1988) identified a third aspect unique to the current reform movement as the focus of the reform itself. They stated that for the first time in educational history, legislatures had stepped over operational boundaries usually reserved for local school boards (cited in Murphy, 1990, p. 6). Additionally, outcome accountability measures were being used increasingly to evaluate reform efforts rather than the procedural assessments normally used in the past.

In relation to the history of educational reform, the effective schools research began to make its impact in the years following World War II and Sputnik but before the current reform period. The effective schools movement gained popularity during the 1970s and 1980s. Its main focus was a push for equality of educational outcomes for all populations of students regardless of socio-economic background (Edmonds, 1979a; Bossert, 1988). This movement's emergence and the formation of its mission was defined following the presentation of a report by James Coleman (1966) entitled *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Bossert, 1988; Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984; Cuban, 1984; Edmonds, 1979a; Mace-Matluck, 1987). This study found that school characteristics account for an extremely small proportion in student achievement once the socio-economic composition of students had been controlled for statistically (Bossert, 1988, p. 342). Jencks (1972), in a similar study, reported that "differences among schools accounted for only a small proportion of the variance in students' achievements, especially when family background was controlled for" (p. 83). Jencks (1972) also stated that the social composition of the school (socio-economic status) was the most important school-level factor associated with student performance on standardized tests (p. 83). A goal of effective schools research was to show that schools could have a positive effect on student achievement regardless of the
socioeconomic background of its student population (Edmonds, 1982; Grady, Wayson, & Zirkel, 1989; Lezotte 1985a).

A study conducted by Brookover and Lezotte (1977) identified ten factors that were characteristic of improving (more effective) schools (p. 79-82). Improving schools were those that showed consistent increases in student achievement over time (Brookover & Lezotte, 1977). Brookover and Lezotte (1977) postulated that improving schools emphasized the instruction of reading and mathematics fundamentals more than declining schools. Teachers and administrators in improving schools shared the belief that all students had the capability to learn, and they showed that belief in the way children were taught. Expectations for student achievement were high and the personnel at improving schools held themselves more accountable for student achievement than did declining school staffs. These school staffs continually sought to improve on the status quo, never being completely satisfied with existing conditions. Finally, Brookover and Lezotte (1977) reported that principals in improving schools were more active in the role of instructional leader and tended to be more willing to assume responsibility for monitoring the achievement of basic objectives (p. 79-82).

Edmonds' (1982) characteristics of more effective schools were similar to those identified by Brookover and Lezotte (1977). Edmonds (1982) stated that effective schools had the ability to teach all children regardless of personal background. In his research, Edmonds (1982) identified five characteristics common to effective schools, which he called correlates of effective schools. He called them correlates because these characteristics seemed to have a relationship in the ever evading equation of schools being or becoming effective; but that these same correlates could not be said to be the determinants of effectiveness. The correlates of effective schools that Edmonds (1979a, 1982) synthesized from his own and other effective schools research studies were:

1. A principal who was a strong instructional leader dedicated to the quality of instruction.
2. Clearly communicated and thoroughly understood instructional focus.
3. An orderly environment in which teaching and learning could take place.
4. Teacher behaviors that conveyed the message that all students are expected to obtain minimum mastery.
5. The use of frequent student measures as a means of program evaluation (p.4).

Brookover and Lezotte (1977) and Edmonds (1982) emphasized many of the same effective school characteristics. Of the many characteristics described, the leadership of the principal within the school had garnered a great deal of attention. In fact, many researchers of school effects had emphasized the message that a school would be successful if it was led by an effective principal (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Crone & Tiddlie 1995; Edmonds, 1979; Good & Brophy, 1985; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lipham, 1981). Past studies had summarized some of the traits that were associated with effective school principals (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisenbaker, 1979; Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984; Lipham, 1981). First, effective school leaders were goal oriented; tending to focus on instructional goals and standards of student performance (Brookover et al., 1979). These goals and standards were based on the premise that all students had the ability to achieve. Second, effective principals showed greater leadership in the areas of instruction, curriculum, and student assessment (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982). In addition, effective principals were commonly viewed as having a greater power base (more influence outside of the school boundaries) than less effective principals in their field (Bossert, 1988, p. 346).

Effective principals also spent a larger part of their time on the management and coordination of instructional matters (Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980). Observing teachers in the classroom, conferring with others on instructional matters, and developing evaluation techniques that assessed teacher and student performance were all examples of management responsibilities attended to by the effective principal (p. 468-469). Finally, Brookover et al. (1979) stated that effective principals worked well with others. He
reported that effective principals had the ability to recognize the unique styles and needs of teachers, doing what they could to help teachers achieve their goals. These principals also had the ability to create an atmosphere of pride in the school among teachers, students, and staff (p. 92-93).

Effective schools research had primarily focused on the leadership role of the principal as a critical link in the school’s pursuit of effectiveness (D’Amico, 1982; Edmonds, 1979; Wellisch, MacQueen, Cariere, & Duck, 1978). Unfortunately, how the superintendent of a school district impacted school and school district effectiveness was less clear (Bjork, 1993; Boone, 1992; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Shoemaker, 1986). Murphy (1991) stated that superintendents were often “seen as the Maytag repairmen of school reform; when considered at all, they are seen as part of the problem rather than part of the solution” (p. 32).

However, there was a growing body of literature which had identified some of the characteristics and behaviors of an effective school district superintendent (Bjork, 1993; Boone, 1992; Leslie, 1992; Murphy & Hallinger, 1986; Shoemaker, 1986). Griffin (1994) reported three themes detailing the impact superintendents had on their school districts. These themes were: (a) a focus on clearly communicated goals and objectives; (b) support to district staff and faculty in the pursuit of school improvement, and; (c) an unrelenting belief that “all students can learn” (p. 25 - 26). In a study on effective behaviors of superintendents, Murphy and Hallinger (1986) found that effective superintendents:

1. Set goals and established expectations and standards
2. Employed productive methods for the selection of quality staff
3. Supervised, evaluated, and trained principals
4. Established a clear instructional focus
5. Insured consistency in technical core activities (i.e. curriculum, instruction)
6. Monitored curriculum and instruction through test analysis and resource allocation (p. 213-236).

Murphy and Hallinger (1986) also stated that instructional effectiveness centered on the personal involvement of the superintendent in the following key areas:

[Instructionally effective superintendents] used a variety of both direct and indirect leadership tools. They controlled the development of goals both at the district and school levels; they were influential in establishing procedures for the selection of staff; they took personal responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of principals; and they established and regularly monitored a district wide instructional curricular focus (p. 52).

From these superintendent behaviors and personal involvement strategies it seemed clear that the office of the superintendent did provide an instructional leadership dimension for individual schools and the district as a whole.

Peterson and Finn (1988) (as cited in Norton, Webb, Dluosh, and Sybouts, 1996) stated that good schools and school districts were piloted by good principals and superintendents (p. 57). The degree of instructional leadership abilities had a positive relationship to the quality of education provided to students. Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth (1988) offered the following leadership roles which needed to be fulfilled by the superintendent:

1. They must symbolize education in the community. Through their public statements they must express, project, and embody the purpose and character of public education.

2. They must be able academicians with the ability to recognize excellence in teaching, learning, and research.

3. They must exercise the wisest kind of political behavior by resolving the conflicting demands of many constituents and, in turn, gaining their support for education.
They must be highly competent managers who demonstrate their skill in selecting staff, planning the future, building the budget, and constructing and maintaining a school plant (p. 7).

Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth (1988) realized the crucial importance an effective superintendent played in creating effective schools and more importantly an effective school district.

Carter and Cunningham (1997) poignantly stated that “The superintendent is the most visible advocate of reason and support for the schools, meeting with parents and student councils, business alliances, government officials, and others to advocate and support the case of education” (p. 237). For this reason a superintendent must be adequately educated to successfully face the many pressures which challenge a superintendent (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybout, 1996). The effective schools research offers superintendents a detailed knowledge base from which to gain insight on how to deal with these pressures. This study therefore sought to describe if a nationally recognized population of public school superintendents perceived themselves to have incorporated this knowledge in the way they lead their own school districts.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined how nationally recognized public school superintendents, as identified by the American Association of School Administrators, perceived themselves to be leaders consistent with the characteristics and leadership behaviors identified within the effective schools research.

Research Questions

This study determined how nationally recognized public school superintendents, as identified by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), perceived themselves to be leading their districts in a manner consistent with the characteristics and
behaviors identified by the effective schools literature. Superintendents who had been selected as superintendent of the year for their respective state for 1999 by affiliate organizations the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) served as the sample for this study. The following research questions were used to answer the problem statement of the study:

1. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to the monitoring of student progress?
2. How do recognized superintendents perceive themselves as instructional leaders?
3. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to creating a safe and orderly environment for schools?
4. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to establishing home and school relations?
5. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to promoting a climate of high expectations?
6. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to encouraging student opportunity to learn and time on task?
7. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to developing a clear and focused mission?

Purpose of the Study

In her research, Hord indicated that the research on the superintendency and the role these professionals play in the success of schools was still in its infancy (Carter, Glass, & Hord, 1993, p. 2). The purpose of this study was to increase the knowledge about the qualities, attitudes, and behaviors of public school superintendents in relation to the effective schools research. It also sought to further investigate the relationship between the role of the superintendent and the creation of effective schools and effective school
districts. Finally, this research described if a recognized population of public school superintendents perceived themselves to incorporate effective school methods in their leadership strategies or styles. This provided the opportunity to validate the findings of effective research through the investigation of the superintendents office.

The information gleaned from this study was important because it contributed to the educational knowledge base of the superintendent and their leadership. Borg and Gall (1989) distinguished between four types of research knowledge: (a) description, (b) prediction, (c) improvement, and (d) explanation (p. 5). This study described if and how nationally recognized superintendents perceived themselves to be using the characteristics of effective schools in their leadership behavior. It further provided information for superintendents to improve themselves in the field of educational leadership. Finally, this study furnished a means of validating the findings of the effective schools knowledge base while also providing an emphasis for further research.

Population/Sample

The population of this study consisted of those superintendents who had been recognized for their leadership efforts within education. For the purposes of this study, a sample of nationally recognized public school superintendents was determined by the professional organization known as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). This sample was composed of 49 superintendents who were chosen as superintendent of the year for their individual state by affiliate organizations of AASA. The superintendents of the year for each state were then considered by AASA for top honors across the nation for the title of superintendent of the year. A list of superintendents was secured by contacting AASA and requesting the names, nominating state, and business address of each school district superintendent recommended for superintendent of the year for 1999. Each selected superintendent was surveyed on the characteristics and behaviors they perceived themselves to employ when leading their school districts. Every item of the
survey instruments were developed in relation to a characteristic of effective schools research as defined and supported by the literature.

**Research Design & Methodology**

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods as a means of collecting, measuring, and evaluating the data. The researcher used two questionnaire formats - mailed survey questionnaires and semi structured telephone interviews. The two assessments combined allowed for more robust findings by studying the phenomenon of interest from different methodological viewpoints (Brewer & Hunter, 1987, p. 17).

The survey questionnaire provided a quantitative approach by using numbers to numerically represent the obtained data. According to Borg and Gall (1989), survey instruments were "... data collection tools used to obtain standardized information from all subjects in a sample" (p. 417). The purpose of such research was to generalize from a sample population so that inferences could be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of the population (Babbie, 1990).

The mailed survey questionnaire approach was selected because of its many advantages. These include the economy of the design, a rapid turnaround time in data collection, and the ability to identify attributes of a population from a small group of individuals (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Fowler, 1988; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). Fowler (1988) also reported that the advantages of mailed questionnaires included relative low cost, minimal staff and facilities, access to a widely dispersed sample which would be difficult to reach by telephone or in person, and respondents have time to give thoughtful answers, to look up records, or consult with others (p. 71). In addition, Babbie (1990) stated that survey research is guided by the constraints of logical understanding, focusing that understanding beyond the sample to the larger population from which the sample was initially selected. Survey research can also examine a large number of
variables while at the same time obtain the greatest amount of understanding from the fewest number of variables (Babbie, 1990, p. 47).

Once the sample population and survey questionnaire had been finalized, a four stage process was used for mailing the questionnaire to the members of the sample. These stages included: (a) mailing an introductory letter introducing the researcher and the research study (see Appendix II); (b) an initial mailing of the complete survey questionnaire with a cover letter (see Appendix I); (c) a second mailing of the complete instrument was made after three weeks, and finally; and (d) telephone calls were made to each of the non-responding superintendents along with a third complete mailing of the survey questionnaire. This data collection stage took eleven weeks to complete.

The results obtained from the mailed questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and measures of dispersion. Descriptive statistics described the location of the center of a distribution and dispersion measures indicate how widely a population is separated (Fink, 1995). The mean, median, mode, and percentages were the measures used to analyze the data obtained from the mailed survey questionnaires.

Telephone interviews were conducted after the initial mailing and return of the survey questionnaire. This allowed the researcher to focus the interview on areas of strength and weakness in relation to the mailed survey (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 446). According to Borg and Gall (1989), “the interview permits you to follow-up leads and thus obtain more data and greater clarity . . . (providing) much greater depth than the other methods of collecting research data” (p. 446). The addition of a qualitative method for collecting data (telephone interviews of superintendents) strengthened the overall design of the study (Borg & Gall, 1989; Brewer & Hunter, 1987; Creswell, 1994).

Five superintendents (10% of the sample population) were randomly selected from the sample population. Interviews were scheduled with each superintendent or their office over the telephone. One week prior to the interview, each superintendent was sent a letter confirming the date and time of the telephone interview along with an outline of the areas to
be covered during the interview. Each telephone interview was approximately 50 minutes in duration and each was recorded and transcribed to preserve the obtained data. The interview data collection process took three weeks to complete. An analysis of each and all the interviews was performed across the control functions (seven characteristics of effective schools) to determine themes, factors, and characteristics of leadership behaviors which emerged from the data. Portraits of each of the five superintendent were examined individually and as a group to determine themes of leadership behaviors and activities across the sample (Murphy & Hallinger, 1986; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Significance of the Study

"The major reason for educational research is to develop new knowledge about teaching, learning, and administration" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 4). This study added to the educational knowledge base by determining how nationally recognized public school superintendents, as determined by AASA, perceived themselves to be leading their organizations in a manner consistent with the effective schools research. This study thereby established if a given population of public school superintendents employed leadership behaviors and activities espoused by the effective schools research.

This study also took a unique approach in determining its target population of nationally recognized public school superintendents. Past effective schools research had determined more effective personnel within a district by how well its student population had performed on nationally standardized tests (Bossert, 1988; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds 1979; Lezotte, 1985b; Lipham, 1981; Maryland, 1978; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Weber 1971). Cuban (1983) criticized these methods of selecting effective schools and school personnel as being too narrow (p. 695). In this study, it was determined that AASA assessed many variables, including student standardized test scores, when selecting a superintendent for superintendent of the year honors. The selection of this studies population therefore added to the significance of its findings.
Delimitations and Limitations

Borg and Gall (1989) stated that the “weaknesses and limitations of educational research can be attributed to the inadequacies of our measures” (p.183). This study used both mailed survey questionnaires and telephone interviews to collect data. These methodologies are prone to methodological difficulties (Borg & Gall, 1989; Issac & Michael, 1981).

Issac and Michael (1981) reported the following limitations associated with the mailed survey technique of gathering data. These included:

1. Surveys only tap respondents who are accessible and cooperative.
2. Surveys often make the respondent feel special or unnatural and thus produce responses that are artificial or planted.
3. Surveys arouse “response sets” that are prone to agree with positive statements or questions.
4. Surveys are vulnerable to over-rater or under-rater bias, causing some respondents to give consistently high or low ratings (p. 128).

The interview also has limitations as a research tool (Borg & Gall, 1989). These limitations included the methodological misuse to collect quantitative data which can be better and more accurately measured by other measures (p. 448). Response effect, another threat, is the “. . . tendency of the respondent to give inaccurate or incorrect responses, or more precisely is the difference between the answer given by the respondent and the true answer” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 448). Issac and Michael (1981) stated that the interview technique can evoke biased reactions in respondents due to characteristics of the interviewer or respondent, or the combination that elicit an unduly favorable or unfavorable pattern of responses (p. 128).

The generalizability of this study was limited to its population of nationally recognized superintendents as identified by AASA and their affiliate state organizations and can not be projected to all superintendents. The generalizability of its findings to the target
population may also be threatened by issues concerning population validity (Borg & Gall, 1989). Population validity concerns the extent to which the results of a study may be generalized from the studied sample to the population universe (Borg & Gall, 1989), and is a measure of how well the sample represents the studies defined population (p.649).

The reliability of educational measures is the "... level of internal consistency or stability of the measuring device over time" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 257). This reliability of a survey questionnaire makes the assumption that differences in answers stem from differences among respondents rather than differences in stimuli to which respondents are exposed (Fowler, 1988, p. 75). This means that the wording of each survey needs to be clearly understandable and unambiguous. Reviews of the survey questionnaire by experts in the field and the implementation of a pilot test were used to develop a more reliable instrument.

The overall response rate was also a potential concern of the survey questionnaire methodology (Babbie, 1990). When members of a studied sample do not participate in the survey questionnaire, response bias becomes a threat to the validity of the results. Response bias is the effect of non-responses on survey results (Fowler, 1988). This is because "... respondents are essentially a random sample of the initial sample, and thus a somewhat smaller random sample of the total population" (Babbie, 1990, p. 165). Babbie (1990) reported that a response rate of 50 percent was adequate for analysis and reporting, 60 percent was good, and a 70 percent or above return rate was very good (p. 165). This study obtained an 86% response rate to the mailed questionnaire.

Another limitation of the present study focuses on the researcher. Borg and Gall (1989) stated that because the researcher has an emotional stake in the outcome of the research, he or she is especially susceptible to bias (p. 178). These unconscious biases can be manifested in many different ways such as making errors in sampling, selecting measures, or in scoring the responses of subjects. Every attempt was made by the researcher to remain objective, which included the frequent review of the study's methods.
and results by other researchers to check for omissions or unconscious biases (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 179).

Definition of Terms

The following are operational definitions for this study:

Clear and Focused Mission: A clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of a commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p.243).

Content Validity: The degree to which the sample test items represents the content that the test is designed to measure (Borg & Gall, 1989, p.250).

Correlates of Effective Schools: Studies consistently report that successful schools have the following characteristics: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) strong instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly environment; (d) positive home/school relations; (e) climate of high expectation; (f) opportunity to learn/time on task; (g) and, a clear and focused mission (Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Edmonds, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1982;).

Descriptive Research: Describes an existing phenomenon by using numbers to characterize individuals or a group (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 37).

Effective School: A school that focuses on the quality of education and equality of opportunity through the correlates of effective schools research (Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b; Lezotte, 1985b).

Effective Superintendent: These individuals have a vision that learning is a democratic process. It must be inclusive and promote a message of learning for all. These superintendents must also be able to clearly communicate this vision to others and also win their support as a means of making it happen (Lezotte, 1994, p. 21-22).
Equity Standard: Student achievement across subgroups based on socio-economic status, family background, gender, and race should be relatively equal. (Edmonds, 1979a).

External Validity: "The extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to particular settings" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 649).

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress: "Some means by which pupil progress can be frequently monitored. These means may be as traditional as classroom testing or as advanced as criterion referenced system-wide standardized measures" (Edmonds, 1979, p. 22).

High Student Expectations: Climate in which faculty and staff internally believe and demonstrate that all students have the ability to achieve in the area of basic skills instruction (Bossert, 1988; Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte, 1985b).

Home/School Relations: Parents understand and support the basic mission of the school and are made to feel that they have an important role in achieving this mission (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 246).

Instructional Leader: "An individual that is a strong programmatic leader and who sets high standards, observes classrooms frequently, maintains student discipline, and creates incentives for learning" (Bossert, 1988).

Internal Validity: The extent to which extraneous variables have been controlled for by the researcher (Borg & Gall, 1989, p.642).

Leadership: "The process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader and shared by the leader and his or her followers" (Gardner, 1990, p.1).

Qualitative Research: The presentation of facts in a narration with words (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 15).

Quality Standard: Fifty percent of student population achieves at fiftieth percentile or greater (Edmonds, 1979a).
Quantitative Methodology: Presents statistical results represented with numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 15).

Safe and Orderly Environment: "The school’s atmosphere is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand" (Edmonds, 1979a, p. 22).

School Improvement Research: The focus on change and innovation as a means of improving the success of schools in their environment (Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984, p.42).

Strong Emphasis On Student Learning: A clearly understood school objective that student learning (especially of basic skills) comes before all other school activities. This may require the diversion of other school resources or funds to further these fundamental objectives (Edmonds, 1979a, p.22).

Summary

Educational research focuses on advancing knowledge and improving practice (McMillian & Schumacher, 1997, p. 17). This was the ultimate goal of this study. A review of the effective schools literature had shown a gap in the understanding of the superintendency (Bjork, 1993; Boone, 1992; Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984; Cuban, 1984; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Hord, 1990; Shoemaker, 1986). It was for this reason that this study concentrated on the superintendent to determine how nationally recognized superintendents perceived themselves to be using the characteristics of effective schools research in the way they lead their school district. This study investigated how a non-traditional sample (different from most effective school population studies) of working superintendents used constructs of the effective schools research in their leadership behavior. This study also validated, and confuted in some regards, the role of the superintendent in relation to the effective schools literature and helped further the understanding of the superintendent's office.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In order to better understand how nationally recognized superintendents act and behave in relation to effective schools research, a literature review was provided. This review focused on issues relevant to the superintendency as well as the effective schools knowledge base. Manual and electronic methods were used to search the literature, which included journals, reports, articles, and books germane to each topic area.

This review of the literature was been divided into six areas: (a) a brief history of educational reform in the United States; (b) the history of effective schools research; (c) some underlying assumptions of effective schools research; (d) the findings and identified characteristics of effective schools research; (e) limitations and truths of effective schools research; and, (f) a review of identified characteristics and behaviors employed by more effective and successful superintendents. Each of the above topic areas were thoroughly explained in the following sections.

The issues, constructs, and characteristics of the effective schools research are closely knit and interdependent (Edmonds, 1982; Lezotte, 1985b). For this reason there is no true delineation from one issue to the next. Therefore, the reader is advised that within each section of this review, reference may be made to a related issue that was discussed in greater detail in another section.
History of Educational Reform

The history of American educational reform has been called by Warren (1990) a complicated issue. He explained that educational institutions in the United States have tended to lack a memory and thus made little use of the findings from past educational reform (p. 59). Chance (1992) stated that educational reform is a continuous and cyclical process which does very little but to temporarily satisfy the public and politicians (p. 4). In addition, Carlson (1996) commented that, “school reform in the United States is as American as apple pie” (p. 5).

Education in this country has often been viewed as an explanation for the failings in America, while at the same time it has been perceived as the means of solving societies ills (Carlson, 1996). It is this belief, the belief that education is a cure for societal ailments, which drives American educational reform. Carlson (1996) provided three reasons for this. First, we do not have a large central bureaucracy at the federal level which dictates educational reform nationally. Second, because education has tended to emphasize a message of local lay person control, schools have tended to reflect the values and expectations of the immediate community. And third, education in the United States struggles to meet objectives which at times are in conflict with each other, such as seeking to meet the needs of all students while at the same time trying to meet the needs of special subgroups of children (Carlson, 1996, p.196).

It is for these reasons that educational reform is a very political process. Dow (1991) concluded that, “decisions about educational reform are driven more by political considerations, such as prevailing public mood, rather than by any systematic effort to improve instruction” (p. 5). This is why Carlson (1996) stated that “in America we do not have revolutions and military coups, but rather we pass legislation that requires schools to address everything from driver to sex education” (p. 196). It is here that Chance (1992) offered insights on the cyclic pattern of school reform. He stated that after educational
policies and regulations are adopted there is generally a time of relative peace until the
reform cycle begins anew (p. 5).

Warren (1990) commented that understanding where education has been can aid the
reformer's efforts in affecting meaningful educational change. He emphatically stated that,
"if we don't know where we have been with regard to educational improvement, and why
we went there, we are left to chart our direction in the shallow waters of contemporary
comparisons and current political moods" (p 63). In other words, knowing the history of
education and its reform aids in creating truly innovative and effective solutions to problem
situations.

Tyack, Kirst, and Hansot (1980) saw three major periods of educational reform in
the United States. These included the mid-nineteenth century common schools movement,
the early twentieth century progressive schools movement, and the current period of reform
which had no name in 1980 (Tyack, Kirst, & Hansot, 1980, p. 256). A fourth period of
time frequently cited in historical analysis of American educational reform are the years
following World War II and the launching of the Russian Satellite Sputnik (Carlson, 1996;
Chance, 1992; Wincek, 1995).

Common School Movement

Education in seventeenth century America focused on children of the upper class
and was linked to religious instruction (Carlson, 1996, p. 197). These schools were
typically subsidized by the families of the children attending and were oriented toward
"creating a pious and God fearing citizenry" (DeYoung & Theobald, 1991, p. 4). As urban
American cities grew during the eighteenth century, local schools began to be established
(Button & Provenzo, 1989). These schools were dependent upon local taxpayer support
and their efficiency was a reflection of how well the community supported public
education. Unfortunately, citizen commitment to education was usually limited and thus
funding for schools was largely inadequate (Button & Provenzo, 1989).
The lack of support by members of the community with regard to public education was in part a reflection of the needs and concerns of the people during the period (Button & Provenzo, 1989). America was an agricultural society, land was inexpensive if not free, and numerous opportunities were available. The need for schooling was looked down upon and even seen as an unneeded luxury. Never was this more true than in the South before the Civil War, where free public education was disregarded as an unimportant matter (Button & Provenzo, 1989).

The push for a system of common schools was in part a result of political and religious unease (DeYoung & Theobald, 1991; Warren, 1990). During the early 1800s immigrants were pouring into the nation's urban areas. Boston for example received thousands of Irish immigrants yearly during the late 1830s and 1840s (Button & Provenzo, 1989; DeYoung & Theobald, 1991). Warren (1990) explained that from the nation's founding years, political leaders had worried about the revolutionary threat of regional loyalties to the new republic. Additionally, the nation's predominantly Protestant population began to feel threatened by other religious groups such as the Irish Catholics. This political and religious unrest helped to fuel the development of a common school system which would weld its sections into a union (Warren, 1990). For this reason DeYoung and Theobald (1991) felt that the common school concept was primarily a solution for urban problems, and the progression of educational control moved outward from cities into the rural areas.

By the mid-nineteenth century the development of common schools was spreading across America (Wincek, 1995). The goals of the movement were: “to provide teachers and schools where none had existed; and to make schools more comparable with regard to such essential features as curricula, teacher preparation, and length of school terms” (Warren, 1990, p. 64). According to Carlson (1996) by 1865 most states were committed to three principles: (a) the primary responsibility for supporting education was the state’s and not the family’s; (b) the state had the right to raise moneys through taxes to support
educational expenses; and (c) the state should establish nonsectarian, publicly supported schools open to all children regardless of creed or financial status (p. 198). These goals and principles from the nineteenth century have endured to the present time.

**Progressive School Reform**

At the end of the nineteenth century problems associated with an ever increasing industrial society were gripping the nation (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The free land was gone, the need for farm labor was decreasing, and immigrants and rural Americans were flocking to the cities. Social injustice was greatest in the cities and it was during this time when progressive reformers sought to remedy the social injustice and lack of democratic values found there (Button & Provenzo, 1989). Once again education was thrust into the middle of the reform just as it had been during the common school push.

The progressive reform movement of the 1890s focused initially on the physical conditions of the city (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 1990). In regard to education, critics voiced concerns over school organization and curriculum. This movement called for basic and sweeping reforms on many levels (Button & Provenzo, 1989). One of the movement's main objectives was to rid education of the taint of politics. For too long educational decisions had been based on politics rather than what was best for the children under its care. For this reason the progressive movement was child centered, advocating the active involvement of its young people in the learning process (Tanner & Tanner, 1990).

John Dewey, whose name is synonymous with the progressive movement and the child as center philosophy, was convinced that children learned best when learning took place within their own environment (Button & Provenzo, 1989). In this regard Dewey saw progressive education as an integration of school and real life. Mitchell (1990) saw progressive reforms as a means of preparing children for the social and economic realities of the new world (p. 154). Many innovative methods of instruction were developed during
this period which included small group instruction and the use of new technologies such as films and radio (Carlson, 1996).

Progressive reforms also focused on organizational and management practices within education (Mitchell, 1990; Warren, 1990). Educational reformers during the progressive period focused efforts to improve the administration of growing school systems and to enhance the role of the teaching profession with respect to academic philosophies and classroom management (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). A charge was made to run schools according to the sound practices of business, which looked at efficiency, professionalism, and scientific methods for improving production. The school as a factory metaphor appeared in 1916 in which Edward Cubberley described schools as educational factories and children as its raw materials (Wincek, 1995). During this period educational administrators

. . . sought to centralize control of the urban schools in small boards of education elected at large, give decision making power to appoint expert superintendents, use state legislatures and departments of education to standardize public education, and consolidate one room schools. The purpose of the reorganization was to take education away from the decentralized lay people . . . and [to] give professionally educated superintendents broad administrative discretion (Wincek, 1995, p. 20).

During this time, technological advances eliminated many jobs held by children (Button & Provenzo, 1989). At the same time legislation was passed which enforced compulsory education and which also limited child labor. For these reasons, attendance in public education steadily increased (Button & Provenzo, 1989).

Post World War II and the Launch of Sputnik

After World War II, critics of American education focused upon the lack of rigor within the curriculum as well as the weak pedagogy offered to students in our public schools (Carlson, 1996; Chance, 1992). The launching of the Russian Satellite Sputnik in
1957 was the single most prominent event which galvanized public opinion that American schools were failing national interests (Carlson, 1996; Wincek, 1995). The reforms of this period tended to focus on changes in the content of math and science curricula and called for learning efficiency within the individual disciplines (Tanner & Tanner, 1990).

A few of the reports that were published during this period that helped to propel the movement were those by Admiral Hyman G. Rickover and former president of Harvard University James B. Conant. Rickover's 1963 report *American Education, A National Failure* claimed that American education had no clear educational philosophy and no firm objectives (as cited in Wincek, 1995). Additionally, Conant stated in his 1964 report *Shaping Educational Policy* that public education had several areas which needed to be addressed. These included:

1. reform of instructional methods and materials including the new developments in foreign language instruction in the lower grades and the new courses in physics, chemistry, mathematics and biology;
2. advanced placement programs;
3. improvement of the instruction in English composition;
4. introduction of new techniques including TV and programmed instruction;
5. recruiting of more intellectually able young people into the teaching profession;
6. education of students of limited ability in the high school;
7. vocational education;
8. teaching reading to children of disadvantaged families;
9. slum schools; and
10. segregated schools (p. 26).

Conant urged both state educators and university professors to work together to create new educational policies to meet these objectives.

The reforms of the 1960s also focused on the concept of equal educational opportunity. These reforms continued into the 1970s (Wincek, 1995). In 1954 the
Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education changed the way Americans thought about education and provided the major thrust in the direction of equality in education (Cremin, 1988; Lutz & Merz, 1992; Ravitch, 1983; Wincek, 1995). Efforts made during this time attempted to provide equal opportunities for students while at the same time shifting the message of education from an egalitarian democratic ideal to a message which incorporated both equity and quality issues (Stevens & Wood, 1987).

By the mid 1970s, the term equality had given way to the term equity within education (Allen, 1992). This was because equality gave a connotation of providing students with such things as equal facilities, teachers, and curricula. Equity was a much broader term focusing on the individual student in the form of acquired knowledge and skills.

Reform Since 1983

The current reform movement is noted for both its longevity and its effects on public education (Chance, 1992; Murphy, 1990). Many educational reports, most notably A Nation at Risk, identified problems and deficiencies within public education which inflated fears that American education was in trouble (Carlson, 1996; Murphy, 1990; Wincek, 1995). According to Passow (1989) subsequent to A Nation At Risk “well over 300 state level task forces were working on some aspect of school reform, with governors, legislators, and state education departments all vying for leadership” (p. 15). Murphy (1990) stated that seven outcome measures were targeted for special attention during this time frame: (a) academic achievement in basic subject areas; (b) functional literacy; (c) preparation for employment; (d) the holding power of schools (drop out rates); (e) knowledge of specific subject areas such as geography and economics; (f) mastery of higher order skills; and (g) initiative, responsibility, and citizenship (p. 10).

Unlike past reforms, the current reform movement has been unique in many regards. First, the concern for education as a whole seems to be greater than at any other period in history, focusing on the general student population rather than any single target...
group (Underwood, 1989). The sustaining force of reform is also different, because there is greater public attention and a larger number of reform actors than there have been in the past. Guthrie and Kirst (1988) identified a third aspect unique to the current reform movement as the focus of the reform itself. They stated that for the first time in educational history legislatures had stepped over operational boundaries usually reserved for local school boards (cited in Murphy, 1990, p. 6). Additionally, outcome accountability measures are being used increasingly to evaluate reform efforts rather than the procedural assessments normally used in the past.

Murphy (1990), using a transportation metaphor, classified current reform initiatives into three waves. Wave 1 from 1982 to 1985 was given the connotation of “Fix the old clunker” (p. 22). During this period, reform efforts used a bureaucratic model focusing on such remedies as tightly specified resource allocation systems, performance measurements, and the specification of instructional models as a means of improving the quality of workers and the inadequacy of their tools (p. 23).

Wave 2 (1986-1989) progressed from “Fix the old clunker” to “Get a new car” (p. 25). These reforms clamored for more than just improving the existing system, but called for a reconstruction of the entire system. Murphy (1990) identified three broad content areas stressed in Wave 2 reform efforts:

1. the professionalization of teaching,
2. the development of decentralized school management systems, and
3. the enactment of specific reform topics overlooked in the early 1980s (such as programs for at risk students).

Strategies to foster greater professionalism within the existing teacher core most often focus on upgrading the quality of the work environment, increasing collegial interaction, and redistributing authority from the administration to the teaching core (p. 28).

The current wave (Wave 3) of reform, 1988 to present, is distinguished by Murphy (1990) as “Rethink the entire view of transportation” (p. 29). This view of
educational reform focuses on the child and, "goes beyond schooling to encompass a comprehensive system for the delivery of services to children" (p. 29). Efforts made in Wave 3 are interested in providing a system of education which improves upon the structures of delivering services to children.

Each wave of Murphy's (1990) reform model has focused on a single major area. Wave 1 keyed on the educational system and Wave 2 on teachers. Wave 3 currently focuses on the children. It is this third relatively new wave of reform which seems to espouse the message that children should "be empowered to contribute successfully to the needs of a rapidly changing society" (p. 29).

History of Effective Schools Research

A history of the effective schools movement is provided to detail the major events and influences that have shaped and molded the effective schools philosophy into what it is today. In addition, key concepts and definitions of the literature are provided along with some of the major studies that have contributed to effective schools research. The time frames of this review are based on Lezotte's (1986) work which described four critical periods in the history of effective schools: 1966-1976; 1976-1980; 1980-1983; and, post 1983.

1966 - 1976

Studies conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, known as input/output research, provided the controversy which fueled the effective schools movement (Lezotte, 1986). These input/output studies looked at the relationship between a school's resources (i.e. curricular opportunities, facilities, district wealth, books in the library, student adult ratio, etc.) with the achievement of its various socio-economic student populations (Bossert, 1988, p. 342). The most notable of these was a study conducted by James Coleman and associates (1966) entitled Equality of Educational Opportunity. In his research, Coleman found that "variations in educational opportunities offered by schools in
Coleman (1966) believed that family background played a major role in determining student performance. His research also found similar differences in student achievement when comparing students of poor and affluent families. What these findings seemed to suggest was that student performance and achievement was dependent upon factors outside the school’s control. In other words, “schools don’t make a difference” (Bossert, 1988, p. 342). Coleman (1966) stated:

... schools bring little influence to bear on a child’s achievement that is independent of his (or her) background and general social context; ... this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school. For equality of educational opportunity through the schools must imply a strong effect of schools that is independent of the child’s immediate social environment, and that strong independent effect is not present in American schools (p. 325).

Jencks (1972) in a similar study determined that “no specific school resource (wealth, facilities, or curriculum opportunities) had a consistent effect on student achievement (as measured by standardized tests) or eventual educational attainment” (p. 23). Jencks concluded that the long term effects of public education on its students were not significantly impacted by a school’s resources. Determinants that Jencks (1972) found to be significant to student performance included such factors as: (a) the genetic makeup of students (p. 71); (b) a school’s student population or access to privileged schoolmates (p. 30); (c) environmental differences between families (p. 76); and, (d) economic family background (p. 78). Thus, Jencks (1972) concurred with Coleman (1966) that schools do not seem to significantly impact student achievement.
What Coleman, Jencks, and other input-output research studies were implying was "schools don’t and can’t make a difference" (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 4). It was this message that spurred educational researchers into asking questions such as, “Do effective schools exist?” and “Are some schools more effective than others in educating students?” The search for effective schools thus began at the time these input-output studies were being published (Mace-Matluck, 1987).

The early focus of effective schools research was to determine if effective schools existed. A study by Weber (1971) looked at four unusually effective urban schools serving similar student populations. In his research he found several factors common to all four schools. Strong leadership on the part of the principal or superintendent was the first common characteristic. The second common characteristic was high expectations on the part of faculty and staff for student success. An orderly climate was the third attribute of the effective schools, which seemed to provide order, a sense of purpose, relative quiet, and a positive atmosphere for learning. The fourth characteristic was the careful evaluation of student progress, and the fifth characteristic was an emphasis on reading (Weber, 1971, p. 25-28).

Klitgaard and Hall’s 1974 study was another early effort in the pursuit to identify more effective schools. This large scale study (schools from over 627 school districts) researched performance on reading and mathematics standardized tests to find schools whose students consistently achieved at higher levels. Their results not only found individual schools which performed at better than average levels, but the data also revealed unusually effective school districts as a whole (Klitgaard & Hall, p. 104-105). Although small in number (2% to 9%) the identified schools were clearly more effective at serving student needs than other schools with similar populations (Klitgaard & Hall, 1974, p. 104).

A study conducted by the State of New York’s Department of Education in 1974 was also interested in determining if more effective schools existed. Two inner city
elementary schools were studied, one identified as high achieving and a second as low achieving. Some of the factors cited as having an impact on the effectiveness of a school were: (a) administrative behavior and policies; (b) a balanced administrative team; (c) well developed and thoroughly implemented plans for reading improvement; and (d) a professional staff which felt that their efforts made an impact on student learning. The results of this study also stated that differences in student performance between the two schools seemed to be within the schools’ span of control (as cited in Edmonds, 1979a, p. 16). This research conflicted with the input/output studies of Coleman (1966) and other similar researchers (Bossert, 1988).

During this period it became clear that effective schools of some form did exist. The focus then moved from the search for effective schools to one of improving school effectiveness through the research (Lezotte, 1986, p. 6). This became the main goal of effective schools research during the next time period from 1976 to 1980.

1976 - 1980

The effective schools movement from 1976 to 1980 utilized case studies and program evaluation studies to further the research on effective schools (Lezotte, 1986; Mace-Matluck, 1987). The knowledge gained from these research methodologies provided direction for educators in the pursuit of increasing effectiveness. This knowledge also helped educational researchers to more accurately define what an effective school truly exemplified (Lezotte, 1986; Mace-Matluck, 1987). Many of the characteristics commonly found in effective school studies were: (a) strong leadership by the principal or other staff; (b) high expectations by staff for student achievement; (c) clear goals and an emphasis for the school; an effective school wide training program; and, (d) a system for monitoring student progress (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 8).

In the late 1970s, the application of the effective schools research sought to increase student achievement by exclusively concentrating on those characteristics under the control of schools (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 9). Edmonds (1982)
proposed three types of school improvement programs based upon the effective schools research: (a) programs organized and administered within schools and school districts; (b) programs administered by state education agencies, which provide incentives and technical assistance to local schools and districts; and (c) programs of research, development, and technical assistance usually located in a university (p. 5). It was during this time that the effective schools movement was being fully accepted by educators nationwide. Mace-Matluck (1987) reported that the early work of the effective schools movement was so enthusiastically received that few, if any, state departments of education have not become involved in the school improvements efforts based on effective schools research, and the term “effective schools literature” has become current in literally thousands of schools and school districts across the nation. This is undoubtedly one of the most frequent topics in educational journals, and it has been a very popular topic on conference agendas as well (p. 10).

A general definition of an effective school began to surface during the time frame between 1976 and 1980 (Mace-Matluck, 1987). These definitions, which varied from one researcher to another, all had similar key characteristics: a student academic focus; learning for all students; and the acquisition of basic skills (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 10-11). Edmonds (1979b) defined an effective school as “one in which the children of the poor are at least as well prepared in basic skills as the children of the middle class” (p. 28). Lezotte (1985) stated that “for a school to be considered effective, it must be able to demonstrate both quality and equity” (p. 303). Mace-Matluck (1987) defined an effective school as “one in which the conditions are such that student achievement data show that all students evidence an acceptable minimum mastery of those essential basic skills that are prerequisite to success at the next level of schooling” (p. 11).
1980-1983

During the time period 1980-1983 summaries and syntheseses on effective schools were being written (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 11). These summaries were lists of characteristics which seemed to typify an effective school or school district. Also during this time, changes in the national political scene caused the creation and fueling of the excellence movement (Lezotte, 1986, p. 7). This excellence movement seemed to threaten parts of the effective schools philosophy (Lezotte, 1986).

Critical reviews of the effective schools findings were completed during this period. Probably the best known of these were written by Edmonds (1979a, 1979b, and 1982), in which he reported that there were five correlates of effective schools: (a) leadership; (b) instructional focus; (c) safe climate; (d) teacher expectations; and (e) frequent monitoring of student progress (Edmonds, 1982, p.4). Edmonds (1982) named these characteristics of effective schools “correlates” because they all had been shown to have a positive relationship to school effectiveness but not necessarily the causation of school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1982, cited in Brandt, 1982, p. 14).

Summaries and reviews by other researches did not always find the same traits of effective schools. For example, Purkey and Smith (1983) identified two sets of variables that, taken together, defined the climate and culture of a school. The nine organizational and structural variables were (a) school site management; (b) instructional leadership; (c) staff stability; (d) curriculum articulation and organization; (e) school-wide staff development; (f) parental involvement and support; (g) school-wide recognition of academic success; (h) maximized learning time; and (i) district support. The four process variables defined by Purkey and Smith (1983) were (a) collaborative planning and collegial relationships; (b) sense of community; (c) clear goals and high expectations commonly shared; and (d) order and discipline. (p. 443-445).

The excellence movement, which Lezotte (1986) contended was a result of national politics, also surfaced between 1980 and 1983. This research had some similar findings as
those postulated by the effective schools movement. According to Zerchykor (1984), both the effective schools research and the excellence movement made the assumption that schools did make a difference with regard to student achievement. Both bodies of research also focused on student outcomes which resulted in models for increasing school effectiveness. Finally, both the effective schools research and the excellence movement insisted on high expectations for student learning (p. 18-19).

The differences between the two movements were cited by Lezotte (1986) as having a negative impact on the efforts of the effective schools cause (p. 6). Mace-Matluck (1987) reported that the most prominent differences between the two movements focused upon student skills (p. 15). The effective schools movement focused upon basic skills, especially in math and reading. It also espoused an equity dimension that all students must attain these basic skills. The excellence movement, on the other hand, emphasized higher ordered skills and minimum competencies and sought to challenge only the best and brightest students. The goals of the excellence movement were “to encourage schools to tighten standards, make curriculum more demanding, increase average achievement scores, and have students score higher on aptitude tests” (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 15). It was for these reasons that Lezotte (1986) felt that the excellence movement benefited some at the expense of others (p. 8).

1983-Present

In 1983 Edmonds, considered the champion of the effective schools movement at the time (Lezotte, 1986), unexpectedly passed away. Mace-Matluck (1987) stated that this occurrence disrupted the effective schools movement for a time but then provided the inspiration for a new focus on school improvement. It was during this time period when various research areas came together to build and expand upon the existing characteristics of effective schools.

This current period of time saw a “growing acceptance of a broader definition of the effective school literature and a convergence of the major bodies of literature that form the
knowledge base for school improvement — particularly the school effects and teacher effects research" (Mace-Matluck, 1987, p. 17). The second generation of effective school correlates or characteristics provided an expansion and elaboration of the original correlates (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 248). Lezotte (1992) explained that “the second generational embellishment of correlates includes a broad array of related considerations that will enhance the effective school of the twenty first century; cause it to be more efficacious; and involve more critical thinking instructional opportunities, authentic assessment and a greater awareness of global and integrational considerations” (Lezotte, 1992 cited in Ennis-Dolasinski, 1992, p. 10). The seven effective school characteristics as defined by Lezotte (1991) were employed as the basis for evaluating the superintendents of this study.

Assumptions of Effective Schools Research

According to Lezotte and Bancroft (1985) effective school based programs have a set of attributes, premises, or assumptions that provide a rationale for why effective schools research holds promise for improving student achievement. These assumptions are the philosophical foundations upon which the characteristics or correlates of effective schools are built upon. Lezotte has emphasized these assumptions throughout his work with effective schools (Lezotte, 1991, 1992; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985a, 1985b; Lezotte and Jacoby, 1992).

Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) stated that schools of today are asked to accomplish three primary missions (p. 230). Due to the changing nature of the American family, the first mission is to provide an institution for custodial care. Second, schools are tasked with the responsibility of sorting, selecting, and training students to fulfill certain roles in today’s society. Finally, the third mission of schools is to teach for learning. It is the mission of “learning for all” to which the effective schools movement is ultimately committed (Lezotte, 1992, p. 35). Edmonds (1979a) argued this point when he stated, “Our thesis is that all children are eminently educable and that the behavior of the school is
critical in determining the quality of that education" (p. 20). Teaching for learning and learning for all is one assumption of the effective schools philosophy.

A second assumption of effective schools focuses on accountability and the use of data collection techniques to measure student results or outcomes (Lezotte, 1985; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Lezotte, 1991; 1992; and; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). The Effective Schools process believes that each school needs to be held accountable for what they teach in their individual programs. This philosophy requires each school to discuss and answer the following questions:

2. How will we know when students know it? Standardized achievement tests most likely do not give a true indication of how well students have mastered the material presented at each individual institution. It is for this reason that alternative assessment methods must be developed to take their place.
3. Who says? Who has the legal and moral authority to decide what's worth knowing and what methods will be used to determine if students know it? (Lezotte, 1992)

Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) adamantly stressed that schools must assess student outcomes in a fair and consistent manner. Development of individual site based assessment tools were encouraged by Lezotte (1991) as a means of continually evaluating the attainment of curricular goals across socio-economic boundaries.

Mace-Matluck (1987) defined an effective school as "one in which the conditions are such that student achievement data show that all students evidence an acceptable minimum mastery of those essential basic skills that are prerequisite to success at the next level of schooling" (p.11). This commitment to educational equity is a third assumption of the effective schools process. Because the number of poor and minority students will continue to increase, Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) indicated that equity within the school will
be of increasing importance. It is for this reason that schools are asked to analyze their data through a process called disaggregation. Disaggregation of student test scores breaks down student results by race, gender, and socio-economic status. Analysis of student data in this way helps each individual school identify problems and weaknesses within each of their perspective curricular programs. This is what Lezotte and Bancroft (1985b) described as a data driven school improvement model (p. 304).

Edmonds (1982) explained that within the effective schools paradigm, schools become effective one at a time (p. 10). Lezotte & Jacoby (1992) stated a fourth assumption of the effective schools philosophy is recognizing the individual school as the production center of public education and the focus for planned change. The reason for this is because those who do the actual work of the organization are in the best position to diagnose, develop, and implement strategies to increase student achievement. School staffs need to be given the autonomy and support from local and state entities to achieve those intended outcomes (p. 233-234).

A fifth assumption of the effective schools philosophy builds upon the fourth. It calls for the staff members within a school to become involved in the evaluation, problem solving, and planning stages within their schools programs (Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985b, p. 309 - 311). Edmonds (cited in Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992) stated that “we (educational leaders) must first get teachers to understand and accept the limitations of what they can do if they continue to work alone....when these limitations are acknowledged, then we will be able to go on and talk to teachers about the possibilities of what they can accomplish if they work together” (p. 244).

Staff development opportunities and an increased use of technology in instruction are two other assumptions underlying the Effective Schools philosophy. Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) stated that each local district and individual school must invest resources in staff development and continuing education opportunities to ensure that that their personnel are continuing to grow professionally. Technology in the classroom is one part of
effective teaching strategy which provides students with immediate feedback and re-teaching exercises to strengthen the student learning process (p. 236).

Finally, one last assumption of effective schools focused on instructional leadership. Lezotte (1994) maintained that educational leaders of tomorrow will be expected to be both efficient managers and visionary leaders. This requires training programs, school boards, and evaluation procedures which communicate the importance, expectation, and reward of change oriented leadership (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 236-237).

Effective Schools Research

The following discussion details the findings of different researchers concerning the characteristics reflective of effective schools. The summaries presented will provide the reader with a better understanding of the complexity of issues involved in school effects research. Additionally, seven characteristics of effective schools, as described by Lezotte (1991), will be examined and they will serve as the model upon which this research study is based. These effective school characteristics include: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress, (b) instructional leadership, (c) safe and orderly environment, (d) positive home school relations, (e) climate of expectation, (f) student opportunity to learn/time on task, and (g) a clear and focused mission.

Researchers concentrating in the area of school effects do not always agree upon the characteristics inherent to effective schools (Mace-Matluck, 1987). In fact, Edmonds (1979b) argued that "no one model explains school effectiveness for the poor or any other social class subset" (p. 22). The findings and conclusions of Edmonds (1979a), Purkey and Smith (1983), Brookover (1985) and others have been provided to detail some of the similarities and differences found between researchers with regard to the characteristics of effective schools.
Edmonds (1979a) of Harvard University, contended that effective schools are those that bring children of the poor to minimal masteries of basic skills that currently describe children of the middle class (p. 15). He identified strong building leadership (emphasizing the school principal), clear goals, an orderly school climate, high expectations and standards, and frequent monitoring and assessment of student progress as the essential characteristics of effective schools (p. 22). These schools were considered to be strong because they made greater demands on their students and had policies and practices that reduced the influence of the social environment and peer culture on student behavior and academic performance.

In a review of effective schools research, Purkey and Smith (1983) reported nine organizational and structural variables and four process variables common to more effective schools. The organizational variables included: (a) school site management; (b) instructional leadership; (c) staff stability, curriculum articulation and organization; (d) school-wide staff development; (e) parental involvement and support; (e) school-wide recognition of academic success; (f) maximized learning time; and (g) district support. The four process variables were: (a) collaborative planning and collegial relationships; (b) sense of community; (c) clear goals and high expectations commonly shared; and, (d) order and discipline (p. 443-445). Purkey and Smith (1983) concluded that the characteristics of effective schools combine to impact a school’s culture. The culture of the school is therefore determined by or encompasses the characteristics of effective schools. Thus, the school’s culture becomes more effective which then increases the overall success of the school (Purkey and Smith, 1983).

A recognition program funded by the federal government called “The Search for Successful Secondary Schools” (Office of Educational Research and Improvement [OERI], 1987) evaluated over 1,560 secondary schools and praised 571 of them for their efforts from 1982 to 1983. The administrators and researchers of the recognition program found that many of these 571 schools shared some similar characteristics. The strengths
common to successful secondary schools were found to be: (a) student discipline; (b) extra curricular participation; (c) recognition of student behavior and performance; (d) school climate; (e) rates of student and teacher attendance; (f) attention to academic learning time; (g) teacher efficacy; and (h) community support (p. x).

In an effective school, Brookover (1985) maintained that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or family background, are able to attain minimum levels of academic mastery. Through his research, Brookover (1985) classified effective schools according to three general headings: ideology, organizational structure, and instructional practices (p. 264). Brookover (1985) stated that the ideology of an effective school focuses on the beliefs and attitudes of the professional staff and student body in relation to learning. The organizational structure of an effective school addresses such goals as a focus on achievement, structures rewarding achievement, minimal stratification of student achievement, instructional practices that maintain high expectations for all students, and parental support and involvement structured to support school achievement of goals. Finally, instructional practices were identified which concentrate on those areas which promote a message of learning for all. These practices included time on task, an orderly environment, and clearly communicated school goals and instructional objectives (Brookover, 1985).

Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) reported that studies consistently reported successful schools as having the following characteristics:

1. A school climate conducive to learning - one free of disciplinary problems and vandalism;
2. A school wide emphasis on basic skills instruction;
3. The expectation among teachers that all students can achieve;
4. Clear and frequent monitoring and assessing of student performances; and
5. Principals that are strong leaders, who know the learning problems in their classrooms, and who allocate resources effectively (p.35).
Levine and Stark (1981) determined through their research and reviews on effective schools that six major instructional characteristics were common to highly successful schools (p. 5). The first characteristic focused on curriculum and instruction aligned to improve the appropriateness of instruction within the classroom, with particular attention focused on the effective pacing of instruction. Second, effective programs promote arrangements that deal with learning problems or low achieving students more successfully. An emphasis on teaching higher ordered cognitive skills and the assured availability of teacher resources were the third and fourth characteristics of an instructionally effective school (Levine & Stark, 1981). The fifth and sixth characteristics mentioned were minimal record keeping for teachers and improving the quality of homework and parental involvement in students' learning. Levine and Stark (1981) also mentioned that these schools were effectively making an effort to target resources that minimized the dysfunctional aspects of student pullout programs (p. 5).

Rosenholtz (1985) reviewed studies from both elementary and secondary schools in an attempt to develop a theoretical context in which to understand the evidence of effective schools. She determined that principals of effective schools were dedicated to the mission of improved student learning, and that these principals could successfully convey these beliefs to their teaching faculty (p. 354). Rosenholtz (1985) stated that effective school principals had the ability to mobilize the effort and commitment of teachers.

In addition to the importance of a strong instructional leader (usually the principal), Rosenholtz (1985) also stated that effective schools differ dramatically from their less effective counterparts (p. 359). She found that effective schools were able to successfully align the values, norms, and behaviors of principals and teachers concerning student acquisition of basic skills. Formal goals reflected this agreement by clearly defining what skills students must master and the appropriate methods that should be used to achieve them. As a result, shared decision making or participatory management became increasingly important to the effective school in defining such organizational goals and
methodologies (Rosenholtz, 1985). Other characteristics of effective schools mentioned by Rosenholtz (1985) included “the recruitment of highly competent teachers whose philosophy on education matches that of the school, organizationally buffering teachers to ensure their efforts are devoted to raising student achievement (increasing time on task), monitoring the academic progress teachers make (regular observations), supplying additional technical support to needy teachers (staff development), and providing - mostly in concert with teaching colleagues - opportunities to establish strategies to achieve instructional goals” (p. 354).

Lezotte (1991) stated that “the second generation correlates (characteristics of effective schools) represent a developmental step beyond the first (generation) and, when successfully accomplished, will move the school even closer to learning for all” (p. 245). Lezotte’s (1991) seven characteristics of effective schools serves as the theoretical basis upon which the problem statement and research questions of this study are based. The seven characteristics of effective schools emphasized by Lezotte (1991) were

1. Frequent monitoring of student achievement;
2. Instructional leadership;
3. Safe and orderly environment;
4. Positive home-school relations;
5. Climate of high expectation;
6. Opportunity to learn and student time on task; and

Each of the seven characteristics of effective schools are examined in detail in the subsequent section entitled characteristics of effective schools.
Characteristics of Effective Schools

Frequent Monitoring of Student Achievement

Within an effective school, student academic progress is measured frequently and used to improve both individual student performance as well as the overall instructional program (Duttweiler, 1998; Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). Edmonds (1979a, 1979b) found that the frequent monitoring of student progress was a very powerful characteristic, because through its application and evaluation it could drive the other characteristics. A study by Levine and Stark (1981) found many schools charted student performance and progress on a class by class basis and used this information to set minimum goals for introduction and pacing of lessons and materials. Lezotte (1985a, 1985b, 1991) stated that effective schools strive to align the intended, taught, and tested curriculum.

Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) and Sudlow (1990) in reviewing the research and writings of Edmonds identified five attributes of a sound student assessment program: (a) tests are developed locally to ensure students are assessed on material covered in the classroom; (b) assessments are nationally validated to ensure that the definition of mastery in one school district is acceptable in other districts; (c) tests are curriculum based, again insuring material coverage by students; (d) assessments are criterion referenced to ensure accuracy of assessment one student at a time; and, (e) measures are standardized to eliminate teacher subjectivity as a possible source of error. The feedback obtained from these measures has been explained by Duttweiler (1998) to have a positive effect on the learning climate of schools. Duttweiler (1998) stated that when student progress is evaluated frequently with a variety of assessment methods, feedback is provided to students and teachers which can strengthen the learning climate (p. 6).

Lezotte (1991) anticipated several changes in the future regarding the frequent monitoring of student progress. He contended that the increasing incorporation of technology in schools will allow teachers to do a better job of monitoring their students...
progress (p. 253). Additionally, this same technology will allow students to better monitor their own learning, providing feedback which can be used to modify behavior. Finally, he suggested that “in the area of assessment, the emphasis will continue to shift away from standardized norm-referenced paper and pencil tests and toward curricular based, criterion referenced measures of student mastery. Teachers will pay more attention to the alignment that must exist between the intended, taught, and tested curriculum” (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 253).

**Instructional Leadership**

Effective schools literature emphasized the role of a strong instructional leader in schools (Arnn & Mangieri, 1988; Bossert, 1988; Bossert, Rowan, Dwyer, and Lee, 1982; Duttweiler, 1998; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; OERI, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1985). Given that effective schools research assumed that schools become effective one at a time, the principalship has garnered a great deal of the attention in this area. However recent work regarding instructional leadership has revealed that the principal, while in the best position to influence the instructional climate, does not necessarily have to be the administrator who assumes the role of instructional leader (Levine & Stark, 1981).

What does it mean to be an instructional leader? According to Rosenholtz (1985) instructional leaders (usually the principal) have a unitary mission to improve student learning. This is accomplished primarily by improving instruction (OERI, 1987). Instructional leaders are those who “are much closer to the day to day instructional program, closely monitor pupil progress, and provide systematic feedback on goal attainment throughout the school year” (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 242).

Communicating this message of improved instruction to teachers, parents, and students is accomplished by modeling his or her expectations (OERI, 1987). The instructional leader emphasizes and models these expectations by making frequent classroom visitations, supporting appropriate staff development activities, and allocating
much time and energy for instructional programs (p. 40). Credibility as an instructional leader is enhanced by active participation in staff development as a presenter of information and pedagogy (OERI, 1987, p. 40). In this way instructional leaders are able to induce others to raise their levels of performance and to work toward the systems' goals (Griffin & Chance, 1994).

In addition to being able to communicate a message of instructional effectiveness, researchers have found many other traits and behaviors common to effective leadership. Bossert, Rowan, Dwyer, and Lee (1982) asserted that effective principals are successful in each of the following four areas of principal leadership:

1. Goals and production emphasis: Emphasis is placed on achievement (e.g. setting instructional goals, developing performance standards, expressing optimism about ability).

2. Power and decision making: Principals are more powerful than their ineffective counterparts, especially in the area of curriculum and instruction and mobilization of support in and out of the school.

3. Organization/Coordination: Good overall organization, devoting more time to support, coordinate and control instruction.

4. Human Relations: Recognize the unique styles and needs of teachers and help teachers achieve their own performance goals (p. 37).

In another study, Armn and Mangieri (1988) identified three behaviors as most important for principals to emphasize with teachers. The first was a task orientation. This behavior was the ability of teachers to create a classroom environment which was businesslike, where students spent most of their time on academic subjects and the teacher presented clear goals to their students. A second behavior important for principals to emphasize with teachers was enthusiasm and interest, which was the amount of a teacher's vigor, power, and involvement. Finally, the third behavior important to principals and teacher effectiveness concerned direct instruction. Direct instruction involved the extent to
which the teacher set and articulated learning goals, actively assessed student progress, and frequently made class presentations illustrating how to do assigned work. Amn and Mangieri (1988) stated that principals in effective schools emphasized the “activity” dimension of teaching (p. 4-6). More simply stated, principals of effective schools expect to see teachers teaching.

**Safe and Orderly Environment**

Within the effective school, an atmosphere exists which communicates an orderly, purposeful, and businesslike feeling. This environment is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 229). Edmonds (cited in Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 239) believed that effective schools were relatively safer, cleaner, more orderly, quieter, and so on. In an interview with Brandt (1982), Edmonds stated that differences between effective and ineffective schools in this regard were relative to the people operating them. For example, a broken window in a school does not discriminate, but the time it takes to fix the window does. If the broken window goes for a long time without being fixed, a message is conveyed to everyone that the people responsible for the school don’t care very much about it (Brandt, 1982, p. 13-14).

Duttweiler (1998) explained that a safe and orderly environment exists in a school when the entire school is dedicated to good discipline and where rules and procedures are well defined and communicated to teachers, students, and parents (p. 5). Five attributes of a safe and orderly environment were described by Murphy and Hallinger (1985). These attributes were: (a) school rules and standards for behavior were clearly specified; (b) consequences for breaking them were clearly understood by both parents and students; (c) discipline was progressive in nature; (d) rules were fairly and consistently enforced; and, (e) a great deal of thought and energy went into the enforcement of school rules through such efforts as regular telephone contacts with parents, high administrator visibility on campuses, and innovative disciplinary programs in lieu of suspension (p. 18).
Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) contended that future emphasis on a safe and orderly environment will additionally focus upon the presence of certain desirable behaviors as well as the absence of undesirable behaviors. These safe and orderly schools will be places where students and faculty increasingly help each other. In order for this to be accomplished a more collaborative and cooperative environment for both adults and students will require substantial commitment and change in most schools (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 249).

Positive Home and School Relations

Educational reforms over the last three decades have increasingly emphasized that parents should be given expanded roles in all aspects of the educational process, especially in the increased involvement of parents in the activities of their children's schooling (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Goldring & Shapria, 1996; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). Such reform efforts as school choice, charter schools, school vouchers, home schooling, local governing councils, parent education programs, and parent networking all indicate strong parental involvement programs (p.342). Nonetheless, Edmonds (cited in Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992) warned:

. . . it is certainly desirable to have the most exalted level of parent participation you can get. But the lesson I have learned from the data is that you are to never depend on it. One of the great implications of this work is that programs of school intervention must fix their attention exclusively on those characteristics over which the school has control (p. 247).

Similarly Lezotte (1991) cautioned that schools must continually strive to become increasingly effective, even when parents are unable or unwilling to become actively involved in school-wide efforts.

Epstein and Dauber (1991) spoke of overlapping spheres of influence of families and schools which can influence student learning and development as well as family and school effectiveness (p. 289). They explained that when teachers make parent
involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with their children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children in the elementary grades, and rate the teachers as better teachers overall. This improved parent involvement then has a positive impact on their child's attitude toward school and helps to increase student success in school (Epstein and Dauber, 1991). Goldring and Shapria (1996) added that parental involvement not only positively impacts student achievement and cognitive development, but also affects parents in terms of their attitudes and perceptions of themselves and schools (p.343).

In the governmental program Search for Successful Secondary Schools (OERI, 1987), a high degree of involvement by parents and community members was found in school affairs. The data of this program revealed five ways in which creative links to the community could be made:

1. Human Resources: Individuals who can provide important human resources are actively recruited by the staff in these exemplary secondary schools. Citizens are recruited as volunteers for clerical duties, to serve as nurse's assistants, to come into classrooms to teach, to tutor students, or help plan and implement special school programs and activities.

2. Public Relations: Aggressive public relations campaigns are those in which parents are used as promoters, communicators, and decision makers. In addition, rather than hiding crises from the community, these schools have turned their communities into allies to help solve problems.

3. Financial Resources: Exemplary schools also have staff who are able to attract financial resources from the community. Beyond the usual support for athletics local businesses contribute funds which are directed to be used for awards for citizenship, scholarship, and attendance.
4. Community Service: Schools invite themselves into the community. Students visit local nursing homes to establish relationships with the elderly; charitable organizations enjoy the youthful exuberance expressed in jog-a-thons etc.

5. Building an Identity: Creating a name in the community can convey a message of excellence and pride when people speak of the schools (p. 64-66).

Epstein and Dauber (1991) also defined six types of community/parent involvement within a school’s comprehensive programs. These were:

1. Basic obligations of families provided a positive home condition that supported school learning and behavior across the school years.

2. Basic obligation of schools included communications with families about school programs and children’s progress.

3. Involvement at school included parents and other volunteers who assisted in classrooms and other areas of the school and also included support for student performances.

4. Involvement in learning activities at home included requests and guidance from teachers for parents to assist their own children at home on learning activities that were coordinated with the children’s class work.

5. Involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy included parents and others in the community in participatory roles in the parent-teacher association/organization (PTA/PTO), advisory councils, Chapter 1 programs, or other committees or groups at the school, district, or state level.

6. Collaboration and exchanges with community organizations included connections with agencies, businesses, and other groups that share responsibility for child education and future successes (p. 290-291).
Schools that included the six types of involvement helped parents to, "... build home conditions for learning, understand communications from the schools, become productive volunteers at school, share responsibilities in their children’s education in learning activities related to curriculum at home, and include parents’ voices in decisions that affect the school and their children" (Epstein & Dauber, 1991, p. 291-292).

Finally Epstein and Dauber (1991) noted that most parents need help from schools to show them how to be productively involved in their children’s education at each grade level. Lezotte (1991) explained:

... the relationship between parents and the school must be an authentic partnership between the school and home. In the past when teachers said they wanted more parent involvement, more often than not they were looking for unqualified support from parents. Many teachers believed that parents, if they truly valued education, knew how to get their children to behave in the ways that the school desired. It is now clear to both teachers and parents that the parent involvement issue is not that simple. Parents are often as perplexed as teachers about the best way to inspire students to learn what the school teaches. The best hope for effectively confronting the problem - not each other- is to build enough trust and enough communication to realize that both teachers and parents have the same goal - an effective school and home for all children (p. 254-255).

Thus, research on parental involvement would indicate that schools must be willing not just to encourage parental involvement in schools, but to educate and instruct parents on the best parenting techniques to help families become actively involved in their children’s academic lives.

**Climate of High Expectation**

Within the effective schools literature the presence of high expectations for student performance and behavior, along with the communication methods to advance such a
message, has been frequently cited as a crucial characteristic of an effective school (Duttweiler, 1998; Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte, 1991; Bossert, 1985; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982). High expectations for student success is shared by the entire faculty of a school, and that shared belief is demonstrated on a daily basis in the ways teachers interact with students and the methods school administrators employ to support the art of instruction (Lezotte, 1991). A climate of high expectations for student achievement begins with a school staff that freely accepts the responsibility for enhancing the learning opportunities for their students (OERI, 1987, p. 56).

Duttweiler (1998) explained that high expectations for learning existed when there were well developed goals; when a commitment to them directed the school’s resources and functioning; when the focus was on student learning and student acceptance of responsibility; and when the expectation was that students from all socioeconomic levels could master the basic skills (p. 5). The US Department of Education program, Search for Successful Secondary Schools (OERI, 1987), surmised that higher expectations were frequently coupled with stronger reward systems. Most of the schools evaluated by the Search for Successful Secondary Schools used both formal and informal means to recognize achievement. Congratulatory letters and notes were employed for all types of achievements. These recognition programs included: (a) a student recognition luncheon program; (b) lists of achieving students are posted; (c) names are read over the PA system; student of the week recognition; (d) displays of student work; (e) student appreciation day; (f) athletic team GPA records; (g) academic display case; (h) perfect attendance awards; and (i) published student work (OERI, p. 58-59).

Levine (1991) additionally explained some points regarding the operationalization of high expectations for student achievement. First, he stated that high instructional expectations and requirements were generally more demanding on teachers. For example, teachers who minimize workbooks and ditto worksheets gave up easy methods for
maintaining classroom control and discipline. Second, Levine (1991) found that specific methods used to operationalize high expectations and requirements were:

... less important than the fact that something is being done systematically and vigorously to communicate and ensure a strong academic press and a climate conducive to learning. For example, strong homework policies that have been utilized at many unusually effective schools and departures from social promotion also found frequently at such schools may be less valuable for their direct impact on student behavior and performance than for their indirect transmittal of high expectations and their positive effect on school climate (p. 391).

Thus, maintaining high expectations for student achievement involves every professional educator, but especially focuses on teachers and the support of teachers in the classroom (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982).

As legislatures have increased pressure on school districts to be more accountable for student results, Lezotte's (1991) words regarding high expectations in the future have significant meaning. Lezotte (1991) believed that in the future, high expectations for student success will be judged

... not only by the initial staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the organization's response when some students do not learn. For example, if the teacher plans a lesson, delivers that lesson, assesses learning, finds that some students did not learn, and still goes on to the next lesson, then the teacher didn't expect the student's to learn in the first place. If the school condones through silence that teacher's behavior, it apparently does not expect students to learn, or the teacher to teach the students (p. 250).

Three changes were offered by Lezotte (1991) as a means of implementing this expanded definition of high expectations for students. First, teachers must come to understand that
high expectations for students begins with high expectations for self. Second, school organization must be reorganized to ensure that instructors have better access to tools and staff development opportunities to aid them in the pursuit of learning for all. And third, the culture of the school must be transformed from an institution designed for instruction into an institution designed to assure learning (p. 250).

**Opportunity to Learn and Student Time On Task**

Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) found that the staffs of effective schools were dedicated to the belief that schooling exists primarily to ensure that students acquire a basic set of cognitive skills. These unusually effective schools were those in which the teachers modified instruction to take account of students’ learning styles, utilized class time as fully and expeditiously as possible, scrutinized and revised grouping arrangements, implemented classroom and school-level climate improvement plans, and otherwise acted to ensure high time on task and opportunity to learn (Levine, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). Therefore, maximizing opportunities for students to learn and the time they spend on task was identified as a characteristic of effective schools (Bossert, 1988; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1985).

Two methods had been identified in the literature which increased student engagement time. First, teachers could be trained in classroom management practices, through staff development activities, to increase student engagement time (Bossert, 1988). Second, and maybe more importantly, effective managers (principals) attempted to buffer instructors from inside and outside interruptions; therefore providing greater opportunity to engage students (Bossert, 1985; Lezotte, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1985). Rosenholtz (1985) stated that principals in effective schools:

... buffer teachers’ time. Classroom time is protected from frequent interruptions such as loud speaker announcements (Stallings, 1980; Fisher, et al., 1980), school assemblies (Rutter et al., 1979), and other low priority intrusive events (Armor et al. 1976; Glenn & McLean, 1981; Sizemore et
Given the positive relationship between engaged time and learning, there is clear logic behind this buffering strategy: committing a larger portion of the school day to uninterrupted teaching increases the certainty of higher student achievement (Coleman 1982; Rutter 1979) (p. 371).

Researchers have found that effective schools provided teachers and students with ample amounts of uninterrupted learning time and were places where teachers practiced management strategies that engaged students on the tasks at hand (Bossert, 1988; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1985). The teachers working in effective schools also internally believed that they were able to teach all students a set of basic skills, regardless of social or economic backgrounds (Lezotte and Jacoby, 1992). But, Lezotte (1991) stated that effective schools in the future will have to do much more. Time according to Lezotte (1991) will continue to be a problem for schools. Schools truly interested in realizing the mission of learning for all must engage in the practice of organized abandonment. This means that staffs of effective schools must be willing to ask the question “What stays and what goes?” An alternative to this strategy would be to adjust the available time that students spend in school, so that those students who need more time to reach mastery would be given it (Lezotte, 1991, p. 252-253).

Clear and Focused Mission

Various researchers have noted that effective schools also share the characteristic of communicating to its students, parents, and staff a clear and focused mission (Brant, 1982; Duttweiler, 1998; Lesourd, Tracz, & Grady, 1992; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Murphy and Hallinger, 1985; OERI, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1985). This mission becomes the philosophy of the school and aids teachers and administrators when making important decisions in areas such as instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 243). How well the mission of a school is
communicated is reflected by the proportion of faculty in the school who know what this focus is (Edmonds, 1982 cited in Brandt, 1982).

According to Rosenholtz (1985) the characteristic of communicating a clear and focused school mission was positively influenced by the strength of the instructional leader. Strong instructional leaders (usually the principal of the school) held a vision of a school without any failure and they worked toward the success and recognition of all students (OERI, 1987). Lesourd, Tracz, and Grady (1992) stated that these leaders were visionaries who held strong personal convictions to which they were strongly committed. They indicated that instructional leaders

1. worked vigorously toward realizing the school's mission and goals while staying true to their own beliefs and convictions;
2. treated the school organization as a culture with traits and processes that were to be skillfully employed in efforts to effect change;
3. gained reputations as innovators, because of their willingness for change;
4. had a personal image of their school in the future. The imagined school of the future was better in some ways than the school of the present (p. 35).

Therefore, the definition of an instructional leader incorporated the role of an effective communicator, who had the ability to clearly articulate to others the school's mission.

Clearly communicating a school's mission had been cited by Rosenholtz (1985) as the beginning point after which social interaction takes place among the faculties of effective schools. The clear communication of a school's mission and goals increased interaction with organizational participants, increased participant interaction and increased organizational consensus. Increased organizational consensus led to greater faculty cohesiveness. High group cohesiveness compels teachers toward the adoption of student achievement as the school's primary mission (p. 366).

It was this shared philosophy which formed the basis for decisive action and the creation of a shared culture within a school. These were the essential ingredients of
successful schools. They were often the result of strong leadership and they led to the creation of a community in which educational leadership and progress could be sustained (OERI, 1987, p. 38).

Limitations and Truths of Effective Schools Research

Limitations

Effective schools research of the 1970s and 1980s successfully established that some schools were significantly better at educating children with similar populations of children (Rosenholtz, 1985). Unfortunately, careful analysis of effective schools research has been found to contain a number of methodological problems (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Cuban, 1983; Levine & Stark, 1981; Mace-Matluck, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1985; Prince & Taylor, 1995; Steadman, 1987). This section of the literature review focuses on the limitations found in effective schools research as well as the undeniable truths which have been established through research on school effects.

Purkey and Smith (1983) asserted that research methodologies employed in school effect studies left much to be desired. Rosenholtz (1985) asserted that some of the problems associated with effective schools studies included:

(a) the comparison of extreme outliers (highly effective schools with extremely ineffective) that neglect both the properties of “average” schools and the measurement of random error; (b) the reliance on case studies that provided no estimates of the relative importance of critical variables and, more importantly, their direction of causality; (c) the cross-sectional rather than longitudinal design of most studies raises questions about the stability of the findings; (d) the failure within some studies to control for confounding variables such as student social economic status (SES); and (e) the lack of generalizability to populations other than elementary schools (p. 353).
Cuban (1983) explained that school administrators must always be cognizant of the limitations inherent to a body of research before using it to create new policy. In his experience promoting effective schools projects, Cuban (1983) discovered many difficulties with the research of school effects. The difficulties he found included:

1. Effective schools research failed to consistently employ its characteristics of effective schools as a blueprint for improving the success of underachieving schools.

2. The language used from one study to the next was ambiguous. For example, many different definitions of an effective school exist.

3. Effectiveness is a constricted concept, tied narrowly to test results in mostly low level skills in math and reading. These studies ignore many skills, habits, and attitudes beyond the reach of paper and pencil tests. Educators and parents also prize outcomes of schooling that reach beyond current definitions of effectiveness, such as sharing, learning to make decisions, developing self esteem, acquiring higher level thinking skills and aesthetic sense.

4. Research has primarily been done in elementary schools. Apart from a few studies, most of the research has taken place in the lower elementary grades, and the findings have little applicability to the secondary school.

5. Employing effective schools research to improve schools have some unintended and possibly undesirable effects which include narrowed curriculum, teaching to exams, silent endorsement by administrators for a single best method for instruction, single minded focus of improved test scores, and schools with high test scores escape obligation to improve (Cuban, 1983, p. 695-696).

Steadman (1987) wrote that the research on effective schools provided little support toward substantiating the factors associated with effective schools. Two reasons were cited in support of the above statement. First, many of the schools that incorporated the characteristics of effective schools were still performing at an extremely low level of
achievement. And second, these schools may have needed to increase overall achievement by only a few percentage points to be called effective, even though this increase would clearly show many classes performing below grade level (p. 216).

Criticism of effective schools research has also focused on applicability of effective schools research (primarily conducted at the elementary level) to secondary schools. The Search for Successful Secondary Schools Project (OERI, 1987) stated that the transference of effective schools findings from the elementary level to the secondary level was more difficult because of differences in goals, structure, and organization (p. 18). Secondary schools tended to focus less on the development of basic skills and more on the development of higher ordered thinking skills, mastery of content in the disciplines, and vocational preparation. While the acquisition of basic skills is important, it does not define the instructional mission of the secondary school.

Organizational differences between the elementary level and the secondary level include differences in span of control, less consensus about goals and staff autonomy, and level of parent involvement (OERI, 1987, p. 18). Teachers in secondary schools are content specialists who are influenced more by peers in their disciplines than by administrators. And, the students at the secondary level are older, requiring educators to address a wider array of issues. The OERI report stated:

Order and work demands must be negotiated in secondary schools. Peers become powerful competitors to adult authority and may obstruct the development of positive relationships with adults. Students are more aware of their interests and may be more critical of the link between these interests and curricular options. Student interests also are strongly influenced by their social and economic environment, their education aspiration and motivations shaped by the job market and the cost of going to college. Secondary students also have more freedom, more mobility, and more out of school options that compete for their time attention (p. 23).
In sum, motivating older students to perform school tasks is more problematic and varying than it is among their younger counterparts.

**Truths**

Mindful of these methodological pitfalls, there are at least three reasons to regard the body of effective schools literature as much more than spurious (Rosenholtz, 1985). First, several studies have shown schools which made organizational changes consistent with the findings of effective schools research to have become more successful. Second, even when controlling for random error, analysts have found that organizational characteristics account for 32 percent of between-school variance in student achievement (Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983, p. 27). Third, effective schools research was conducted within a relatively compressed time frame, not building serially from one study to the next; yet all studies produce common findings with remarkable consistency (Rosenholtz, 1985, p. 353).

The Search for Successful Secondary Schools Project (OERI, 1987) stated that even though research on effective schools has often been criticized for methodological weakness, it is important to remember that the findings were merely relationships between school characteristics and student performance on standardized tests (p. 17). What is striking is that dozens of the effective school studies have found similar conclusions, and even further that this research is also consistent with studies on effective teaching (OERI, 1987). Clark, Lotto, and Astuto (1984) even suggested that there were many parallels between the findings of effective schools research and the conditions found in highly successful businesses (p. 64).

Other criticism of effective schools research has focused on the degree the findings can be applied to secondary schools. However, two pieces of research, the study of London secondary schools by Michael Rutter and his colleagues (1979) and the comparative analysis of public and private secondary schools in the United States by James Coleman and his associates (1982) identified secondary school variables that are linked to
higher student achievement, and their findings were strikingly similar to the conclusions of other school effectiveness studies. It was for reasons such as these that Rosenholtz (1985) asserted, "It strains the limits of credibility that different studies, conducted by different investigators in different urban areas, could produce strikingly similar findings by chance" (p. 353). Therefore, there are powerful and persuasive arguments for using the findings from research on effective schools as one basis for defining indicators of quality and success (OERI, 1987, p. 18).

Research on the School District Superintendent

According to Levine (1991) the success of an effective schools program depends on a judicious mixture of autonomy for participating faculties and control from the superintendent and the central office (p. 392). Levine (1991) called this relationship a kind of directed autonomy. It follows then that the superintendent and their central office staff all play an important part in improving the quality of instruction (Parjak & Glickman, 1989). The critical role of the school district superintendent has been alluded to throughout the effective schools and school improvement literature (Buckly, 1993, Cuban, 1984; Edmonds, 1982; Fullan, 1985; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Parjak & Glickman, 1989; Leslie, 1992; Lezotte, 1989 & 1994; Murphy, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1994; Taylor & Levine, 1991).

Concentration upon the superintendent in the area of instructional leadership has not been emphasized in educational research (Bjork, 1993; Boone, 1992; Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984; Cuban, 1984; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Shoemaker, 1986; ). In fact, Murphy (1991b) stated that if district superintendents were considered at all, they were often thought of as part of the problem rather than part of the solution (p. 511). But Lezotte (1989) stated that creating effective schools required the leadership, collaboration, and support of the central office (superintendent) and school board (p.18). This
relationship between an effective superintendent and a successful school district was aptly explained by Lezotte (1994):

When researchers find a school where all students master the intended curriculum, they soon realize they are in the presence of an anomaly - a school where the normal flow has been altered by some powerful force. If the researchers find themselves in a school district where several schools are anomalies, they know the normal flow has been altered by a powerful force, one probably located in the superintendent's office (p. 21).

This is why many researchers have called for increased study of the district superintendent and their impact on increasing the effectiveness of schools (Boone, 1992; Bjork, 1993; Cuban, 1984; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Parjak & Glickman, 1989; Shoemaker, 1986).

According to Eaker, Ranells, and Dufour (1991), district leadership is a prerequisite for success toward the goal of school improvement:

...it is very difficult to convince teachers that school improvement will be the major thrust of the district without the visible and vocal leadership from the school board and superintendent. The superintendent is in the best position to promote, protect, and defend the district's school improvement efforts (p. 8).

Eaker and associates (1991) stated that the district level leadership (superintendent and their staffs) needed to manifest itself in at least three ways. Planning emphasized the establishment of processes and procedures which lead to a shared view of what the district should become. Monitoring stressed the continued effort in the observation and evaluation over valued programs. Finally modeling was the outward behavior of leaders which advertised and communicated personal values as well as central values around which the organization operated (p. 8-10).

Griffin (1994) identified three themes under which school superintendents impacted the effectiveness of their districts. The themes of focus, support, and beliefs were all
emphasized. Superintendent focus brought clarity of vision and organizational goals and ensured an alignment between the intended curriculum, taught curriculum and the tested curriculum, while holding others accountable for measurable results and outcomes. Disaggregated test data were used as a tool within the instructional program to improve student achievement.

Support was the second theme (Griffin, 1994). In this area the superintendent recognized the district staff as professionals by providing staff with the assistance necessary to accomplish school improvement tasks and organizational goals. Staff development programs consisted of training designed to foster teacher skills in directing and monitoring student progress.

The third theme was beliefs. Beliefs were the driving and sustaining forces linked to a superintendent's efforts in the areas of focus and support. These beliefs contributed to the process of actualizing visions which ultimately conveyed the message that all students can learn (Griffin, 1994, p. 25-26).

Instructionally effective superintendents as distinguished from typical superintendents, engaged in certain types of behaviors. Murphy and Hallinger (1986) stated that these behaviors included: (a) setting goals and establishing expectations and standards; (b) selecting staff; (c) supervising and evaluating; (d) establishing a clear instructional and curricular focus; (e) insuring consistency in technical core activities (i.e. curriculum, instruction and budgeting); and (f) monitoring curriculum and instruction (p. 220-228). Cuban (1984) similarly claimed that school boards and the superintendent were keys to the success or failure of school reform. Cuban (1984) explained

Faith and folk wisdom also suggest that the superintendent exerts a critical role in establishing the district agenda, communicating the mission of the district to both the staff and community, creating a system wide climate favoring achievement, targeting essential personnel and funds, and
monitoring and assessing the overall program in order to implement school board policies directed toward school improvement (p. 145).

Murphy (1991b) stated that effective superintendents were "those who manage the seemingly contradictory elements of the job: to develop leadership both from the top down and from the bottom up, to be both tough and gentle, to be leader and follower" (p. 513).

Boone (1992) contended that one of the direct methods by which instructionally effective superintendents accomplish their goals was through the administrative control of building principals. This control was normally exercised through frequent site visitations which are designed to meet specific purposes (Boone, 1992). While principals are normally expected to be the instructional leaders of their schools, empowering principals to exercise instructional leadership requires supportive behavior on the part of the superintendent. McCurdy (1983) summarized what principals expected from the superintendent of schools:

1. Foster open, two way communication with principals. Principals want to be told what is expected of them and want to be able to use the superintendent as a sounding board for ideas.

2. Provide more support, especially in setting goals, giving recognition for accomplishment and building confidence.

3. Give principals more authority to try new approaches and take risks. Principals also want to be responsible for managing their buildings without interference and to be held accountable for results. Principals appreciate firmness in ends, but flexibility in means (p. 56-57).

Superintendents were also rated highly by principals if they engaged in joint principal-superintendent goal setting and who also involved them in district decision making (McCurdy, 1983, p. 57).

Bjork (1993) indicated that structural aspects of the school district organization provided superintendents with a means of fulfilling the role of instructional leader. School superintendents maintained indirect influence over the behavior of building level principals.
and teachers. The effectiveness of the superintendent was therefore determined by their willingness or unwillingness to alter the structure in which these individuals work (Bjork, 1993, p. 251). Bjork (1993) stated:

This perspective suggests that a change in the superintendent's behavior at one end of the organizational hierarchy may signal changes in performance at the building and classroom levels. Thus, the structural changes initiated by the superintendent in such areas as evaluation and rewards for performance, staff recruitment, selection and socialization, and rules and regulations provide a crucial "valuation tie that binds from top to bottom" (Crowson and Morris, 1990, p.6). (p. 251).

Instructional leadership at the superintendent level involves sending messages and role cues to participants at the lower levels in the organization through clear articulation of goals as well as recognition for those who support the designated goals. In this way, the school superintendent may garner greater influence toward changing the behavior of principals and teachers at the building and classroom levels (Bjork, 1993).

Instructional leadership of the central office (superintendents and their staffs) was cited by Pajak and Glickam (1989) as being instrumental in overall district improvement. They found that administrative and supervisory functions were quite specialized, with superintendents more heavily involved in external affairs and supervisors concentrating more on the internal workings of the district. District level supervisors were heavily engaged in facilitating the improvement effort by working directly with teachers and principals. Effective districts were those which created a climate for professional dialogue, provided supervisory support, and welcomed leadership from a variety of positions and levels (p.61). Specifically, Pajak and Glickman (1989) found that the role of an effective central office provided:

1. Instructional dialogue: Effective districts made continual dialogue about improving instruction, schools, departments, grade levels. System
meetings emphasized planning, implementing, and reviewing curriculum and instruction. Teachers viewed peers and supervisors as working with them, not on them, to help improve instruction.

2. Infrastructure of support: Superintendents provided an organizational structure for designated positions that were responsible for stimulating dialogue about improving instruction and increasing student achievement.

3. Sources of instructional leadership: central office supervisors, lead teachers, assistant principals for instruction, department and grade level heads, and teams of teachers provided a great deal of instructional leadership within schools. This finding runs contrary to the findings that school principals are the primary impetus of instructional leadership (p. 61-63).

Shoemaker (1986) divided the role of the superintendent and the district office into six major categories: (a) initiating; (b) planning; (c) conferring legitimacy; (d) enhancing implementation; (e) evaluating; and (f) sustaining effort (p. 5-6). Initiating included such functions as the creation of a mission statement and goals, introduction of a collaborative planning process, and public commitment from the superintendent of schools and the board of education. The development of outcomes and learning objectives to help teachers and principals focus their energies toward improved instruction was the planning function of a district office. Conferring legitimacy referred to the development of policies that protected learning practices such as homework, retention standards, and expansion of academic learning time. Providing staff development opportunities, technical assistance in collecting and analyzing data, and allocating appropriate resources came under the function of enhancing implementation. The evaluation role of the district office was defined as using data and communicating data to increase effective practices at the school level was the focus of the evaluating role of the district office. Finally, sustaining effort included those efforts.
by the superintendent and central staff supervisors which maintained the motivation required at all levels for sustained growth and improvement (Shoemaker, 1986, p. 5-6).

According to Hord (1990) instructionally effective superintendents created an atmosphere for change by challenging staff to generate ideas for improvement by arranging and reinforcing the exchange of ideas among staff and by supporting risk taking activities. Furthermore, instructionally effective superintendents clearly communicated a vision of what each school and the school district should be to the board of education, principals, teachers, and the community. Finally, instructionally effective superintendents created an atmosphere of collegiality with principals by being actively involved in the hiring of principals, being readily accessible to principals with no intervening administrative structures, setting and maintaining clearly established expectations, and by developing plans for principal's growth which are linked to district goals and to school needs (p. 37-39).

This literature review has attempted to demonstrated that the superintendent is an essential figure in the improvement process of schools and the school district. For improvement to occur, change must occur (Fullan, 1985). Leslie (1992) stated that there is a growing body of literature which suggests that the leadership of the superintendent of schools is the critical component in institutionalizing educational change. Change is affected by the superintendent and district level administrators by (a) establishing a climate for change, and (b) exhibiting active backing in the form of communicated expectations for success, psychological support, needed resources, and local facilitation assistance (Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984, p. 53-55).

Fullan (1985) asserted that there is a need for the . . . superintendent (or any other program leader seeking improvements) to clarify and develop the capacity of central district staff to support innovation development and implementation . . . In the same way that the principal who interacts regularly with teachers in relation to an innovation has a
strong positive effect, the central district leader who interacts regularly with district staff (and for that matter principals) in relation to the innovation process improves their abilities as change facilitators (p. 405-406).

Fullan further identified the roles that a superintendent and their staffs play when implementing change to improve effectiveness as: (a) scanners, adapters, and advocates of promising new practices; (b) direct implementation assisters to teachers; (c) teaming with facilitators external to the district by providing implementation assistance after an external facilitator has conducted front end training; and (d) indirect roles such as the training of principals/or resource teachers who provide direct support to teachers (p. 406). The research would indicate that superintendents and central office administrators must be actively involved (directly or indirectly) throughout the process, not just at the initial or final phases.

While being a facilitator for change is an important characteristic for a superintendent to possess, Trigg (1997) explained that other attributes are also critical to the success of a superintendent. He stated that a successful superintendent or administrator at any level provided a safe environment for children to learn and ensured that learning is occurring for all children. Additionally, Trigg (1997) suggested that no single personality type dominates the ranks of successful leaders, but most do possess four particular traits:

1. **Honesty and Integrity:** Effective leaders model ethical behavior on a daily basis, and they do not tolerate anything less from those around them.

2. **Clear simple vision:** Successful leaders have clear and simple visions and beliefs. Their visions are based on academic achievement, quality teaching, and providing a safe environment for students and staff.

3. **High expectations:** For innovation in problem solving; regular monitoring of programs is critical to ensure these high expectations are being met.
4. Courage: The ability to stand up for what is right or best for the organization, even if it means standing alone (p. 9).

Summary

Central points and ideas which were consistently communicated through this review of the literature on effective schools indicated that district superintendent has a critical role in creating and maintaining effective schools and an effective school district (Buckly, 1993, Cuban, 1984; Edmonds, 1982; Fullan, 1985; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Parjak & Glickman, 1989; Leslie, 1992; Lezotte, 1989 & 1994; Murphy, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1994; Taylor & Levine, 1991). However, no studies were found that explored if public school superintendents perceived themselves to be leaders consistent with the characteristics and leadership behaviors identified within the effective schools research (Chance, personal communication, May 1, 1998). Therefore this study investigated the perceptions of superintendent behavior in relation to the characteristics of effective schools research which contributed to the body of research literature on the superintendent and effective schools research.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND DATA DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Hord (1992) stated that unlike the study of the effective school principal research on the superintendent is still in its infancy. In this study, a multi-methodological design was employed to gain an understanding between the perceptions of nationally recognized superintendents and their use of the effective schools research in the leadership of their school districts. Both quantitative (mailed survey questionnaires) and qualitative (telephone interviews) methods were used to focus in on the phenomenon of interest to this study.

Quantitative research methods employ a positivist framework by utilizing instruments to collect data (Creswell, 1994). Positivism refers to a scientific method widely used in both the natural and social sciences (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 16). Aspects of a positivistic methodology include the careful design of data collection techniques, the elimination of biases, and the selection of a representative sample from the population (Creswell, 1994, p. 116). Borg and Gall (1989) explained that positivism is:

a system of philosophy that excludes everything from its consideration except natural phenomena and their interrelationships. One of the major principles of logical positivism is the verifiability principle, which states that something is meaningful if and only if it can be observed objectively by the human senses (p. 17).
Therefore quantitative research strives to be as objective as possible by eliminating a researcher's "values, interpretations, feelings, and musings" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p.17).

Qualitative research relies on observation, interviews, and document analysis, or a combination of these to provide an in-depth understanding of what is studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). This model was developed by anthropologists and sociologists and has been called by such names as, "qualitative, naturalistic, ethnographic, subjective, or post-positivistic" inquiry (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 380). The use of qualitative interviews in this study were employed to provide personal contact with subjects and to clarify any concepts or questions derived from the mailed survey questionnaire.

The combination of methodologies designed to study the same phenomenon has been called a triangulated measure (Borg & Gall, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Triangulated measures attempt to "pinpoint the values of a phenomenon more accurately by sighting it from different methodological viewpoints (Brewer & Hunter, 1987, p. 17)." Marshall and Rossman (1995) stated, "Designing a study in which multiple cases, multiple informants, or more than one data gathering method are used can greatly strengthen the study's usefulness for other settings" (p. 144). In this study a "two-phase/dominant-less dominant design" was used to triangulate the data (Creswell, 1994, p. 177).

Chapter three describes the constructs and procedures utilized to address the problem statement identified in chapter one. Triangulation of the data was achieved by using two different methods for collecting the data of interest to this study. These were (a) mailed survey questionnaires to nationally recognized superintendents as identified by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) as a means of obtaining their perceptions about their leadership behaviors in relation to the effective schools research and (b) semi-structured telephone interviews with superintendents as a means of strengthening the findings of the mailed questionnaire.
Statement of the Problem

This study determined how nationally recognized public school superintendents, as identified by the American Association of School Administrators, perceived themselves to be leaders consistent with the characteristics and leadership behaviors identified within the effective schools research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to increase the knowledge about the qualities, attitudes, and behaviors of public school superintendents in relation to the effective schools research. It also sought to further investigate the relationship between the role of the superintendent and the creation of effective schools and effective school districts. Finally, this research described how a recognized population of public school superintendents perceived themselves to incorporate effective school methods in their leadership strategies or styles. This study therefore provided the opportunity to validate the findings of effective research through the investigation of the superintendents office.

This information was useful because it contributed to the knowledge about education. Borg and Gall (1989) distinguished between four types of research knowledge: (a) description, (b) prediction, (c) improvement, and (d) explanation (p. 5). This study described how nationally recognized superintendents behaved and impacted upon a school district in relation to the effective schools literature. It further provided information for superintendents to improve themselves in the field of educational leadership while also lending itself as a basis for further research. Finally, this study furnished data which supported that nationally recognized superintendents did perceive themselves to be using the characteristics of effective schools research in their practice of leadership. This research therefore has served to not only add to the knowledge of the superintendent's office in relation to the effective schools research, but has also served to validate the research known as school effects.
Research Questions

This study determined how nationally recognized public school superintendents, as identified by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), perceived themselves to be leading their districts in relation to the characteristics and behaviors of the effective schools research. Superintendents who had been selected as superintendent of the year for 1999 for each individual state by the affiliate organizations of AASA served as the sample of this study. The following research questions were used to answer the problem statement of this study:

1. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to the monitoring of student progress?
2. How do recognized superintendents perceive themselves as instructional leaders?
3. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to creating a safe and orderly environment for schools?
4. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to establishing home and school relations?
5. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to promoting a climate of high expectations?
6. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to encouraging student opportunity to learn and time on task?
7. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to developing a clear and focused mission?
Instrumentation

Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was created (see Appendix A) consisting of 70 Likert-type scale items, each describing a specific characteristic of effective schools as defined by Lezotte (1991). These characteristics were: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly environment; (d) positive home/school relations; (e) climate of high expectations, (f) student opportunity to learn and time on task; and, (g) a clear and focused mission. Table 1 describes each questionnaire item correlated with the appropriate characteristic of effective schools research. While there may be some overlap, each survey item was listed only under one characteristic.

Table 1

Summary Profile of Survey Question Items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Total Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress</td>
<td>15, 38, 41, 44, 53, 65</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>4, 7, 8, 19, 21, 25, 28, 37, 39, 45, 46, 49, 55, 59, 60, 62, 67, 70</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and orderly environment/climate</td>
<td>10, 14, 20, 22, 33, 36, 40, 51, 54</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-School Relations</td>
<td>3, 6, 16, 26, 29, 34, 57, 68</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>9, 13, 17, 18, 23, 35, 47, 56, 64, 66</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to Learn/Time On Task</td>
<td>32, 43, 48, 50, 52, 58</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and Focused Mission</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 11, 12, 24, 27, 30, 31, 42, 61, 63, 69</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item responses ranged from strongly disagree 1 to strongly agree 7. Selected superintendents were instructed to choose the number (1-7) which most appropriately described their perceptions for each item. A modified Likert scale was used for each
question of the mailed survey because it provided, "great flexibility since the descriptors on
the scale can vary to fit the nature of the question or statement (McMillan & Schumacher,
1997, p. 257). In order to ensure a response commitment, the respondent was not offered
an opportunity to select a noncommittal response (i.e., "don't know/undecided"). A
comments section was also provided on the response form for superintendents to provide
any additional information they may have deemed pertinent to the study.

The survey questionnaire was a modified instrument utilizing items from two earlier
studies (Griffin, 1992; Villanova, Gauthier, Proctor, Shoemaker, Freedman, Lappert, &
Waterman, 1989). Both authors were appropriately cited and permission was obtained to
use the copyrighted Connecticut school effectiveness questionnaire (1989) from the
Connecticut State Department of Education (see Appendix III). Each item of the survey
questionnaire was modified to reflect superintendent perceptions.

When developing or modifying a survey questionnaire, steps need to be taken to
ensure the content validity of the instrument. Content validity is the degree to which the
test items measure what they are designed to measure (Borg & Gall, 1989). McMillian
and Schumacher (1997) reported that using experts in the field to examine and evaluate test
items was one method that could be employed to establish content related validity (p. 236).
The survey questionnaire employed in this study was therefore sent to experts in the fields
of effective schools research or research on the superintendency to establish content
validity. Reviews were made by George Pawlas from the University of Central Florida,
Richard Saxe from the University of Toledo, and most notably from Lawrence W. Lezotte
from the Effective Schools Research Center. Their suggestions were noted and minor
adjustments to the questionnaire and cover letter were appropriately made.

Following the review of the survey questionnaire by experts in the field, a pilot
study was conducted to ensure a sound research plan (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 77).
Seventeen currently employed superintendents from the state of Nevada were asked to
participate in the pilot study. This pilot study helped to: (a) identify any survey questions

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that were ambiguous or unclear; (b) determine any changes needing to be made with regard to the administration of the questionnaire; (c) perform a brief analysis of the data obtained using the methods to be employed in the actual study, and; (d) to determine if any additional questions may be needed to highlight concepts underdeveloped in the original instrument (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 345-346). Each participant was asked to circle questions which seemed difficult to understand or unclear and to write any suggestions for improvement.

The pilot study ran over a six week period. At the end of six weeks, approximately 59% (10/17) of the pilot population had returned the mailed survey. Data entry and analysis were made on the pilot data as a means of preparing for the actual study. Comments made on the survey stated that the instrument itself was clearly understandable and required little revision. It was found that the postcard reminder (3rd stage mailing) resulted in no additional returns of the mailed survey. To increase the return rate of the actual study, an introductory letter was mailed one week prior to the first mailing of the questionnaire and a third complete mailing and telephone calls would be made to non-responding superintendents when administering the actual study. This was performed in place of the reminder postcard.

**Telephone Interviews**

Using the responses from the mailed survey questionnaire and Griffin's (1992) superintendent interview questionnaire, a semi-structured telephone interview was constructed as a means of strengthening the results obtained from the mailed survey (see appendix A). An 11 item interview along with possible follow up questions for each item was developed. Each item was correlated to a specific area of effective schools research as defined by Lezotte (1991).

The telephone instrument was sent to the same experts who validated the mailed survey questionnaire. Reviews were made by George Pawlas from the University of Central Florida and by Richard Saxe from the University of Toledo. Unfortunately, Dr.
Lawrence W. Lezotte from the Effective Schools Research Center did not respond to repeated requests to review the telephone interview. Their suggestions were noted and adjustments to the interview were appropriately made. A field test of the telephone interview was considered, but time constraints prevented this from occurring.

Population

A target population is the group of individuals that conform to specific characteristics in which the results of the research is to be generalized (Jolliffe, 1986; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). For the purposes of this study the target population was defined as those superintendents who had been recognized for their efforts within education by being named superintendent of the year. A sample of nationally recognized public school superintendents was determined by the professional organization and their affiliate state organizations known as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). This sample was composed of 51 superintendents who were selected as superintendent of the year for their individual states. Their names were also submitted to AASA for the American Association of School Administrators Superintendent of the Year for 1999. A list of superintendents was secured by contacting AASA and requesting the names, nominating state, and business address of each state superintendent of the year for 1999.

In order for a superintendent to be considered for the AASA superintendent of the year award, an in-depth written application was first submitted by the superintendent or on his or her behalf. A panel then used the following criteria to evaluate applications:

1. Leadership for learning. The application had shown creativity in successfully meeting the needs of the students in his or her school system.

2. Communication Skills. The applicant had exhibited strength in both personal and organizational communication.
3. **Professionalism.** The applicant had demonstrated commitment through consistently upgrading his or her administrative knowledge and skills, providing professional development opportunities for other members of the educational team, and motivated others to achieve.

4. **Community involvement.** The applicant had demonstrated knowledge about and active involvement in local community activities, as well as an understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

This program was open to all US public school superintendents and superintendents of American schools abroad, including Department of Defense Activity Schools. The school system size had no bearing on the eligibility of the school superintendent.

AASA reviews all applications for completeness. Entries were then separated by state and returned to the chief executive officer of each state association of school administrators. Each state association formed a special selection committee to choose the Superintendent of the Year representing that state. Selection processes vary in the degree of rigor and competitiveness for the award of superintendent of the year. It was noted that some state selection processes ascribed to the motto, "who's turn is it?"; while other states ascribed to the selection process motto of, "who has truly earned it?" (E.W. Chance personal communication, April, 15, 1998; R. McCord, personal communication November 9, 1999). These selections were made on or before November 15 for each year.

This study's sample included 49 of the 51 nationally recognized superintendents for 1999. Two superintendents were not included in the study. One Department of Defense superintendent and the Nevada superintendent who had participated in the field test of the mailed questionnaire. Hawaii was not represented because it employs only one superintendent of schools and therefore does not participate in the recognition program.
Design of the Study

This study employed what Creswell (1994) called a two phase/dominant less dominant design (p. 177). The two phase approach uses the triangulation of different methodologies as a means of studying the same phenomenon. What is unique to this approach is that the researcher conducts a quantitative phase of the study and a separate qualitative phase. The advantage of this design is that the two approaches are clearly separate and allows the researcher to present thoroughly the paradigm assumptions behind each phase (Creswell, 1994, p. 177). A disadvantage given by Creswell (1994) was that the reader may not be able to understand, "the connection between the two phases" (p. 177).

A dominant/less dominant design allowed the researcher to present the study within a single dominant paradigm with one small component of the overall study drawn from the alternative paradigm (Creswell, 1994, p. 177). In this study, the dominant design was the use of the mailed survey questionnaire (quantitative measure) to the 49 nationally recognized superintendents. The less dominant method was the qualitative interviews conducted with 10% of the sample population. The advantage of this design was the use of one paradigm as the means of presenting a clear and consistent picture, while still gathering limited information from another venue to further probe other aspects of the study (Creswell, 1994).

Quantitative Mailed Survey Questionnaire

The mailed survey questionnaire design (first and dominant phase) used numbers to numerically represent the obtained data. According to Borg and Gall (1989), survey instruments are "... data collection tools used to obtain standardized information from all subjects in a sample" (p. 417). The purpose of such research is to generalize from a sample population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population (Babbie, 1990).
The survey questionnaire approach was selected because of its many advantages. These included the economy of the design, a rapid turnaround time in data collection, and the ability to identify attributes of a population from a small group of individuals (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Fowler, 1988; Orlich, 1974; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). Fowler (1988) also reported that the advantages of mailed questionnaires included relative low cost, minimal staff and facilities, access to a widely dispersed sample which would be difficult to reach by telephone or in person, and respondents have time to give thoughtful answers, to look up records, or consult with others (p. 71). In addition, Babbie (1990) stated that survey research was guided by the constraints of logical understanding, focusing that understanding beyond the sample to the larger population from which the sample was initially selected. Survey research can also examine a large number of variables while at the same time obtain the greatest amount of understanding from the fewest number of variables (Babbie, 1990, p. 47).

A cross sectional survey methodology was be employed to obtain standard information from a sample drawn from the target population (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 418). The 49 nationally recognized superintendents for the year 1999 served as a convenience sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 164) drawn from the entire population of recognized superintendents. Babbie (1990) stated that cross-sectional surveys collect data from a sample to describe a larger population at that point in time (p. 62). He also reported that the survey questionnaire design can do more than describe conditions, but can also determine relationships at a single point in time (Babbie, 1990, p. 62).

Qualitative Telephone Interviews

Semi-structured telephone interviews served as the second and less dominant phase for collecting the data of interest to this study. Upon receipt of the initial survey mailings, ten percent of those superintendents agreeable to an interview were randomly selected (with replacement) to be called over the telephone. The review of the literature on effective schools research, superintendent behaviors and activities, and instructional leadership as
well as responses from those superintendents participating in the pilot test contributed to the development of the semi structured telephone interview questions.

The use of interviews in research was advantageous because it collected data through direct verbal interaction between individuals (Borg & Gall, 1989). Contrasted with the mailed survey questionnaire, the interview allowed for follow up on leads and the collection of data with greater clarity. Telephone interviews also offered an avenue to reduce cost, opportunity for frequent callbacks, access to a population of subjects which may not have otherwise be feasible, and the monitoring and quality control of telephone interviews was much easier (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 456-457). Orlich (1974) also listed some of the advantages associated with the interview. These included: (a) feelings of the respondents are revealed; (b) discussion is allowed about the causes of problems or solutions of problems; (c) the respondent is allowed maximum opportunity for free expression; (d) respondents may provide personal information, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions that might not be gained on a written instrument.; (e) a high rate of participation is provided; (f) researcher has an opportunity to follow up or probe for leads; (g) fewer individuals may be needed than for mailed surveys; and, (h) comparisons may be made with mailed surveys (p. 8-9).

A semi-structured interview approach was used to interview selected superintendents. This type of format first asked respondents a series of structured questions and then probed more deeply, using open-ended questions to complete the obtained data (Borg & Gall, 1989). The semi-structured interview has the advantage of being reasonably objective while providing a greater understanding of the respondents opinions and motives. According to Borg and Gall (1989) the semi structured interview was most appropriate for interview studies in education (p. 452).
Procedure for Collecting Data

Approval was sought and permission was granted by the University of Nevada Las Vegas to conduct research with human subjects regarding this study. The Office of Sponsored Programs gave its approval to conduct the study for a period of one year beginning October 1, 1999. A copy of the letter of permission is on file at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Once the sample population, survey questionnaire, and semi-structured telephone interview protocol were finalized, a four stage process was used for mailing the questionnaire to the members of the sample. Creswell (1994) recommended (a) an initial mailing; (b) a second mailing of the complete instrument after two weeks; and (c) a third mailing of a postcard as a reminder to complete and send in the questionnaire (p. 122). In this study, a modification of Creswell's (1994) three stage process was utilized. Data collection using the mailed survey questionnaire employed the following four stages:

1. An introductory letter was sent one week prior to sending out the questionnaire which introduced the researcher and the study. The purpose of this pre-mailing was to produce a greater response rate to the first and second questionnaire mailings (See Appendix III).

2. A complete mailing of the survey questionnaire which included a cover letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed return envelope. This yielded 26 returns or a 54% response rate.

3. A second complete mailing of the questionnaire was sent to non-responding superintendents (70% response rate had not been obtained) three weeks after the first mailing. This yielded six additional returns for a total 67% response rate.

4. Six weeks after the initial mailing of the questionnaire a 70% return rate had not been obtained. Telephone calls were then placed to those superintendents not responding; followed by a third complete mailing of the instrument. This stage yielded ten more returns for a total 86% response rate.
Each complete mailing included a stamped self addressed return envelope, a demographic information sheet, cover letter, and questionnaire. The four stage process used to collect the mailed questionnaire data was completed in eleven weeks.

The telephone interviews were conducted over a three week period. Superintendents participating in the mailed questionnaire were asked if they would be willing to participate in a random telephone interview. From the list of agreeing superintendents (who responded from the first mailing), a random sample of five superintendents (ten percent of the sample) was drawn to participate in the telephone interviews.

Interviews were scheduled with each superintendent or their office over the telephone. One week prior to the interview, each superintendent was sent a letter confirming the date and time of the telephone interview along with an outline of the areas to be covered during the conversation (see Appendix III). Each telephone interview was approximately 50 minutes in duration and each was recorded and transcribed to preserve the obtained data. The interview data collection process took three weeks to complete.

Analysis of the Data

Quantitative Mailed Survey Questionnaire

The results obtained from the mailed survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics describe the location of the center of a distribution (Fink, 1995) which provides a description of how a particular group of subjects responded to the characteristic, or event, at the time the measurement was made (Bishop, 1991). The values of the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation were calculated for each survey question item. A frequency distribution was also made for each questionnaire item. Frequency distributions provided a simple count of how frequently each value of the variable occurred among the set of measured observations. From these frequency distributions, percentages were computed indicating the number of respondents...
who marked a particular category in relationship to the total number of respondents (Orlich, 1974).

According to Orlich (1974) the reporting of percentages and means are adequate analytical methods, with the use of computed means from Likert-type responses being most useful to researchers (p.144). The use of the same Likert scale for all questions on the mailed questionnaire allows for the computation of means for each item on the survey. The computing of means then permits the rank ordering or prioritizing of each item on the survey to be made. Agreements and disagreements between selected groups and items can easily be observed in this manner.

The first step in analyzing the data obtained from the mailed survey questionnaires was the coding of the data and its entry into a statistical computer program called SPSS. Each subject was assigned an identification code to protect the subject's privacy and for the ease of subject identification (Borg & Gall, 1989). Item responses were coded according to each subject's circled responses (Likert scale 1-7) for each survey question item. Once the data from the mailed survey questionnaires had been coded and entered into the SPSS program, descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, percentages, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations) were computed which described how the sample population distributed itself across each item of the mailed survey.

Borg and Gall (1989) stated that continuous checks need to be made to ensure accuracy of data entry and data analysis. This process begins by first visually inspecting data displays for data input errors. These errors may be large or small values of a variable or mis-aligned columns. The second step was to make spot checks on parts of the data file as a means of revealing any unacceptable errors. Third, the results of statistical analysis needed to be checked. This was done by first visually inspecting the results to ensure that they were realistic and plausible and then recalculated the analyses after waiting an unspecified period of time (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 856). This process of checking the data entry and statistical analyses by the researcher is called intra-rater reliability (Bishop, 1991).
Qualitative Telephone Interviews

Superintendent telephone interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to preserve the obtained data. An analysis of each and all the interviews were performed across the control functions (seven characteristics of effective schools) to determine themes, factors, and characteristics of leadership behaviors which emerged from the data. Portraits of each superintendent were then examined as a group to determine themes of leadership behaviors and activities across the sample (Murphy & Hallinger, 1986; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Each interview tape was clearly labeled and an interviewer’s journal was maintained. Notes outside the interview situation were documented and all contacts with district personnel were recorded. Names of participating superintendents were not used. Letters were assigned to each superintendent as a means of ensuring privacy and identification of subjects (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Five phases of data analysis occurred in this study with regard to superintendent telephone interviews. These five stages were cited by Marshall and Rossman (1995) which included: (a) organizing the data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (c) testing the emergent hypothesis against the data; (d) searching for alternative explanations of the data; (e) and writing the report (p. 113). Each of these modes requires the data be reduced and interpreted into manageable chunks of information as a means of bringing meaning to the obtained data.

Organizing the data began with the reading and rereading of the data to force the researcher to become very familiar with the findings. Strategies were developed with how to manage the data. These strategies included the use of note cards or software programs to keep track of the data. During this phase careful attention must occur on how the data is reduced in order to ensure the reliability of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Tesch (1990) called this process “de-contextualization” and “re-contextualization”; the process of taking apart what was found to create a clear and consolidated picture of the findings (p. 97).
Generating categories, themes, and patterns is the process of noting regularities in the obtained data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.114). The development of categories should be internally consistent with the constructs of the study but distinct from one another. Creswell (1994) explained that flexible rules govern how one goes about sorting through the raw data, but that categories of information do surface. In this study, these categories are already predetermined as the seven characteristics of the effective schools research: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly school environment; (d) positive home and school relationship; (e) school climate of high expectations for students; (g) increased opportunity to learn and time on task; and, (h) a clear and focused mission.

The third step when processing the data of qualitative interviews was testing the emergent hypotheses. Marshall and Rossman (1995) stated that:

As categories and patterns between them become apparent, the researcher begins the process of evaluating the plausibility of these developing hypotheses and testing them through the data. This entails a search through the data during which one challenges the hypotheses, searches for negative instances of the patterns, and incorporates these into larger constructs, if necessary (p. 116).

This phase included the evaluation of the data to ensure informational adequacy, credibility, usefulness, and centrality. It must also determine if the data illuminates the phenomenon of interest to the study and therefore significantly impacts the results (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

Searching for alternative explanations is the act of challenging the findings which seem to clearly explain the constructs of the study. This was the fourth stage of processing the interview data. Alternative explanations always exist. The goal of the researcher was to identify and describe these alternatives and then demonstrate why the offered explanation was the most plausible of them all (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 116-117).
The fifth and final phase of the data analysis process was writing the report. It is this stage in which the researcher uses words "... to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data ... engaging in an interpretive act, lending shape and form - meaning - to massive amounts of raw data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 117). In this study, summaries of superintendent leadership behavior in relation to the seven characteristics of effective schools research were made. These rich descriptions will be added to the quantitative findings obtained from the mailed survey questionnaires.

Significance of the Study

"The major reason for educational research is to develop new knowledge about teaching, learning, and administration" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 4). The present study added to the existing educational knowledge base by determining how nationally recognized public school superintendents, as determined by AASA and their affiliate organizations, actually lead their organizations in a manner that was consistent with the effective schools research. This study therefore established if a given population of public school superintendents perceived themselves to be employing leadership behaviors and activities espoused by the effective schools research. It therefore had the potential to validate the findings of the effective schools research with regard to the office of the public school superintendent.

This study also used a unique approach in determining its population of nationally recognized public school superintendents. Past effective schools research had determined more effective personnel within a district by how well its student population had performed on nationally standardized tests (Bossert, 1988; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds 1979; Lezotte, 1985b; Lipham, 1981; Maryland, 1978; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Weber 1971). Cuban (1983) criticized these methods of selecting effective schools and effective school personnel as being too narrow (p. 695). In this study, it was determined that AASA assesses many variables, including student standardized test scores, when selecting a
superintendent for superintendent of the year honors. The selection of this studies population therefore added to the greater significance of its findings.

Limitations

Borg and Gall (1989) stated that the “weaknesses and limitations of educational research can be attributed to the inadequacies of our measures” (p.183). This study used both mailed survey questionnaires and semi-structured telephone interviews to collect the data of interest. These methodologies are prone to methodological difficulties (Issac & Michael, 1981).

Issac and Michael (1981) reported the following limitations associated with survey research: (a) surveys only tap respondents who are accessible and cooperative; (b) surveys often make the respondent feel special or unnatural and thus produce responses that are artificial or planted; (c) surveys arouse “response sets” that are prone to agree with positive statements or questions, and; (d) surveys are vulnerable to over-rater or under-rater bias, causing some respondents to give consistently high or low ratings (p. 128).

Orlich (1974) stated that mailed survey questionnaires have the following disadvantages:

1. They can prevent the investigator from learning the respondent’s motivation for answering the questions;
2. Mailed surveys may limit a respondents expression of opinions;
3. The return of all questionnaires is difficult to achieve;
4. Complex designs cause poor responses or none at all;
5. Mailed surveys may hinder the investigator from learning what causes poor returns;
6. Names and current addresses of the target population are often not available;
7. Questions may have different meanings to different people;
8. There is no assurance that the intended respondent actually completes instrument;

9. Selections of the sample, per se, may cause biased results (e.g., the sample may not be representative of the sampling universe;

10. The questionnaire may ask for long outdated information; or respondents may not complete the entire instrument (p. 7).

The interview technique as a data collection method is limited because the study may evoke biased reactions in the respondents due to characteristics of the interviewer or respondent, or the combination that elicit an unduly favorable pattern of responses (Issac & Michael, 1981, p. 128). Olrich (1974) gave nine disadvantages regarding the interview technique:

(1) the method is time consuming; (2) only a limited number of persons may be interviewed due to time and cost; (3) quantification of results may be difficult for unstructured interviews; (4) scheduling of interviews may be difficult; (5) costs may be prohibitive; (6) respondents may feel that they are being “put on the spot”; (7) the interviewer may make subjective judgments about the responses, and thus bias the data; (8) the overall reliability of responses can be limited since respondents tend to answer truthfully those questions which are not embarrassing to them; (9) interview responses are sometimes biased depending upon age, sex, education, race, interview experience, socio-economic level, and religious background of the interviewer (p. 11).

The generalizability of this study is limited to its target population of nationally recognized superintendents as identified by AASA and can not be projected to all superintendents. The generalizability of its findings to the target population may also be threatened by issues concerning population validity (Borg & Gall, 1989). Population validity concerns the extent to which the results of a study may be generalized from the
studied sample to the population universe (Borg & Gall, 1989), and is a measure of how well the sample represents the studies defined population (p.649).

The reliability of educational measures is the “level of internal consistency or stability of the measuring device over time” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 257). The reliability of both the quantitative mailed survey questionnaire and the qualitative telephone interviews makes the assumption that differences in answers stem from differences among respondents rather than differences in stimuli to which respondents are exposed (Fowler, 1988, p. 75). This means that the wording of each survey and interview item needs to be clearly understandable and unambiguous. Reviews of the survey and interview questionnaires by experts in the field and the implementation of a pilot test were used to develop a more reliable instrument.

The overall response rate was also a general concern of the survey questionnaire methodology (Babbie, 1990). When members of a studied sample do not participate in the survey questionnaire, response bias becomes a threat to the validity of the results. Response bias is the effect of non-responses on survey results (Fowler, 1988). This is because, “respondents are essentially a random sample of the initial sample, and thus a somewhat smaller random sample of the total population” (Babbie, 1990, p. 165). Babbie (1990) reported that a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting, 60 percent is good, and a 70 percent or above return rate is very good (p. 165).

Another limitation of the present study focuses on the researcher. Borg and Gall (1989) stated that because the researcher has an emotional stake in the outcome of the research, he or she is especially susceptible to bias (p. 178). These unconscious biases can be manifested in many different ways such as making errors in sampling, selecting measures, or in scoring the responses of subjects. Every attempt was made by the researcher to remain objective, which included the review of this study’s methods and results by other researchers to check for omissions or unconscious biases (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 179).
Summary

“Learning for all” is a key assumption of the effective schools philosophy (Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). School district superintendents are therefore a crucial element in communicating this assumption to those involved with children and their learning. Unfortunately, research regarding the superintendent and their impact on effectiveness within a school or a school district has not reached a level of clear understanding (Boone, 1992; Griffin & Chance, 1994; Hord, 1990; Shoemaker, 1986). The intent of this study was to add to the knowledge base regarding the public school superintendent and the research on effective schools.

This study was designed to investigate whether a population of recognized public school superintendents perceived themselves to be leading their schools in a manner that is consistent with the characteristics of effective schools. For the purpose of this research, a more successful or recognized public superintendent was defined as any superintendent who has been nominated for “superintendent of the year” through the professional organization American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Mailed survey questionnaires and telephone interviews were developed and conducted as a means of collecting, analyzing and evaluating the data.

Review of effective schools research has come under criticism for its lack of research on the impact of central office administrators (Cuban, 1984). This research added to the knowledge base by detailing how public superintendents viewed their attitudes and behaviors in relation to the effective schools literature. This study therefore gave insights into how recognized superintendents used the characteristics of effective schools as a means of improving school and district student achievement.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

Effective schools research is a body of literature which has at its core the philosophy of “learning for all” (Edmonds, 1979a; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). This philosophy not only asserts that all students are expected to master a basic set of academic skills regardless of student social or economic backgrounds; but that parents, teachers, administrators, and anyone else involved in the education of students must also learn for the sake of the children (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). This “learning for all” results in the creation of an atmosphere dedicated to maximizing school effectiveness and student achievement (Purkey & Smith, 1983). It is for this reason that all personnel in every school and school district are crucial to the sustained achievement of students.

Before 1990, effective schools research had primarily focused on the individual school as being the production center of public education and the focal point for planned change (Edmonds, 1979a; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Sudlow, 1990). The individual school was seen as the key level upon which to focus the findings of effective schools research. At this level, schools became effective one school at a time. But since 1990, this thought has widened to include the school district with the emergence of the superintendent of public schools touted as being a crucial link in the success of schools and ultimately the success of children (Boone 1992).

According to Bjork (1993) structural aspects of the school district organization provide superintendents with a means of fulfilling the role of instructional leader. School superintendents maintain indirect influence over the behavior of building level principals and teachers. The effectiveness of superintendents is therefore determined by their
willingness or unwillingness to alter the structure in which these individuals work (p. 251). This perspective suggests that superintendent behavior at the top of the organization has an influence at the building and classroom levels.

This study focused on the superintendent in relation to seven characteristics of effective schools as defined by Lezotte (1991). These characteristics were: (a) frequent monitoring of student achievement; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly school environment; (d) positive home and school relations; (e) climate of high student expectations; (f) opportunity to learn and time on task; and, (g) a clear and focused mission. Specifically, this study described how nationally recognized superintendents perceived themselves to be leaders consistent with the characteristics and leadership behaviors identified within the effective schools research. The following seven research questions were addressed to answer the problem statement of this study:

1. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to the monitoring of student progress?
2. How do recognized superintendents perceive themselves as instructional leaders?
3. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to creating a safe and orderly environment for schools?
4. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to establishing home and school relations?
5. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to promoting a climate of high expectations?
6. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to encouraging student opportunity to learn and time on task?
7. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to developing a clear and focused mission?
This study examined the perceptions of nationally recognized superintendents in districts across the nation. Each superintendent who participated in this study was identified by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and their affiliate local organizations as Superintendent of the Year. Quantitative mailed questionnaires and qualitative telephone interviews were used to ascertain and measure the data. Theoretical constructs of the study were based on the literature area known as effective schools research. The data were collected during an eleven week period.

This chapter is organized as follows: (a) description of the data collection processes; (b) description of superintendents and school districts; (c) summaries of the data obtained from the mailed survey questionnaire and superintendent interviews; and, (d) chapter summary.

Data Collection Processes

A questionnaire was developed (see Appendix I) as a means of answering the research questions which guided this study. This questionnaire consisted of 70 items, each relating to one of the seven characteristics of effective schools as defined by Lezotte (1991). These were: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly environment; (d) positive home/school relations; (e) climate of high expectations; (f) student opportunity to learn and time on task; and, (g) a clear and focused mission. Table 3 shows each questionnaire item categorized with the appropriate effective schools characteristic. While there may be some overlap, each survey item was listed only under one characteristic.

In addition to a mailed questionnaire, a semi structured telephone interview was constructed as a secondary means of collecting superintendent perceptions. An 11 item interview was developed with appropriate follow up questions to further investigate each major characteristic area. Each interview item was correlated to a specific area of effective schools research as defined by Lezotte (1991). Telephone interviews averaged 50 minutes.
Table 2

Summary Profile of Survey Questionnaire Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Total Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress</td>
<td>15, 38, 41, 44, 53, 65</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>4, 7, 8, 19, 21, 25, 28, 37, 39, 45, 46, 49, 55, 59, 60, 62, 67, 70</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and orderly environment/climate</td>
<td>10, 14, 20, 22, 33, 36, 40, 51, 54</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-School Relations</td>
<td>3, 6, 16, 26, 29, 34, 57, 68</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>9, 13, 17, 18, 23, 35, 47, 56, 64, 66</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to Learn/Time On Task</td>
<td>32, 43, 48, 50, 52, 58</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and Focused Mission</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 11, 12, 24, 27, 30, 31, 42, 61, 63, 69</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in length. The data obtained from the mailed questionnaires and the semi structured telephone interviews were used to triangulate the data. According to Creswell (1994) triangulated measures provide more reliable results. The use of a questionnaire and telephone interviews resulted in stronger findings of how nationally recognized superintendents perceived their leadership behaviors in relation to the characteristics of effective schools then would have been found using only one data collection methodology.

Sample

The population of this study was identified as those superintendents who had been recognized as superintendents of the year for their state. The sample for this phase of the study were superintendents, one from each state (except for Hawaii which did not participate) and two Department of Defense school districts, who had been recognized as a superintendent of the year by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
and their affiliate organizations for 1999. This was what McMillian and Schumacher (1997) classified as a convenience sample. Names of the 1999 superintendents of the year and their district mailing addresses were obtained by contacting Darlene Pierce at AASA, who was in charge of the superintendent of the year recognition program. Two nationally recognized AASA superintendents for 1999 were not included in the results of the study. The superintendent from Nevada had participated in the pilot of the mailed questionnaire and therefore could not be included in the results. The other was the Department of Defense superintendent from Belo Horizonte Brazil, who failed to fill out the personal and professional background information on himself, leaving doubt that he was the actual individual who responded to the questionnaire.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was mailed to each of the 49 AASA Superintendents of the Year for 1999. Each mailing contained a stamped, self addressed envelope, a personal and professional background information sheet, cover letter, and questionnaire. Respondents were asked to return the questionnaire and personal and professional background information sheet to the researcher within two weeks of each mailing. The first mailing yielded 26 responses, for a 53% return rate.

A second complete mailing was sent three weeks after the first mailing to those superintendents who had not responded to the initial mailing. This yielded another 6 responses, for a total of 32 or a 65% return rate. A third complete mailing and a telephone call was made to any non-responding superintendent after the second mailing. Ten more questionnaires were returned which gave the study a total of 42 returns for an 86% return rate. Babbie (1990) stated that any survey questionnaire return rate of over 70% was an exceptional accomplishment (p. 165).

Item responses for each questionnaire item ranged from strongly disagree 1 to strongly agree 7. The questionnaire instructed respondents to choose the number (1-7)
which most appropriately described how they perceived their own behaviors in relation to each questionnaire item. A modified Likert scale was used because it provided flexibility where, "descriptors on the scale can vary to fit the nature of the question or statement" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 257). It took approximately 20-30 minutes for superintendents to complete the personal and professional background information sheet and the 70 item questionnaire.

Superintendent perceptions were organized under the seven characteristics of effective schools as identified under the literature review in chapter 2. Superintendent responses to each item of the mailed questionnaire were grouped under two classifications. These classifications were: (a) weak responses, ranged 1-5 and, (c) strong responses, ranged 6-7. Mean scores and the percentages of strong responses were reported for each questionnaire item. These results were reported for superintendents of school districts under 5000 students, over 5000 students, and for the entire population of recognized superintendents. Questionnaire items were then rank ordered from greatest to least agreement in an effort to better organize and understand the obtained data.

Superintendent Interviews

Superintendent interviews were conducted during a three week period. Following the completion of the first full mailing of the mailed questionnaire, five superintendents were interviewed. Twenty-six superintendents responded to the first mailing and of those approximately 20 agreed to an interview. Randomly with replacement, five superintendents were chosen from the 20. One selection was a forced choice so as to interview at least one female.

Once the five superintendents were chosen, telephone calls were made to each superintendent to schedule the telephone interview. Of the five interviews, only one was scheduled with the superintendent him or herself. The others were made through their secretaries. Approximately one week prior to each interview, each superintendent was
mailed an interview confirmation letter and a basic outline of the topics to be covered during the interview (see Appendix II).

A semi-structured interview was used which consisted of 11 main questions. Under each main question were potential follow up questions that may have been used to further investigate superintendent responses (see Appendix I). Each interview lasted approximately 50 to 60 minutes and was tape recorded and transcribed. All Superintendent responses pertaining to each specific question or area were then grouped together as a means of most effectively analyzing the information obtained.

The following sections present the results of both the mailed questionnaire and the superintendent interviews under the corresponding seven characteristics of effective schools research as developed in the literature review. Under each characteristic of effective schools, the mailed survey results are first presented, followed by the results obtained from the superintendent telephone interviews.

Descriptions of School Districts and Superintendents

A personal and professional background information sheet was included with the survey questionnaire in an attempt to better understand the population of the study. Of the 49 superintendents chosen to be studied, 42 responded within the eleven week data collection period. The responding 42 superintendents exhibited the following characteristics. Ethnically, 39 of the sample were Caucasian, 2 were African American, and 1 was Mexican American. Of these superintendents, 81% (34) were male and 19% (8) were female. The mean age of this group was 54.4 years, with a minimum age of 48 and a maximum age of 62 being reported. One superintendent was single, 40 were married, and one was divorced. The mean number of children raised in the household of these superintendents was 2.5 children with a median of 2.0.

Professionally, these superintendents served a mean of 6.9 years and a median of 6.0 years as a classroom teacher. They also served an average of 7.6 years as an assistant
principal and/or principal with a median of 6.0 years. The mean number of years served as an assistant superintendent was 1.8. Respondents served an average of 13.0 years as a superintendent with a median of 12 years, while also reporting an average of 2.5 years in other administrative positions, these included: (a) departmental directorships; (b) special education coordinator; (c) consultant; (d) supervisor of education; (d) coordinator of federal and public relations; (e) interim superintendent; (f) university educator/administrator; and (g) central office administrator. In total the responding sample of recognized AASA superintendents had a mean number of years served in education of 31.6 years with a median of 31 years. Seventy-four percent of the superintendents held a doctorate degree, 10% held an educational specialist degree, 12% a master degree plus 32 credits, and 5% held a master degree.

Respondents were asked to provide information regarding their personal and professional background. This information included the number of elementary, junior/middle, high schools, as well as the number of students and teachers employed in their districts. For the purposes of this study, student population provided a useful statistic by which to categorize school district size.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Enrollment</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,001-2,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,001-5,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001-10,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001-20,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001-40,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,001-80,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,001 +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students in the district these superintendents served in ranged from a minimum of 335 students to a maximum of 120,000 students. The median best described
the central tendency of this data at 6050 students per district; the mean was not stated because of two outliers (59,000 and 120,000 students) which were more than three standard deviations from the mean.

Superintendent Perceptions of Their Behavior In Relation To The Effective Schools Research

The data obtained from the mailed questionnaire and telephone interviews is summarized below. This information provided the basis from which the conclusions of this study were found. The questionnaire items were clustered under the effective schools characteristic headings: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly school environment; (d) positive home and school relations; (e) climate of high expectations; (f) opportunity to learn and time on task; and, (g) a clear and focused mission.

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Within effective schools and school districts, student academic progress is measured frequently and used to improve both individual student performance as well as the overall instructional program (Duttweiler, 1998; Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992). Edmonds (1979a, 1979b) found that the frequent monitoring of student progress was a very powerful characteristic, because through its application and evaluation it could drive the other characteristics. Lezotte (1985a, 1985b, 1991) stated that effective schools strive to align the intended, taught, and tested curriculum.

In the area of frequent monitoring of student progress, 83% strongly believed that they ensured that school personnel were using systematic procedures for monitoring student progress (item 15). Another eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that they strongly encouraged the use of technology so that students were able to monitor their
Table 4

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Results Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Mean Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Mean Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>% Strong Small District</th>
<th>% Strong Large District</th>
<th>% Strong Entire Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ensure that school personnel are using systematic procedures for monitoring student progress.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Encourage the use technology so that students are able to monitor their learning and where necessary adjust their own behavior.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Analyze achievement scores for all subgroups of students (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, social class) to assure that all populations of students are achieving.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Implement successful preventative strategies for helping students at risk of failure.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Regularly use many indicators to assess student progress (e.g., grades, tests, attendance, discipline, referrals, extracurricular).</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Ensure that the testing programs are an accurate and valid measure of the curriculum taught in the school district.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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learning and where necessary adjust their own behavior (item 44). Seventy-nine percent of respondents also reported that they analyzed achievement scores for all subgroups of students (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, social class) to assure that all populations of students were achieving (item 41). Seventy-four percent of respondents also reported that they implemented successful preventative strategies for helping students at risk of failure (item 38). Two items received comparatively weaker response percentages in the area of frequent monitoring of student progress. These were questions 53 and 65. Sixty-nine percent of superintendents indicated that they regularly used many indicators to assess student progress (e.g., grades, tests, attendance, discipline, referrals, extracurricular) (item 53). Finally, 55% of superintendents responded that their testing programs were an accurate and valid measure of the curriculum taught in the school district (item 65).

**Frequent Monitoring of Student Achievement Interview Results**

Interview questions with regard to frequent monitoring of students focused on four main areas: (a) student assessment methods; (b) disaggregation of test scores; (c) actions taken upon receipt of assessment scores; and, (d) how performance reports were communicated. Comments made by individual superintendents are noted by an upper case letter in parentheses.

**Methods of student assessment.** Student assessment performed at the district level almost exclusively utilized standardized norm referenced exams and/or some type of district wide criterion referenced tests tailored to their individualized curriculums. These standardized and criterion referenced exams were used to: (a) evaluate student performance at testing grade levels; (b) provide scores for entry into different programs (i.e. gifted and talented/special education); (c) evaluate programs; (d) evaluate past action plans; and, (e) identify new goals and objectives. Other methods used to evaluate students at the district level were usually unique only to the reporting superintendents district. Many of the evaluations reported were site based evaluation tools and were not looked at by district level
administration. The most significant methods reported by the specific superintendents designated in parentheses were:

1. Use of high school reports (how performing at grade level) as a means of evaluating lower levels (A)
2. Use of various types of software used in the classroom (B)
3. Student progress reports and report cards (C)
4. Portfolios (C)
5. Attendance related to student achievement (D)
6. Part of a state accreditation process which evaluates a number of indicators such as climate issues, goals, and objectives (E)

Disaggregation of test scores. Edmonds (1979) stated that effective schools are those in which all students, regardless of social or economic background, learn a set of basic skills as well as the average student from the middle class. In order to properly evaluate student performance, the effective schools research encourages the break down of test scores along race, gender, and economic status. Of the five superintendents interviewed in this study, all five indicated that their districts broke standardized and criterion referenced test scores down along similar lines.

Superintendents indicated that they performed item analyses and broke down test scores according to social and economic status for some of the following reasons. Superintendent B stated that they specifically looked for problems or difficulties their children were having while also checking for curriculum congruence. Superintendent C explained that the tests were used for diagnostic purposes, as a means of identifying students who needed assistance within a certain area, where they then could provide remedial instruction. He also stated these scores were also used to determine entrance into special programs such as the gifted and talented, resource programs, or special education programs.
Superintendent D explained that his district looked at testing data “every way from Sunday.” But he also expressed reservations about how well the data was being used to make improvements in the instructional program. He stated, “I think we have all the data we need; all the things are there, it’s just a matter of finding the time, and the will to some degree, for people to apply that back to the classroom and factor the accountability there.”

Superintendent E explained that not only does her district strongly believe in breaking down test scores across population boundaries, but that each school site was required to have a site council. This site council was composed of school people, parents, and community members and was charged with interpreting and sharing that information with the community at large.

Communication of student performance reports. Superintendents were asked how they and their central office staff communicated student performance to individuals within and outside the organization. Responses included: (a) through meeting with principals and other district personnel; (b) individual student reports; (c) the media; (d) newsletters/annual reports; (e) teacher class summaries; (f) school report cards; (g) district report cards; and (h) school board presentations. These reports in addition to breaking down the performance of students across such stratification’s as race, gender, and economic backgrounds also may have included many other types of information.

Superintendent D stated that his annual report to the board and the community included some 40 to 50 pieces of information. This report included:

“Things like . . . advanced placement scores for those students that graduated early, the SAT mean scores, the achievement tests scores, PSAT scores the number [of] merit semi-finalists, the ten year merit semi-finalists, post graduation activities of the previous years class, analysis of college attendance of the previous years class, student attendance, teacher attendance, reports of student assistance teams for youngsters in need of some help, report of the stride program, report of the high school study
center, executive summary of the achievement tests, the comprehensive
tests, deferential aptitude tests and then the high school profile that gets into
all the things that we give our colleges about our kids. That’s a publication
every December or January that goes to our board and presented publicly
that they have access to. The media involves themselves in those reports.

Two superintendents and their districts indicated that test scores were somewhat
protected from the public. Superintendent A stated that most politicians shied away from
the issue of low test scores due to a large population of American Indians in the state which
had a history of low performance. Additionally, superintendent C explained that their
district did not like individual buildings to be compared, and so building reports and
breakdowns were not shared with the public. The other three superintendents indicated that
everything was openly shared with the public.

Reception of test results. Superintendents were asked what actions were taken if
test results showed that a school obtained unexpectedly poor or exceptional student
achievement scores. Most superintendents elaborated on what happened with regard to low
scores. This section has been broken down into two sub sections: (a) district level actions
and (b) state level actions.

Upon receipt of lower than expected student results for a specific school,
superintendents elaborated on what they and their districts had done in the past.
Superintendent E explained:

If when the state scores come in and I notice lower scores then expected... that would mean that they either were not as much improved as we had hoped or they went down. First of all we understand that single scores from one point to another are not as meaningful as longitudinal data. So we would take a look at that and see what the context tells us. [If] it’s an anomaly, we need to wait and see. ... we look at data and see what the schools goals and the administrative goals were.... we’d be looking at that
test data and say ‘well your reading scores plummeted, were your goals to support change’. At the mid-year point, we’d be looking to see how the strategies you’ve decided to implement are going. So there would be ongoing monitoring, drawing attention to the improvement.

Other actions identified by superintendents as a means of improving test scores included:

1. Reordering of the presentation of concepts to ensure students are exposed to material before tests were taken.
2. Teaching of test taking skills
3. Efforts to impress upon teachers the importance of assessment instruments
4. Efforts to impress upon students the importance of assessment instruments
5. Improve procedures to disqualify exams of students who did not take the exam seriously (improved proctoring procedures)
6. Use incentives to increase student interest in performing well on exams (e.g. pizza parties)
7. Recognize evaluation of scores as part of a continual process toward instructional improvement
8. Use scores to evaluate past and develop new strategic action plans
9. Use scores to evaluate curriculum and ensure curriculum alignment
10. Use scores to provide input into staff development action planning

Superintendent E was the only superintendent that elaborated on some of the things she and her district did to recognize schools with exceptional scores. She stated that they always took advantage of the opportunity to talk with the public. In addition, superintendent E stated that celebrations of cake and ice cream at schools and at board meetings were held to congratulate those sites which had become state accredited.
State accountability procedures. In recent years, state legislatures have increasingly become active monitors of student achievement and of individual school effectiveness. Superintendents were asked what actions their state could take upon the discovery of poor test scores. Once again, two superintendents (A and C) stated that their states had no accountability procedures. Superintendent C did admit that within the next year the state school districts would all be taking the same exams and would be compared using the standardized achievement results.

Superintendent B explained that state actions ranged from a school being placed on probation to being taken over by an oversight committee under state control. He stated that normally the state would assign a representative who monitored the progress of school improvement plans and then would present that information and evaluations of progress to interested parties at the legislative level. Superintendent B explained that school accreditation ranged up to five years. If there were concerns, schools were accredited for less time. Superintendents D and E also mentioned state oversight and an accreditation process.

**Instructional Leadership**

Instructional leaders are those who, "are much closer to the day to day instructional program, closely monitor pupil progress, and provide systematic feedback on goal attainment throughout the school year" (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 242). Rosenholtz (1985) stated that instructional leaders have a unitary mission to improve student learning. This is accomplished primarily by improving instruction (OERI, 1987).

In the area of instructional leadership, 95% of the superintendents believed that they supported principals when developing and implementing innovative programs designed to increase school effectiveness and student achievement (item 7). Ninety-three percent of responding superintendents also strongly agreed that they participated in the formulation of district goals (item 45) and promoted the concept to principals that it was important to be highly visible in the school setting (item 46/95%). Ninety percent of the respondents
also reported that they communicated to principals what it meant to be an instructional leader and the expectation of what they must do to fulfill that role (item 55).

Eighty percent or more of reporting superintendents indicated that they: (a) encouraged change and innovation at the school level (item 4/86%); (b) reviewed and supported each school's mission, goals, and objectives (item 37/83%); (d) promoted district staff development activities designed to meet the needs of students (item 59/86%); and (e) made use of shared decision making processes (item 70/83%).

The sample of recognized superintendents also reported that they (a) ensured that most problems facing a school were dealt with at that level without a great deal of outside help (item 21/76%); (b) promoted the concept that the principal make informal contacts with students, teachers, and community members around the school (item 28/76%); (c) observed each principal's instructional leadership methods within the school setting (item 39/81%); (d) assisted principals in securing additional resources, arranging opportunities, and promoting staff development activities for the school, teachers, and community (item 62/71%); (e) exhibited problem-solving skills related to resolving instructional concerns (item 67/76%); and (f) 71% of superintendents reported that they provided principals with instructional issues to be shared with their faculty members (item 49).

Weaker responses were found for questionnaire items 8, 19, 25, and 60. Sixty-nine percent believed that they used the principal as the primary instrument for change (item 19), while 64% of the reporting superintendents stated that they assisted principals or school personnel to increase effectiveness after systematic observations (item 60). Fifty-five percent of superintendents reported that they provided educational leaders with clear guidelines on important instructional leadership activities and the amount of time that should be devoted to each (item 8). Finally, 61% of superintendents felt that they provided incentives for schools to be creative, innovative, and risk takers with regard to increasing instructional effectiveness (item 25).
### Table 5

**Instructional Leadership Results Summary (\(\text{\*} = \text{one or more missing responses}\))**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>MeanReply</th>
<th>MeanReply</th>
<th>MeanReply</th>
<th>% Strong Agree</th>
<th>% Strong Agree</th>
<th>% Strong Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Support principals when developing and implementing innovative programs designed to increase school effectiveness and student achievement.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Promote the concept to principals that it is important to be highly visible in the school setting.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Participate in the formulation of district goals.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Communicate to principals what it means to be an instructional leader and the expectation that they must fulfill that role.</td>
<td>*6.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>*6.4</td>
<td>*94%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>*90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage change and innovation at the school level</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Promote district staff development activities designed to meet the needs of students.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Review and support each schools mission, goals, and objectives.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Make use of shared decision making processes.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Observe each principal’s instructional leadership methods within the school setting.</td>
<td>*6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>*6.1</td>
<td>*88%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>*81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ensure that most problems facing a school are dealt with at that level without a great deal of outside help.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Promote the concept that the principal make informal contacts with students, teachers, and community members around the school.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Exhibit problem-solving skills related to resolving instructional concerns.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Assist principals in securing additional resources, arranging opportunities, and promoting staff development activities for the school, teachers, and community.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Provide principals with instructional issues to be shared with their faculty members.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>*5.8</td>
<td>*5.8</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>*61%</td>
<td>*71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Use the principal as the primary instrument for change.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #</td>
<td>Item Description</td>
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<td>% Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</td>
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<td>% Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Assist principal or school personnel to increase effectiveness after systematic observations.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Provide incentives for schools to be creative, innovative, and risk takers with regard to increasing instructional effectiveness.</td>
<td>*5.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>*5.7</td>
<td>*56%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>*61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Provide educational leaders with clear guidelines on important instructional leadership activities and the amount of time that should be devoted to each.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* = one or more missing responses)
In the area of instructional leadership, the sample of AASA Superintendents usually agreed less with questionnaire items which were action specific. General questions were normally responded to with stronger agreement. While this should be expected in some degree, it may indicate that superintendents believed that they are instructional leaders, but their actions may not confirm those beliefs.

**Instructional Leadership Interview Results**

Under the characteristic of instructional leadership, the superintendents were asked two broad questions: (a) Describe in what ways you as the superintendent provide instructional leadership to schools and the school district as a whole; and (b) How do you communicate to principals, teachers, and parents what you feel is important for their schools to be accomplishing? Review of the transcripts revealed common activities performed by these superintendents in the area of instructional leadership. The following section presents these findings under the categories of: (a) meet with principals, administrative teams, and various other groups; (b) school visits; (c) instructional focus; (d) methods of communicating goals; (e) hire quality people; (f) monitor student achievement; (g) buffer principals; and, (h) encourage risk taking.

**General responses.** The first question given to each superintendent was, “Describe in what ways you provide instructional leadership to schools and the school district as a whole.” Due to the broad nature of the question, responses varied widely. Therefore, typical responses were identified and condensed into short topical themes. The responses or themes touched upon by the five superintendents are summarized below, where the number in parentheses indicates how many superintendents discussed each area

1. Hire the best people possible (3)
2. Buffer schools and principals (3)
3. Put an emphasis on staff development (2)
4. Clearly communicate goals and priorities to others (2)
5. Participating in staff development (2)

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6. Focus on instructional issues (2)
7. Communicate vision to those closer to the day to day instructional program (2)
8. Focus on student needs (1)
9. Being visible, appearing at schools, visiting classrooms (1)

Superintendent E gave the following response to the first interview question. It is provided as an example of how superintendents responded to the question of how they provided instructional leadership to their district.

By making it clear what the priorities are and that ...we can’t allow things to interrupt activities that are focusing on instruction. Just like we don’t have interruptions in the classroom, you don’t interrupt a professional development activity for principals to talk about a personnel issue. So by making it clear what the priorities are in action...by appearing at the schools in instructional settings, visiting classrooms...participating in staff development, writing about instruction in my “communications book” both public and in house. With the school district there’s a hold by board meetings so that instruction is clearly the guiding force. In fact we spend a significant portion of the board’s time, focusing on instructional issues not management...and by making sure that the...agenda for the meetings is clearly focused on instruction and that the majority of those times the meetings are or is spent on other issues, directly related to the instruction.

Meeting with principals and other administrative teams. Superintendents responded that meeting with principals was part of their instructional leadership role. Shared decision making with principals was cited as being important. Additionally, the agendas set for these meetings were quoted as having an instructional focus or to focus on issues directly related to instruction. Comments
were made by my superintendent B that he delegated much of this responsibility to his subordinates and that he did not meet with principals as often as he should.

Every superintendent mentioned that they met with various other administrative groups. These groups included such teams as advisory councils, central office administrators, teacher unions, school board sub-committees, and focus groups. These groups were composed of administrators, teachers, staff, students, and members of the community. Usually these meetings were held at least once a month and were used to improve the flow of communication, to listen to concerns or questions that people had, to provide shared decision making and problem solving strategies, and to provide a decision making process that was understandable to all participants.

School visits. All five superintendents responded to questions about school visitations. The general consensus was that they were important, but that the demands of their office kept them away from school visitation activities. Most superintendents quoted themselves as having a goal, such as being at every school site twice a month. But respondents also admitted that they usually did not meet that goal.

Superintendents also reported that they viewed school visitations as being more ceremonial in nature than opportunities to provide instructional leadership. For example, superintendent D stated that:

Basically you need to carve time out of your schedule to be out there...I find myself out there as a superintendent dealing mostly with the visibility and attention to...I consider the personal needs of the folks seeing me around, but the actual amount of instructional leadership that I show, unless I see something so hideous that it bothers me or so positive that it impresses me, it just kind of more visibility than it is more management by walking around.

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These responding superintendents therefore viewed school visits as more of an exposure and showing support issue than an issue related to instructional leadership.

**Opportunity to speak with parents, teachers, and students.** Superintendent responses in relation to opportunities to speak with parents, teachers, and students were limited. They listed such items as speaking with parents informally such as “over the back yard fence” or at PTA functions or meetings. They also cited examples of opportunities to speak with teachers or students as being teacher/superintendent lunches, or traveling with teachers and students on trips or conferences. Once again a few responding superintendents saw this theme as being more of a visibility or exposure issue more than an instructional leadership issue.

**Focus on instruction.** Responding superintendents indicated an emphasis on instructional issues as driving many aspects of their districts operations. While they may have not used the exact words “focus on instruction” that idea or concept was present. The comments listed below indicated this theme:

- Superintendent A stated, “Each year we review one particular area a year and put an emphasis on that area as our focus.”

- Superintendent C noted, “We believe it’s important for people to be in school . . . in fact our job kind of cooperatively is to make sure that were going the right ways in the whole instructional area (talking about working cooperatively with school board) . . . they deal with a lot of issues about are things being implemented the way we want, . . . what are we not doing that we should be doing, what are we doing that we shouldn’t be doing”.

- Superintendent D commented that “. . . by making sure that the administrative meetings . . . (are) clearly focused on instruction and that the majority of those times the meetings are, or is spent on other issues, directly related to the instruction”
Superintendent perceptions on staff development. Staff development practices aimed at increasing the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom has also been cited as a function of instructional leadership. Therefore superintendent perceptions about staff development was asked for. Four of the five superintendents indicated a strong and positive feeling about staff development as a means of improving student achievement. Only one respondent (superintendent B) revealed himself to be quite negative about any staff development associated with classroom management. He stated that good staff development was associated with pedagogy directly related to the subject being taught and how to better teach it, but that any staff development aimed at increasing time on task or similar classroom management strategies was “a waste time.”

Positive comments about staff development ranged from “it’s absolutely essential” to “we put a lot of effort and dollars into it”. Superintendent C commented

I think staff development is something that is essential and I [have] made this comment a lot of times; that if United Airlines put in a staff development [program] that put in the same amount of time that we put into staff development, I would be afraid to get within 100 feet of an airplane . . . but . . . staff development still is a small portion of our budget. There’s never enough and we need to do more. The problem is that our community, which is not unlike most communities in our state, believes when a teacher is not in front of students, they’re not doing their job; and so we have to convince people and continually convince people that staff development has to take place.

Therefore, staff development programs and opportunities were perceived by the majority of interviewed superintendents as an essential part of their district wide programs.

Communication of goals. As an effective instructional leader, individuals must be able to communicate a sense of outcome, goal, or direction that attracts followers while also
being able to communicate that meaning with clarity and understanding (Bennis, 1989).

Superintendent B stated that he communicated his goals for the district in part by:

... informal conversation [and] through evaluation activities that I'll conduct with individual building principals. We have a performance award system here and those awards for the most part are associated with the instructional program.

Similarly, superintendent D reported that he communicated his expectations by stating:

Pretty much (I believe) that your actions speak so loudly that people don't hear what you're saying... we have weekly meetings with my central office staff which those folks are a part. And basically those central office meetings involve discussions of instructional issues and discussion of the issues that are out there. I believe that from those discussions, and from that interaction, that frequently last at least two to three hours a week, they begin to get a sense of... (or) on the same wavelengths to where we're going.

Overall, responding superintendents stated that they communicated their goals and expectations in many diverse ways. The following methods and the number of respondents who referred to these methods included:

1. Principal meetings (3)
2. The media (2)
3. Meetings with various educational groups (2)
4. Newsletters (2)
5. Word of mouth (informal activities) (2)
6. Parent conferences (1)
7. Evaluation activities (e.g. evaluation of principals) (1)
8. Performance award systems (1)
9. Television broadcast of school board meetings (1)
10. Leadership by example (modeling) (I)

**Hire the best personnel.** Hiring quality personnel was also frequently cited by superintendents as a strategy they employed as an instructional leader. Superintendent B stated that, “I make sure we hire the very best people we can . . . and place processes that are designed to achieve that result.” Superintendent D commented that “[I] surround myself with folks who I think are pretty competent in what they do.” Finally superintendent C explained, “Hiring good persons is a major importance . . . our philosophy is to hire good people and you . . . try to create an atmosphere where they can do their jobs . . . and encourage them to do their jobs.”

**Monitor student achievement.** All five superintendent interviews noted the use of standardized tests and criterion references tests as the most widely used evaluation methods that these superintendents employed to monitor student achievement. While superintendents did mention various other methods of gauging student performance (e.g. portfolios and report cards), it was clear that these measures were not used to evaluate existing programs or goals. As superintendent C stated with regard to standardized and criterion referenced testing, “We constantly dipstick student learning.”

**Buffer principals.** Just as the effective schools research has noted that effective principals buffer their teachers from outside distractions, effective superintendents have been identified to protect their building principals from distractions (Hord, 1990; Pajak & Glickman, 1989). Superintendents C, D, and E, all stated that they did what they could to maximize their principal’s time spent on instruction. Both superintendents C and E explained that their districts had taken or removed barriers which inhibited principals from acting as instructional leaders; an example given by both was the outsourcing of custodial crews. Superintendent E stated:

*We try to create a network of procedures and policies that help the principal by making decisions in advance; without taking away the flexibility that a building needs. There are many things that we put in place that take the heat.*
off the principal . . . I would say that would be a major effort to allow the principal to focus on instruction and the things they need to be dealing with in terms of student performance. This might be one . . . I think we’re in our eighth year of contracting out custodial and maintenance which allows the principal to stay more focused on other things.

Encourage risk taking. Encouraging risk taking on the part of principals or other motivated individuals at the school level were cited as being important by superintendents B, C, D, and E. Most responses made by superintendents emphasized a willingness to accept failures without repercussions. Superintendent D explained this by saying,

I think I would rather have someone make a mistake trying to do the right thing then sit back and not do anything and have it blow up in their face. I think the trick to that kind of a leadership . . . role is not over reacting when something seems to go south on you; you’re going to have to be a bit more careful that you don’t come down on people with both feet for a honest mistake.

Similarly superintendent C stated that:

I encourage people to take risks by giving them the authority to take risks first of all, and then second, by encouraging them to be innovative and, if they make a mistake, I mean hey I’m not going (to) hold, hold them on the carpet for that. I tell people that . . . we all make mistakes. My concern is that we don’t make the same mistake twice.

Both superintendents C and E mentioned that the district did what it could to finance innovative ideas at the school level. Superintendent C explained that extra funding was usually found and superintendent E indicated that through grants many innovations were financed.
**Safe and Orderly Environment**

Within the effective school, an atmosphere exists which communicates an orderly, purposeful, and businesslike feeling; free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive but is conducive to teaching and learning (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 229). Edmonds (cited in Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 239) believed that effective schools were relatively safer, cleaner, more orderly, and quieter. In an interview with Brandt (1982), Edmonds stated that differences between effective and ineffective schools in this regard were relative to the people operating them.

Duttweiler (1998) explained that a safe and orderly environment existed in a school when the entire school was dedicated to good discipline and where rules and procedures were well defined and communicated to teachers, students, and parents (p. 5). Five attributes of a safe and orderly environment were described by Murphy and Hallinger (1985). These attributes were: (a) school rules and standards for behavior were clearly specified; (b) consequences for breaking them were clearly understood by both parents and students; (c) discipline was progressive in nature; (d) rules were fairly and consistently enforced; and, (e) a great deal of thought and energy went into the enforcement of school rules through such efforts as regular telephone contacts with parents, high administrator visibility on campuses, and innovative disciplinary programs in lieu of suspension (p. 18).

In the area of a safe and orderly school environment 95% of the AASA Superintendents of the Year strongly agreed that they took steps to provide good working conditions for both staff and students (item 54) and 93% reported that they ensured each school was a safe and secure place to learn (item 33). Eighty-eight percent of responding superintendents also indicated that they behaved in a way which provided support services to schools in a prompt and courteous manner (item 14) and that they encouraged teachers, administrators, and parents to work cooperatively to support the discipline policy of each school (item 22). Eighty-one percent of the sample strongly agreed that they acted in a way
### Table 6

**Safe and Orderly Environment Results Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Provide good working conditions for both staff and students.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Ensure that each school is a safe and secure place to learn and work.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Provide support services in a prompt and courteous manner.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Encourage teachers, administrators, and parents to work cooperatively to support the discipline policy in each school.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ensure that each school is neat, bright, clean, and comfortable.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Communicates importance of a positive atmosphere to principals and staff.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Foster a strong and cooperative relationship with union leaders that is built on trust.</td>
<td>*5.2</td>
<td>*6.4</td>
<td>*5.9</td>
<td>*56%</td>
<td>*86%</td>
<td>*73%</td>
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<th>% Strong Small District</th>
<th>% Strong Large District</th>
<th>% Strong Entire Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Ensure that discipline procedures at each school are being enforced consistently and fairly.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Make regular visits with the staff of each individual school</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* = one or more missing responses)
which ensured district schools were neat, bright, clean, and comfortable (item 20). Finally, the sample of reporting superintendents felt that they communicated to principals and support staff the importance of a positive classroom atmosphere (item 10/79%) and they also actively tried to foster a strong and cooperative relationship with union leaders that was built on trust (item 40/73%). Weaker responses were reported on items 36 and 51 in the area of a safe and orderly environment. Sixty-nine percent of the sample felt that they ensured discipline procedures at each school were being enforced consistently and fairly (item 36) and 62% of the superintendents reported that they strongly agreed that they made regular visits with the staff of each individual school (item 51).

Safe and Orderly Environment Interview Results

The superintendents interviewed were asked in what ways they ensured that schools were clean, safe, and orderly. To better organize the information obtained, it was presented under the headings of (a) clean schools and (b) safe and orderly schools. Clean Schools. Superintendent A explained that his district maintained a custodial crew which had a “philosophy” that a cleaner school made for better behaved students. Superintendent B stated that his district, “employed a confident custodial core” and that an inspector of buildings made inspections frequently. Additionally, Superintendent B explained that parent complaints were punctually investigated and followed up by a meeting with the principal. He also commented that they had a five year capital project plan which scheduled school improvements in a timely manner. He explained that while he did look at the cleanliness issues of a school during a visit, he did not necessarily make an issue of it.

Centralizing custodial services and performing assessment surveys on the perceptions of school cleanliness within buildings were cited by Superintendent C as being a major contributor to truly clean schools. Superintendents D and E stated that outsourcing custodial services had not only freed up the time of principals, but had also improved the effectiveness of the custodial crew. Superintendent D explained that by
employing this custodial service, they were better able to organize and monitor their custodial personnel.

Superintendent E added that she frequently visited schools. Additionally, the district's Board of Education toured each school building before the start of the new school year and the monthly school board meetings were held at a different school site each month. In this way, the school board and the central office had the opportunity to visit the school and tour its facility at least once a year. She stated that the custodians took pride in their facility and the board was put at ease to see that the schools were ready.

**Safe and orderly schools.** Superintendent A stated that schools were made more comfortable and orderly by putting in such amenities as carpeting in the classrooms and hallways and by designing new schools which allowed for easier transitions between class periods. In the area of safety, his district had worked to ensure that student discipline was consistently enforced and that teachers were appropriately monitoring student discipline situations.

Superintendent B explained that some of the safety precautions he and his district had taken centered on the employment of school police and a department security head whose job it was to worry about security issues. Insurance companies were also brought in to ensure that they were appropriately handling such things as chemicals. Superintendent B stated that a director of student relations developed guidelines for good student order and that information was circulated to each student and parent. He added that students with drug problems disappeared from the normal school setting and usually resurfaced in one of the many alternative programs available. These alternative programs included: (a) Project LIFE: a school within a school in which half of the day was spent on academics and the other half was used for technical/vocational job training; (b) evening high school/adult education; (c) teenage/parent program for pregnant girls; (d) junior high LIFE program and Project Third Shift which concentrated on junior high students who
were close to dropping out. Superintendent C added that no alternative programs existed for the elementary level students, but that some were needed.

The use of school safety teams and a district wide safety team was the beginning point for superintendent C when answering the question about safety in schools. He stated that these teams interacted to develop and establish goals for safety. Additionally, the district maintained an excellent relationship with the local police department. One police officer was specifically assigned to each school building and was part of the school safety team. Other issues cited by superintendent C included: (a) the use of name tags for all employees of each school; (b) conflict management strategies and peer mediation as a means of resolving conflict; (c) the emphasis on the enforcement of strong, strict, and consistent school discipline policies; and, (d) alternative programs for individuals who were not able to acclimate to a normal school environment.

Superintendent D explained that due to the rash of violent acts in schools across the country (e.g. Columbine High) a concern within his district had generated a couple of safety action plans. The first was a sophisticated emergency code lock down system. Second, they purchased a high technology radio/transmitter system with the ability to contact emergency police in the event of the unthinkable. Additionally he and his district had employed two campus monitors as a means of more effectively supervising school areas, and remote doors were locked in the name of safety. Superintendent D commented that discipline at each school site was mainly a principal’s concern, but he noted that principals were encouraged to involve police when appropriate and that district support in extreme cases was always given.

Finally superintendent E stated that she closely monitored all violent acts as documented in suspensions or expulsions. A district hearing office kept the superintendent abreast of any students who were about to be expelled for inappropriate behavior. Individuals removed from the normal school, with the exception of a weapons violation,
were usually sent to some type of alternative school setting, which included home schooling with teacher visits or evening classwork from 3:30 - 6:30 P.M.

**Home and School Relations**

Epstein and Dauber (1991) spoke of overlapping spheres of influence of families and schools which can influence student learning and development as well as family and school effectiveness (p. 289). They explained that when teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with their children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children in the elementary grades, and rate the teachers as better teachers overall. This improved parent involvement then has a positive impact on their child's attitude toward school and helps to increase student success in school (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Goldring and Shapria (1996) added that parental involvement not only positively impacts student achievement and cognitive development, but also affects parents in terms of their attitudes and perceptions of themselves and schools (p. 343).

In the area of frequent monitoring of student progress, 93% of responding AASA recognized superintendents indicated that they maintained a positive public image/viewpoint about the schools and the overall school district (item 26). Respondents also reported that they: (a) promoted individual school programs which encouraged active parent/school interaction and participation (item 16/83%); (b) encouraged parents to become involved in school activities and school advisory boards (item 68/86%); (c) provided school and district newsletters to parents as a means of keeping them informed about school activities, changes in rules or procedures, or on instructional matters (item 6/81%); and, (d) established policies and procedures which encouraged teachers to maintain communication with parents in a variety of methods (e.g., home visits, phone calls, progress reports, newsletters, regular notes) (item 57/74%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Maintain a positive public image/viewpoint about the schools and the overall school district.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Encourage parents to become involved in school activities and school advisory boards.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Promote individual school programs which encourage active parent/school interaction and participation</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provide school and district newsletters to parents as a means of keeping them informed about school activities, changes in rules or procedures, or on instructional matters.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Establish policies and procedures which encourages teachers to maintain communication with parents in a variety of methods (e.g., home visits, phone calls, progress reports, newsletters, regular notes).</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #</td>
<td>Item Description</td>
<td>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</td>
<td>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</td>
<td>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</td>
<td>% Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</td>
<td>% Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</td>
<td>% Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Involve the community in district decision making and district programs.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Encourage community businesses to become a part of the school — for example, by providing speakers, donating material and equipment, serving on advisory committees, etc.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Provide parents with individual school report cards describing school efficiency aspects (pass/fail rates, graduation rates, dropout rates, teacher student ratios, % teachers teaching out of emphasis area, etc.).</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weaker responses were found for questionnaire items 3, 29, and 34 in the area of positive home and school relations. Sixty-seven percent of the responding superintendents indicated that they involved the community in district decision making and district programs (item 3). Sixty-two percent of the responding sample reported that they encouraged community businesses to become a part of the school in ways such as providing speakers and donating material and equipment, serving on advisory committees (item 34). Finally, 55% of respondents stated that they provided parents with individual school report cards (item 29) describing school efficiency aspects (pass/fail rates, graduation rates, dropout rates, teacher student ratios, percentage of teachers teaching out of emphasis area, etc.).

In the area of providing a positive home and school environment, the sample of AASA Superintendents usually agreed less with questionnaire items which were action specific. General questions tended to be responded to with stronger agreement. This finding raises the concern that the sample of superintendents may have believed they supported a positive home and school environment but their actions may not truly substantiate those perceptions.

Positive Home and School Relations Interview Results

Superintendents were asked in what ways parents were involved with schools and the school district. Each superintendent listed many of the traditional methods used to include parents in school activities. These activities and the number of superintendents that noted these efforts included:

1. parent aides/volunteers (4)
2. parent conferences (3)
3. parent advisory councils (2)
4. PTO and PTA organizations (2)
5. Senior citizen volunteers (2)
6. Student activities (2)
7. fund raising (1)
Eight of the five superintendents interviewed mentioned that they and their districts were not doing enough with regard to forming more positive relations between the home and schools. Superintendents C and D both elaborated that in this regard, educational leaders needed to begin to “think differently.” Superintendent E explained this point by stating:

I think what we’re coming to realize is that we need to rethink parent involvement, maybe parent involvement doesn’t look like it did in the past, maybe we need to think about taking things to parents instead of trying to get them to come to us. Maybe we need to think about . . . parent involvement is what happens between the parent and child at home and maybe that’s more important then the parent sitting in the stands watching the student perform.

Superintendent C elaborated on alternative methods he has encouraged his schools to use in the area of positive home and school relations. First, he and his office had directed that schools would have meetings with parents and that a minimum amount of time would be spent in that regard, although he did not elaborate on how much time. Each school was then given the autonomy to determine how those contacts were to be made. Superintendent C gave a detailed description of some of the efforts that were being made or being looked at for the future:

I gave to the principals this year (an objective) . . . to develop . . . some alternative ways to involve parents, because the traditional ones just don’t work. An example would be at our middle school here, where my office is kind of adjacent to . . . parent/teacher conferences used to be . . . we would have them twice a year at the end of the quarters. Right now they run them
about four or five times a year. In fact they’ve even gone out to local malls and held them out there, trying to involve parents in what’s going on. It’s easier to involve parents when we have activities, and so we found out that sometimes we’ll piggyback on those activities. We’ll have family hot dog night for instance at one of the elementary (schools) and bring everyone in and have the students do some kind of performance and then try to hit up on parents when they’re there and keep talking about issues and talk about planning etc.. So we’ve done a lot of those kind of things. Obviously, one of the major goals we’re working on right now is the installation of a telephone in every classroom. The reason for that is to provide teachers with the resources to call each parent when they can. Some of our buildings do parent/teacher conferences and make home visits for all their conferences; and again that’s some of the individual nature of our district.

The superintendents were also asked in what ways they communicated opportunities for parents to become involved with schools. Superintendents reported that opportunities for involvement were communicated through: (a) parent aide coordinators, (b) parent newsletters and fliers; (c) parent conferences; (d) open house; and, (e) informal contacts and personal relationships.

Recognition activities for parent participation was another question given to superintendents. Superintendents A, B, and E mentioned such recognition awards and activities as (a) ceremonies for parent volunteers who had ten or more years helping a school; (b) certificates and parties for parent helpers; (c) recognition by the school board at monthly meetings; (d) principal recognition at their individual schools; and (e) some state recognition practices. Superintendent E indicated that recognizing volunteers was mainly the individual school’s responsibility.

Finally, the last question which garnered significant responses from interviewed superintendents was how they and their districts involved other community groups in
Superintendents detailed the following ways in which other community groups become involved with schools. The number in parentheses represents the number of superintendents that commented on efforts in that area.

1. Business partnerships (5)
2. Open facilities (e.g. gym, adult education classes, computer labs, etc.) (4)
3. Tutoring math and science (2)
4. Guest Speakers (2)
5. Professional Mentoring (2)
6. Job Shadowing (2)
7. Contribution of funds (2)
8. Field trips out to the community (e.g. nursing homes, tour businesses, etc.) (1)
9. Staff development (e.g. company instruction on minority issues and multiculturalism) (1)
10. Links with the community college which provided guest instructors (1)

Interesting comments were made by many superintendents. Superintendent C felt that many of the usual strategies used to involve community groups were not effective. Superintendent D felt that for partnerships to be effective, there had to be some give and take from both sides. He stated that often schools and school districts were often perceived as “looking for a hand out.” Superintendent E explained that they had a program called Kids 2000, in which units at local military base, were thoroughly involved with different schools. These units provided mentors, assisted with activities, and helped sponsor learning activities such as the construction of a wildlife area outside the school that students could use as part of their science learning.

**High Expectations for Student Achievement**

In effective schools high expectations for student success is shared by the entire faculty of a school, and that shared belief is demonstrated on a daily basis in the way teachers interact with students and the methods school administrators employ to support the
Table 8

High Expectations Results Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Clearly communicate to everyone high expectations for student academic achievement.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Communicate to everyone a concern for all students, including those who are labeled “average.”</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Clearly and succinctly communicate to everyone that all students can succeed regardless of socio-economic background.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ensure that school instructional goals are developed congruent with district policy.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Recognize academic accomplishment of students.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regularly provide the community with information assessing the effectiveness of individual schools and the district as a whole.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Establish discipline procedures that ensure that low achieving students are as well behaved as other students.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #</td>
<td>Item Description</td>
<td>Mean Small District (n=17)</td>
<td>Mean Large District (n=25)</td>
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<td>% Strong Agree Sample</td>
<td>% Strong Agree District (n=42)</td>
<td>% Strong Agree Entire District (n=42)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Believe that a student’s home background is not the primary factor that determines individual student achievement in this school district.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Strive for a promotion rate across all grades that sees low income students being proportionally advanced as well as student populations of the middle class.</td>
<td>*5.3</td>
<td>*5.7</td>
<td>*5.5</td>
<td>*44%</td>
<td>*61%</td>
<td>*54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Maintain clear and understandable guidelines for grouping students for instruction.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* = one or more missing responses)
art of instruction (Lezotte, 1991). A climate of high expectations for student achievement begins with a school staff that freely accepts the responsibility for enhancing the learning opportunities for their students (Search for Successful Secondary Schools, 1987, p. 56). Duttweiler (1998) explained that high expectations for learning existed when there were well developed goals; when a commitment to them directed the school’s resources and functioning; when the focus was on student learning and student acceptance of responsibility; and when the expectation was that students from all socioeconomic levels could master the basic skills (p. 5).

In the area of high expectations for student achievement, ninety percent or more of the responding superintendents responded that they (a) clearly and succinctly communicated to everyone that all students could succeed regardless of socio-economic background (item 66/91%); (b) clearly communicated high expectations for student academic achievement (item 47/95%); and, (c) communicated to everyone a concern for all students, including those who are labeled “average” (item 56/91%).

Eighty percent of the responding sample indicated that they (a) recognized academic accomplishment of students (item 13/81%) and (b) ensured that school instructional goals were developed congruent with district policy (item 17/83%). Seventy percent or more of the responding recognized superintendents for 1999 reported that they: (a) regularly provided the community with information assessing the effectiveness of individual schools and the district as a whole (item 9/74%) and (b) established discipline procedures that ensured that low achieving students were as well behaved as other students (item 35/71%).

Weaker responses in the area of high expectations for student success were reported for items 18, 23, and 64. Sixty-nine percent of responding superintendents believed that a student’s home background was not the primary factor that determined individual student achievement (item 64), and 54% of reporting superintendents strived for a promotion rate across all grades that saw low income students being proportionally advanced as well as
student populations of the middle class (item 23). An even smaller percentage of superintendents (33%) felt that they maintained clear and understandable guidelines for grouping students for instruction (item 18).

In the area of providing a climate of high expectations, the sample of AASA Superintendents usually agreed less with questionnaire items which were action specific. General questions were normally responded to with stronger agreement. While the sample of AASA Superintendents of the Year indicated that they perceived themselves to be communicators of high expectations for all students, there is a possibility that their actions and behaviors do not confirm those beliefs.

Climate of High Expectations Interview Results

The superintendents who participated in the interviews were asked what types of programs or initiatives exemplified high expectations for student success. Superintendent responses varied widely, many times touching on the entire culture of a school or school district, while not staying entirely focused in the area of programs. Superintendent A explained that their expectations for students came from a philosophy or culture which communicated that all students “from the richest kids in town to the poorest” had the ability to achieve. He also stated that the community (which was fairly affluent) played a large role in communicating high expectations for student success.

Superintendent B stated that he had found that high expectations for students did not mean trying to build up students self esteem. He stated that, “I’m not big on expectations or that kind of thing . . . we try to get kids to go for it instructionally, to challenge themselves and be a part of things and to know that we will support them in whatever they want to do.” Programs or initiatives that superintendent B listed which communicated high expectations for students were the use of staff development funding as a means of dictating what types of activities the district felt was important and a no tracking of students policy (although his district did have a small pool of gifted and talented students at each school level). Superintendent B admitted that when it came to teachers, he and the
district did not work hard to ensure that teachers were competent and knowledgeable in subject matter.

Student performance objectives, committee/group discussions on high expectations for staff, district reports, recognition awards which highlight achievement of objectives, and teacher/student ratios were cited by superintendent C as efforts which communicated high expectations for students. Superintendent D emphasized advanced placement programs and the extra curricular academic activities such as the forensics team. He also explained that he and his district had raised the number of high level classes as a means of increasing the number of students participating in them. Superintendent D added that the greatest area which communicated high expectations for student success came from the community (a highly affluent district). He stated that they not only encouraged high expectations but they, “demand it! You can’t get away with anything less.” Finally school improvement plans and student self evaluation methods were cited by superintendent E as two areas which exemplified high standards for students. She continued that every school had different levels of students on free and reduced lunch, but our expectations for all of them were the same.

Superintendents C and D were asked if resource allocation in any way communicated high expectations for student achievement. Superintendent C indicated that extra funding was often made available to schools which were attempting to implement innovative programs and he gave an example of a year round elementary school and multi-age grouping. Superintendent D stated that the only significant way finances were used to communicate high expectations for students was through high salaries for their teachers which started at $34,000 per year up to 75,000 per year. Additionally, he stated that his district spent approximately $8,000 per year to educate each student. This was why superintendent D stated that “our greatest investment is in our staff.”
Part of high expectations for student achievement is attempts to ensure that all students learn a set of basic skills (Edmonds, 1979a). Superintendents were therefore asked about any programs which helped to remediate students who had fallen behind. The following examples were given by individual superintendents (each was identified by only one superintendent):

1. Alternative high school: community college half day and high school half day early childhood programs (e.g. head start, infant/toddler programs through the inter-agency community council).
2. Peer modeling programs for students with special needs.
3. Focus on a reduction of truancy at the high school level in a collaborative effort with the court system.
4. Efforts to get greater attention of parents.
5. Project 2nd chance - pull out program for non-proficient 8th graders who were not allowed to continue in a normal schooling environment until they have proven they had mastered the skills to go on. A similar plan was about to be implemented for 9th graders moving on to the 10th grade.
6. Early intervention processes to identify and remediate students in need.

One last question was asked of superintendents in the area of a climate of high expectations. This question asked what types of policies challenged or encouraged students to go beyond the minimum. Superintendent A stated, “No, we made a conscious effort and a conscious decision...six or seven years ago like at the middle school level every child will take every course other than the only elective to have is band.” Superintendent C explained that they had gifted and talented programs which began at the elementary levels all the way to high school honors and AP courses. Superintendent D answered the question previously by stating that he and his district provided increased opportunities to take higher level classes. Superintendent E responded similarly by
indicating that AP courses and an extended learning program were offered for those students who qualify for the gifted and talented.

Superintendent C commented about high school students that did not apply themselves to their full potential in schools:

We try to do the best we can, obviously, and we see this a lot with senior level kids that (say) "hey I’ve gotten my courses (and) I could really challenge myself but... I’ve got this job that I’m kind of concerned about... and I’ve really (got) things that I really want to do so I want to coast." We try to encourage through (the) individual... they’re the type A kids; I mean they’re going to get there... so, those kids we really don’t have to worry about. We do what I consider to be a very... outstanding job with about 75% of our kids, but we’ve got about 25% that we really got to do some different things with. That’s the kids we’re talking about in the alternative programming and other kinds of things we’re continuing to struggle for.

Opportunity To Learn and Time On Task

Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) found that the staffs of effective schools were dedicated to the belief that schooling exists primarily to ensure that students acquire a basic set of cognitive skills. Therefore, maximizing opportunities for students to learn and the time they spend on task was identified as a characteristic of effective schools (Bossert, 1988; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1985). Two methods had been identified in the literature which increased student engagement time. First, teachers could be trained in classroom management practices, through staff development activities, to increase student engagement time (Bossert, 1988). Second, and maybe more importantly, effective managers (principals) attempted to buffer instructors from inside and outside interruptions; therefore providing greater opportunity to engage students (Bossert, 1985; Lezotte, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1985).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>%</th>
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<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Review with the principals of each school standardized test results in an effort to develop action plans for improvement.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Establish and enforce a district wide attendance policy that maintains high standards.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Provide guidelines for the integration of special instructional programs with classroom instruction and the school curriculum.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Develop policies in which pull out programs (e.g., Chapter 1, special education, instrumental music) do not disrupt or interfere with basic skills instruction.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Ensure that a schools daily schedule does not interfere with the goals of the school and district instructional program.</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>*5.5</td>
<td>*5.7</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ensure that schools are enforcing a school wide homework policy.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* = one or more missing responses)
In the area of opportunity to learn and time on task, 91% of the responding superintendents agreed that they reviewed with the principals of each school standardized test results in an effort to develop action plans for improvement (item 43). Seventy-six percent of responding superintendents also reported that they established and enforced a district wide attendance policy that maintained high standards (item 48).

Weaker responses were found for questionnaire items 32, 50, 52, and 58. Sixty-two percent of the responding superintendents believed that they provided guidelines for the integration of special instructional programs with classroom instruction and the school curriculum (item 32) while 21% strongly felt that they ensured schools were enforcing a school wide homework policy (item 50). Sixty percent of responding superintendents reported that they developed or supported policies in which pull out programs (e.g., Chapter 1, special education, instrumental music) did not disrupt or interfere with basic skills instruction (item 52). Finally, 59% of respondents reported that they ensured that a school's daily schedule did not interfere with the goals of the school and district instructional program (item 58).

**Opportunity To Learn and Time On Task Interview Results**

Superintendents interviewed were asked in what ways they ensured the effective use of time available for teaching and learning at the classroom level. Superintendent A stated that keeping teachers in the classroom was important, and so activities such as field trips were scrutinized to ensure a need and instructional purpose. Other areas mentioned by superintendent A were efforts to ensure the intercom was not used at all during the instructional day and that the normal instructional periods were as minimally impacted as possible.

Superintendent B had no comment or was unsure of any central office practices which focused on the opportunity to learn and time on task characteristic of effective schools. Superintendent C indicated that his district built in plenty of extra instruction time in the school calendar. This was made possible with negotiations with the teachers union.
He also encouraged the principals to minimize any distractions to the normal instructional
day, such as field trips, special activities, no use of the intercom during the instructional
day, and to minimize teacher collateral duties (e.g. playground supervision).

Superintendent D explained that providing an opportunity to learn and time on task
was a site level focus. He indicated that his main role in this characteristic was focused on
the principals in their supervisory leadership roles. He stated:

Supervision of instruction in the classroom and being assured that kids are
not getting involved in trivial busy work as opposed to real quality
instruction and time on task stuff . . . we have principals monitor it more
closely. All I can do is kind of practice that with the administrator (by)
directly working with them . . . (time on task) is a supervisory
responsibility at the building level. I depend on them (my principals) to take
care of that.

Superintendent D also stated that the practices of careful allocation of resources and a close
look at scheduling conferences and staff development time were other policies which
communicated to schools the importance of maximizing learning time as a major priority.

Superintendent E indicated that efforts on her part in the area of student opportunity
to learn and time on task focused on insuring that teachers were well prepared to teach
students. These efforts led to an increase in the number of half day student release days;
which allowed elementary teachers more time to cooperatively plan. She also indicated that
principal meetings were used to talk about different ways to improve instruction. Finally,
superintendent E stated that she does her best to buffer schools from outside distractions
that came in the form of well meaning types of groups (e.g. charity organizations trying to
fund raise through schools). She also added that she felt it was her responsibility to sniff
out and eliminate programs that were well intentioned but a burden on the instruction of
basic skills.
Interviewed superintendents were then asked about any remedial programs which offered students extra time to learn. Superintendent responses included (number in parenthesis represents the number of superintendents out of five who commented on identified area):

1. Summer programs (5)
2. Before and after school tutoring programs(4)
3. Transition programs (preparing students to go on to next level) (2)
4. Summer program with a hot lunch offered(1)
5. Exploratory programs (summer trips to different destinations)(1)
6. Intensive Saturday study hall programs(1)
7. Internships (1)
8. IEP's for the gifted and talented dealing with business (1)
9. SAT prep and college courses (1)

Superintendents indicated that these programs were usually associated with a nominal fee designed to be self supporting.

Superintendents were finally asked what types of staff development activities he or she provided which may have helped teachers to become more effective in the classroom. Superintendent A explained that they brought in speakers for inservices and also encouraged teachers to attend workshops sponsored by his district which trained teachers on how to focus and refocus students in a more efficient manner as well as how to better manage the classroom environment. Superintendent B stated that classroom management staff development was a “waste of time” and that their efforts focused more on improving an instructors ability to teach his or her discipline.

Superintendent C maintained that staff development was encouraged at the individual level (workshops, conferences, etc.). He also stated that when teachers were observed to be performing poorly, the principals were to team up with these teachers and “negotiate” some types of activities they were to take part in. Superintendent D explained
that they had fourteen days set aside for clerical and staff inservice time. He stated that all staff development at the district level was under the direction of a staff development director located at the central office. Superintendent D explained that district level activities were driven by intensive needs assessments and goal orientations. He also stated that part of those days were provided to each individual building for site level staff development activities. These staff development efforts by individual schools were required to be somewhat tied to the goals identified by the district.

Superintendent E stated she and her district provided eight days for staff development. A professional development council composed of representatives from various schools monitored and managed the professional development program. The types of staff development supported by the district included such things as workshops and conferences. These staff development activities could be used by teachers to move on the salary schedule. She explained that the district had been known to bus large numbers of faculty members to worthwhile types of activities as well as make holes in the master calendar to allow a maximum number of teachers to attend a valuable conference. Other comments made by superintendent E in the area of staff development included: (a) working with the local university; (b) grant writing to fund staff development; (c) oversight of staff development by an assistant superintendent; and, (d) staff development pursuits were developed from the district and individual building's instructional or improvement goals.

**Clear and Focused Mission**

The effective schools research has found that effective schools share the characteristic of communicating to its students, parents, and staff a clear and focused mission (Brant, 1982; Duttweiler, 1998; Lesourd, Tracz, & Grady, 1992; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte and Jacoby, 1992; Murphy and Hallinger, 1985; OERI, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1985). This mission becomes an internalized philosophy which aids teachers and administrators when making important decisions in areas such as instructional goals, priorities,
Table 10

Clear and Focused Mission Results Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</th>
<th>% Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Involve district staff when making decisions that impact instructional practice.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage principals to bring instructional issues to principal meetings for discussion.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Make available central office personnel to assist in curriculum implementation and effectiveness improvement efforts.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Ensure that each school is primarily focused on learning for all.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ensure that each school has a written statement of purpose that is the driving force behind most important decisions.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ensure that the instructional goals of the district are clearly communicated to the principals of each school within the district</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Play a strong role in the selection of top quality staff.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #</td>
<td>Item Description</td>
<td>Mean Reply Small District (n=17)</td>
<td>Mean Reply Large District (n=25)</td>
<td>Mean Reply Entire Sample (n=42)</td>
<td>Mean % Strong Agree Small District (n=17)</td>
<td>Mean % Strong Agree Large District (n=25)</td>
<td>Mean % Strong Agree Entire Sample (n=42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ensure all materials and supplies necessary for instruction are available at each individual school.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ensure that curriculum objectives are the focus of instruction in all grades.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Periodically review each schools written and sequential objectives to establish congruency with district goals .</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Ensure that objectives are coordinated and monitored in all subjects and grades.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Ensure that there is an identified set of objectives for all subject areas that all students must master in all grades.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ensure that the primary focus of most meetings is on instructional issues.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* = one or more missing responses)
assessment procedures, and accountability (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992, p. 243). How well the mission of a school is communicated is reflected by the proportion of faculty in the school who know what this focus is (Edmonds, 1982 cited in Brandt, 1982).

According to Rosenholtz (1985) the characteristic of communicating a clear and focused school mission was positively influenced by the strength of the instructional leader. Effective schools were found to employ strong instructional leaders who held a vision of a school without any failure and they worked toward the success and recognition of all students (OERI, 1987).

In the area of a clear and focused mission, the sample of recognized superintendents reported that they involved district staff when making decisions that impacted instructional practice (item 12/95%) and they also encouraged principals to bring instructional issues to principal meetings for discussion (item 1/91%). Responding superintendents also indicated that in the area of a clear and focused mission they (a) held schools accountable for a written statement of purpose (item 2/83%); (b) ensured materials and supplies necessary for instruction were made available at each school (item 24/81%); (c) made efforts to clearly communicate to principals the instructional goals of the district (item 27/83%); (d) played a strong role in the selection of top quality staff (item 30/83%); (e) ensured that each school was primarily focused on learning for all (item 61/86%); (f) ensured that curriculum objectives were the focus of instruction in all grades (item 31/76%); (g) periodically reviewed each schools written and sequential objectives to establish congruency with district goals (item 11/71%); and, (h) ensured that objectives were coordinated and monitored in all subjects and grades (item 69/ 71%).

Weaker responses were found for questionnaire items 5 and 63 in the area of a clear and focused mission. Sixty-nine percent of responding superintendents indicated that they ensured an identified set of objectives for all subject areas existed which detailed what all
students must master in each grade (item 63). Finally, 45% of the responding superintendents perceived themselves to focus most meetings toward instructional issues.

In the area of maintaining a clear and focused mission, the sample of AASA Superintendents usually agreed less with questionnaire items which were action specific. General questions were normally responded to with stronger agreement. Given that 70% or more of responding superintendents strongly agreed with 12 out of 13 items related to providing a clear and focused mission, this finding may not be significant. These findings may indicate that the responding sample of recognized superintendents believed that they provided a clear and focused mission but they may not actually behave in a way which exemplifies those beliefs.

Clear and Focused Mission Interview Results

The five superintendents interviewed in this study were asked what vision they had for their district. Responses for each superintendent are presented below. The letter in parentheses corresponds to the responding superintendent.

(A) "We make a pretty concerted effort to try to improve things as best we can. I guess the improvement is a goal (meaning vision) – it's not so much of a goal that something you can reach – it's a journey and I think we have that pretty well ingrained in the whole system."

(B) "Basically it says we want every kid to be very good, that's about it and the ones I directed around the country I think are basically the same, that's about it, educated to a high level."

(C) "I want our school district to become a school district that provides all students with experiences that are going to prepare them for life. Our mission statement says essentially that. It just says that our mission is to educate all students to become responsible citizens, successful citizens and individual learners; and life long learners, we put all that together in terms of our district mission statement . . . We want to produce kids that are
creative thinkers. We want to produce kids that are able to use the technology, to access their environment. Those kinds of things are all kind of blended into our mission statement and our performance priorities.

(D) "The acquisition of basic skills along with ethical responsible citizenship and success in an international workplace."

(E) "My personal vision is... (to) make it possible for students to become the kind of adult that you want to live next door to. Someone that would be successful in some line of work... contributing to the economy in a positive way and they would also have the traits and the qualities that you like to find in people around you."

The superintendents also reported that they had active roles in the production of their districts mission statements. Usually these mission statements were formulated through numerous meetings and even retreats. Many individuals and groups, such as faculty, administrators, community members, and even facilitators were cited as being participants in the process of discovering their districts mission statement. Superintendents normally called these discovered district missions as "ours." Communicating a message of a shared philosophy.

Most superintendents could not verbatim repeat the mission statement of his or her district. They knew about what it was, but had troubling recalling the exact verbiage. For example Superintendent B stated that, "basically it (the mission statement) says we want every kid to be very good. That's about it."

Summary

In this chapter the analysis of the data gathered during the study was reported. Quotes from superintendent interview transcripts were extensively used. A description of what superintendents reported or said was presented as accurately as possible. First, descriptions of the sample of participating AASA recognized superintendents were
reported. Second, the data from a Likert-type mailed questionnaire were analyzed and used to report superintendent perceptions of their behavior in relation to the characteristics of effective schools. Third, the results from semi-structured telephone interviews with superintendents were analyzed and used to triangulate the data obtained from the mailed questionnaires.

The analysis of the data found that recognized superintendents played strong leadership roles in the effective school areas of: (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly environment; (d) clear and focused mission; and (e) climate of high expectations. Superintendents were not found to be a driving force in the areas of providing opportunities to learn/time on task and encouraging positive home and school relations.

In chapter 5, the results of this study will be presented. Detailed summaries and conclusions are discussed, which were derived from the data reported in chapter 4. Finally, recommendations for further study are provided, which if conducted, would expand upon the findings of this study.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary

Chapter five presents a summary of this research study. The study’s problem statement focused upon determining how nationally recognized public school superintendents perceived themselves to be leaders consistent with the characteristics and leadership behaviors identified within the effective schools research. Conclusions were developed out of the data obtained from mailed questionnaires and telephone interviews with AASA Superintendents of the Year for 1999.

The study was conducted in three phases. First a review of the literature in the area of effective schools and the superintendent along with other related information was made. This review of the literature included the use of books, journals, ERIC Searches, and Dissertation Abstracts to find pertinent information related to the topic areas. The seven characteristics of effective schools included: (a) frequent monitoring of student achievement; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly environment; (d) positive home and school relations; (e) climate of high expectations; (f) opportunity to learn and time on task; and (f) a clear and focused mission.

The second phase was the collection of data from superintendents who had been identified as AASA Superintendents of the Year for 1999. Over an eleven-week period, data were collected by using a 70-item mailed questionnaire completed by 42 out of 49 superintendents along with five telephone interviews. The data collected from these two
procedures were then used to triangulate the data to form the conclusions of the study.

The third phase of the study focused on the analysis of the data. Superintendent perceptions of their behaviors and activities were related to the characteristics of effective schools research. Questionnaire items and interview items were subdivided among the seven characteristics of effective schools as noted above. Responses under each characteristic were thoroughly reviewed to identify those behaviors and activities recognized superintendents perceived themselves to employ in their leadership roles. The following research questions guided the analysis of the obtained data:

1. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to the monitoring of student progress?
2. How do recognized superintendents perceive themselves as instructional leaders?
3. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to creating a safe and orderly environment for schools?
4. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to establishing home and school relations?
5. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to promoting a climate of high expectations?
6. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to encouraging student opportunity to learn and time on task?
7. What behaviors do recognized superintendents perceive themselves to employ relative to developing a clear and focused mission?

Conclusions

In this section, each research question was presented as well as the conclusions that were developed from the data (presented in chapter 4). Primarily, the data used to justify the conclusions of this study were those results obtained from the mailed questionnaire.
Superintendent interviews were then used to define the types of activities and/or behaviors this population of superintendents exhibited in the area of interest as well as to support or contradict the data obtained from the questionnaire.

The issues, constructs, and characteristics of the effective schools research were found to be closely knit and interdependent (Edmonds, 1982; Lezotte, 1985b). For this reason there is no true delineation from one issue to the next. Therefore, the reader is advised that within each section of this presentation, reference may be made to a related issue that is discussed in greater detail in another section.

**Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress**

Recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to providing frequent monitoring of student progress. This was research question number one. Of the six questionnaire items related to this characteristic, approximately five of them received relatively high responses from the recognized superintendents who participated.

On the research questionnaire, superintendents perceived themselves to have (a) ensured school personnel were using systematic procedures to monitor student progress; (b) encouraged the use of technology as a means for students to monitor their own learning; (c) disaggregated test scores were monitored across gender, race, ethnicity, and social class; (d) provided preventative strategies for helping at risk students and (e) to a lesser degree made use of many indicators to assess student progress such as grades, tests, attendance, discipline referrals, and/or extra curricular activities.

Only one item on the mailed questionnaire correlated with frequent monitoring of student achievement received a weak response rating. Fifty-five percent of the responding superintendents indicated that they ensured that their testing programs were an accurate and valid measure of the curriculum taught in the school district. This left some concern as to the degree to which superintendents provided oversight in the area of curriculum alignment with standardized and criterion referenced examinations.
Superintendent telephone interviews indicated that respondents encouraged the use of many types of assessment tools at the site level. These methods included the use of: (a) attendance records; (b) portfolios; (c) student progress reports; and, (d) disaggregated test scores. All five superintendent interviews indicated that the evaluation of standardized tests and criterion references tests were clearly the most widely used methods that these superintendents employed to monitor student achievement. While superintendents did mention various other methods of gauging student performance (e.g. portfolios and report cards), it was clear that these measures were not used to evaluate existing programs or goals. These superintendents and their districts disaggregated student standardized and criterion referenced exams across social and economic boundaries on a per school basis. One superintendent even reported that each teacher in their district was provided with the performance scores of their students broken down across social and economic lines.

Interviewed superintendents stated that upon the receipt of poor testing scores from a school, review of those scores with the buildings administration would take place. School principals were often asked to develop action plans in an effort to improve student performance in identified areas. Interviewed superintendents also identified efforts by their districts which sought to improve test scores by preparing students through test taking skills and motivational techniques.

State accountability legislation was also reported as playing an increased role in their districts. Three of the five superintendents explained that policies were in place in which legislative oversight was a possibility. Interviewed superintendents indicated that if a school or schools performed poorly over a number of years without any signs of improvement, the state could come and take it over. Most state action was limited to the assignment of probationary status or limited accreditation. These superintendents stated that no school had ever been taken over by the state in their district.
Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Conclusions

Both the mailed questionnaires and telephone interviews with recognized AASA superintendents indicated that standardized testing and criterion referenced testing were used as the primary methods for measuring, evaluating, and diagnosing student performance. These tests were broken down across gender, social, and economic backgrounds. Superintendents used these tests as a means of diagnosing problem areas and to develop action plans at the school level. State accountability packages were reported by superintendents to provide additional emphasis for performing well on these assessment exams. The results obtained from the mailed questionnaire and interviews, showed the sample of recognized superintendents and their districts to be working within the effective schools definition of monitoring student progress frequently.

These results may seem to be quite narrow because monitoring student progress is almost entirely reliant on the analysis of standardized tests. While this is true, the effective schools research has often been criticized for its narrow focus (Cuban, 1983). Edmonds (cited in Brandt, 1982) explained that action plans used to improve student success have to be data driven. The use of standardized tests is the most efficient means to accomplish this. Until a better means is made available to assess students on a variety of areas, standardized and criterion referenced testing must be a major focus in the pursuit of increased student achievement.

Instructional Leadership

Recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to providing instructional leadership. This was research question number two. Of the 18 questionnaire items asked in this area, participating superintendents responded strongly to 15 of them. The themes which presented themselves in the area of instructional leadership were: (a) promoter of innovation; (b) provider of a clear and focused mission; and (c) teacher of instructional leadership skills.
Promoter of Innovation

Four questionnaire items corresponded to the degree superintendents perceived themselves to be a promoter of innovation within schools. Three of the four questionnaire items were strongly responded to. These questions pertained to efforts made by superintendents with regard to: (a) support of innovative programs aimed at increasing school and student success; (b) encourage principals to make change and develop innovative programs at the school level; and (c) assist principals with additional support (e.g. finances, arranging opportunities, staff development) to aid the risk taking process. One item was responded to weakly by superintendents in the area of a promoter of innovation. The sample of recognized superintendents did not perceive themselves to be providing incentives for risk taking or innovation at the school level.

Superintendent interview responses in this area also supported the findings obtained from the mailed questionnaire. Four of the five interviewed superintendents stated that they encouraged risk taking at the school level by maintaining a willingness to accept failures without repercussions. Additionally two superintendents reported that they were usually able to find additional resources to aid principals or schools developing new innovative programs.

Provider of a Clear and Focused Mission

Three questionnaire items focused on the superintendents role in the communication of a clear and focused mission. This area was covered in greater detail under research question six. It was also included as a part of a superintendents instructional leadership role. Each of the three questionnaire items which pertained to promoting a clear and focused mission was received by the sample of responding superintendents as being important. These included: (a) participation in the formulation of district goals; (b) reviewed and supported each schools mission, goals, and objectives; and, (c) made use of shared decision making processes when dealing with instructional concerns.
Superintendent interviews also showed that superintendents perceived themselves to be actively involved in the communication of the district’s mission. These superintendents reported meeting with different groups as the primary activity through which this was accomplished. These communication activities were usually made before large groups in a more formal fashion. Little informal and personal methods were reported as being used to communicate the mission of the district.

**Teacher/Promoter of Instructional Leadership Skills**

Superintendents responses were additionally analyzed on their perceptions of how they encouraged principals to be instructional leaders. Eleven questionnaire items pertained to this area. Approximately nine of the eleven items were responded to strongly. The sample of responding AASA superintendents perceived themselves to have: (a) promoted the concept to principals that it was important to be highly visible in the school setting; (b) communicated to principals what it meant to be an instructional leader and the expectation that they must fulfill that role; (c) promoted staff development activities focused on student needs; (d) observed each principals instructional leadership methods at the school level; (e) buffered schools from outside distractions; (f) supported principals to meet and make informal contacts with students, teachers, and community members; (g) exhibited (modeled) problem solving skills focused on resolving instructional concerns; (h) provided principals with instructional issues to be shared with their faculties; and (i) used the principal as the primary instrument for change.

Two questionnaire items received weaker scores in the promotion of instructional leadership skills. Superintendents did not feel that they provided assistance to principals to help them improve after systematic observations. Secondly and to the smallest degree, these superintendents did not perceive themselves to provide educational leaders with clear guidelines on important instructional leadership activities and the amount of time that should be devoted to each.
Superintendent interviews found that as a teacher and promoter of instructional leadership practices, superintendents perceived themselves to: (a) meet often with principals and other administrative groups; (b) focused meetings on instructional issues and needs of students; (c) participated or felt strongly about staff development; (d) modeled instructional leadership behavior; and (e) buffered schools from outside distractions.

Superintendent interviews also revealed some contradictory information. Superintendents reported that school visits were used primarily for a visibility or exposure role. They did not mention that these visits were used to communicate to principals any important instructional leadership practices. In addition, none of the superintendents stressed that it was important for principals to get out into the community. Finally, the telephone interviews were very quiet on how or what instructional leadership practices they stressed principals were to exhibit. This information led the researcher to conclude that superintendents taught or promoted instructional leadership skills to their principals mainly through modeling and informal evaluation activities.

Edmonds (as cited in Brant 1982) stated that instructional leadership occurs by being highly visible and sharing ideas which pertain to effective instructional practice. This interaction takes place in a personal way. AASA superintendents did not indicate that this occurred with their leadership behaviors. Little personal communication of important instructional leadership practices were made by superintendents to their principals.

**Instructional leadership conclusions.** This study separated the conclusions found under research question six into three themes. These themes included that superintendents were: (a) promoters of innovation; (b) providers of a clear and focused mission; and (c) teachers and promoters of instructional leadership skills. The results of this study led the researcher to conclude that superintendents did perceive themselves to promote and encourage innovation at the school level. This was generally accomplished by providing an atmosphere which encouraged risk taking. Superintendents indicated a willingness to accept failure and saw risk taking as a sign of strength from principals.
Superintendents were also found to communicate a clear and focused mission. This was accomplished through meetings and other formal activities. The results pointed to some informal communications with members of the community, but overall results indicated that most efforts made by superintendents in this area were communicated to the professional members of the school district in group settings. Individual and informal methods of communication with faculty and staff members were not mentioned as primary methods for disseminating a clear and focused mission.

Finally, as a teacher and promoter of instructional leadership practices, recognized superintendents were found to use modeling and evaluation procedures to accomplish this task. Superintendents were not found to communicate these expectations to principals or other educational leaders in an individual or personal way. Questionnaire results which found that superintendents tended to answer general questions more strongly than action specific questions supported the conclusion that even though these superintendents do perceive themselves to be instructional leaders in each of the three areas of supporting innovation, providing a clear and focused mission, and being a promoter of instructional leadership skills; their actions may not communicate this perception as strongly.

**Safe and Orderly Environment**

Recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to creating a safe and orderly environment for schools. This was research question number three. Most superintendents strongly indicated that they made significant efforts in the following areas: (a) provided good working conditions; (b) ensured clean, safe and secure schools to learn and work in; (c) provided prompt and courteous support for schools; (d) ensured that schools were clean and comfortable; and (e) encouraged positive relationships in and out of individual schools.
Telephone interviews supported these findings. Detailed explanations of strategies used by superintendents to increase effectiveness in the areas of clean, safe, and orderly schools included:

1. Promoted a district philosophy that cleaner schools resulted in better behaved students
2. Frequently monitored school cleanliness by visits or inspections
3. Centralized or outsourced custodial crews
4. Outfitted schools well
5. Maintained a strong relationship with police and other agencies to ensure safety
6. Provided a variety of alternative programs for students with discipline problems
7. Established school and district safety teams as well as policies for safer schools
8. Invested in conflict management and peer mediation strategies
9. Invested in superior technology

The enforcement of fair and consistent discipline policies received a weaker response rating from superintendents. One interviewed superintendent stated that discipline was something that was mainly handled at the school level; if it reached his level it was basically perfunctory. Conversely, two other superintendents indicated during their interviews that they did stress the importance of a strong and consistent discipline policy. Overall, the data pointed to the enforcement of discipline being a site level responsibility. In every interview, discipline matters were something brought to the district office, and not the other way around.

Finally, as a means of monitoring how clean, safe, and orderly a school was; superintendents were asked if they made regular visits with the staff of each individual school. Superintendents ranked this activity with the lowest response rate. Telephone interviews obtained the same findings, with all five superintendents indicating that school visits were not made as often as they would like.
Safe and Orderly Environment Conclusions

Even though superintendents did respond weakly with regard to discipline and school visits, the overall results showed that recognized superintendents and their districts did take great steps to ensure that schools were safe, clean, and orderly. AASA Superintendents of the Year reported the outsourcing of custodial crews and school visits as a means of increasing the effectiveness of cleaning crews. They also reported maintaining good relations with law enforcement agencies as well as employing school police and monitors as a means of ensuring safety on school campuses. Recognized superintendents indicated that while discipline was mainly a site level concern, district support was always there, especially when it reached the central office level. These obtained results led to the conclusion that recognized superintendents perceived themselves to be performing in a manner consistent with the findings of effective schools in the area of providing a safe and orderly school environment.

Positive Home and School Relations

Recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to providing positive home and school relations. This was research question number four. Of the eight questionnaire items, approximately five received relatively high responses from superintendents who participated. Superintendents who responded to the mailed questionnaire perceived that they (a) maintained a positive viewpoint about the schools and school district; (b) encouraged parents to be actively involved with schools; (c) promoted school programs which involved the participation of parents; (d) published newsletters as a means of communicating with parents; and (e) established various policies which encouraged teachers to maintain communication with parents.

Weaker ratings were reported by recognized superintendents in the areas of (a) involved the community in district decision making processes; (b) encouraged community
businesses to become part of the schooling process; and (c) provided parents with school report cards describing school efficiency statistics.

Superintendent interviews found that recognized superintendents did make efforts in supporting positive home and school relations. These efforts included encouraging parents to participate in/as (a) parent organizations; (b) student activities; (c) rewarding parent volunteers; (d) school volunteers; and (e) parent conferences. Superintendents also stated that recognition awards were in place to reward parents who gave freely of themselves. Recognized superintendents reported that they made efforts to involve community and business groups through (a) business partnerships; (b) opening school facilities; (c) offering tutoring services for students and the community; (d) professional volunteers; (e) links with the university; and (f) contribution of funds.

Superintendent interviews revealed that parent involvement in schools was severely lacking. The five superintendents interviewed made it clear that parents were not involved with schools to the degree that was needed. Two of the responding superintendents stated that the old methods for involving parents did not work, and that new ways of thinking were required. Only one of the superintendents stated that he was taking strides to encourage his schools to create greater parent participation. This superintendent explained that he was communicating to school principals that a standard amount of time needed to be spent meeting with parents. He also stated that he encouraged his schools to be innovative in the ways they involved parents. Some of the methods quoted by this superintendent included: (a) piggy backing activities; (b) installing telephones in every classroom; and (c) going out into the community to meet with parents (e.g. the malls).

Positive Home and School Relations Conclusions

The data from the mailed questionnaires and superintendent interviews indicated that superintendents were providing opportunities for parents and the community to participate with schools. The results also indicated that the methods employed were ineffective in encouraging and building stronger ties with parents. New strategies for
increasing home and school relations were found to be needed to truly increase the
involvement of parents and the community.

The results therefore indicated that while superintendents were not satisfied with the
amount of parent involvement in their district, they were also not significantly concerned to
do much about it. Questionnaire responses from responding superintendents which
showed superintendents to respond more strongly to general items than to items which
were action specific supported this conclusion. These findings led the researcher to
conclude that recognized superintendents were not showing the leadership behaviors
necessary for building stronger positive home and school relations within their districts.

**Climate of High Expectations**

Recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions
which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to providing high
expectations. This was research question number five. Of the ten questionnaire items
which pertained to a climate of high expectations, 8 received relatively strong responses
from the sample of recognized superintendents who participated. Interview questions were
centered around perceptions on (a) superintendent perceptions on how they communicated
high expectations and (b) behaviors which communicated high expectations for all
students.

**Communication of High Expectations**

Four questions pertained to the degree superintendents perceived themselves to be a
communicator of high expectations. Three of the four questionnaire items were strongly
responded to and the fourth item was responded to with moderate strength. The first three
items each received 90% strong agreement or higher. These included the perceptions that
superintendents (a) communicated high expectations for student achievement; (b)
communicated concern for all students; and (c) communicated that all students can succeed
regardless of their background. The fourth questionnaire item detailed the degree to which
recognized superintendents believed that a student’s home background was not the primary
factor that determined individual student achievement. This item received a 69% strong agreement score.

Superintendent interviews revealed that a climate of high expectations came from: (a) a philosophy or culture which had grown within the district; (b) a state of mind which focused on helping students achieve, not focused on increasing self esteem; and (c) an outgrowth of the community which demanded success. One response by a superintendent did not reveal high expectations for all students. When asked about confronting students who were not applying themselves to their full potential, the superintendent remarked that:

We try to do the best we can, obviously, and we see this a lot with senior level kids that [say] "Hey I've gotten my courses [and] I could really challenge myself but . . . I've got this job that I'm kind of concerned about . . . and I've really (got) things that I really want to do so I want to coast." We try to encourage through (the) individual . . . they're the type A kids; I mean they're going to get there . . . so, those kids we really don't have to worry about. We do what I consider to be a very . . . outstanding job with about 75% of our kids, but we've got about 25% that we really got to do some different things with. That's the kids we're talking about in the alternative programming and other kinds of things we're continuing to struggle for.

The results in this area led to the conclusion that superintendents did communicate high expectations for student success toward the acquisition of a basic set of academic skills. Unfortunately, the data also indicated that higher expectations beyond this basic skills level were limited.

**Behaviors Which Communicated High Expectations For All Students**

Six questions pertained to the types of behaviors recognized superintendents employed which communicated a climate of high expectations. Four of the six questionnaire items received strong responses. These behaviors included the perceptions that superintendents (a) ensured that school goals were developed congruent to district
policy; (b) recognized academic accomplishments of students; (c) provided the community with information assessing the effectiveness of individual schools and the district as a whole; and (d) established discipline procedures that ensured that low level achieving students were as well behaved as other students.

Two behavior questionnaire items which pertained to high expectations received weaker scores from responding superintendents. The first was the pursuit of a promotion rate across all grades that saw low income students being proportionally advanced as well as student populations of the middle class. The second focused on maintaining clear guidelines on the grouping procedures for instruction.

Superintendent interviews revealed many behaviors or actions used by superintendents to communicate a climate of high expectations. These included:

1. Use of staff development funding
2. Performance objectives
3. Group discussions
4. District reports
5. Recognition awards
6. Smaller teacher to student ratios
7. Advanced placement programs
8. Extra curricular activities
9. High salaries for teachers
10. Better than average expenditures to educate students per year
11. Elimination of tracking programs

Superintendents also indicated that many alternative programs existed with the purpose of remediating students who had not yet met a standard of performance. Many examples such as summer school opportunities, second chance programs, and even head start programs were identified as opportunities for students to spend more time on the academic material. Both the mailed questionnaire and the telephone interview results presented support the
conclusion that superintendents perceived themselves to act in ways which communicated a climate of high expectation for student success.

Climate of High Expectation Conclusions.

The sample of AASA superintendents who participated in this study perceived themselves to communicate a message of high expectations for student achievement. The results of the study also indicated that recognized superintendents employed many strategies for communicating a climate of high expectations for students.

One area where the data from the mailed questionnaire and the telephone interviews conflicted, had to do with having high expectations for all students. It was clear that these superintendents held the same high standard for all students; that all students regardless of their backgrounds were expected to attain a level of basic competency. But beyond that, superintendents provided much less focus.

Superintendent questionnaire results found that AASA Superintendents perceived themselves to have high expectations. Weaker results on action specific items caste some doubt on their having high expectations for all students. Telephone interviews supported this conclusion. While the data revealed opportunities for mid and higher level students such as advanced programs and other extra curriculum opportunities, superintendents did not discuss any types of strategies which focused on increasing participation in those areas. The data revealed that the responding superintendents focused their efforts on bringing lower performing students up to the basic minimums while mid to higher level students received much less attention.

Opportunity To Learn & Time On Task

Nationally recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to providing increased opportunities for students to learn and time on task. This was research question number six. Of the six questionnaire items which pertained to an opportunity to learn and time on task, only two received relatively high responses from the responding sample.
Telephone interview questions were also centered around what behaviors or actions they used to increase opportunities to learn and time on task for students.

Responses to the mailed questionnaire showed that recognized superintendents used standardized test results in an effort to develop action plans for student improvement. To a smaller degree, responding superintendents believed that they established and enforced a district wide attendance policy that maintained high standards.

Weak responses were recorded in relation to the following questionnaire items. These behaviors included the perceptions that superintendents (a) provided guidelines for the integration of special instructional programs with classroom instruction and the curriculum; (b) developed policies in which pull out programs did not disrupt or interfere with basic skills instruction; (c) ensured that a school's daily schedule did not interfere with the goals of the school and district instructional day; and (d) ensured that schools were enforcing a school wide homework policy.

Superintendent telephone interviews reported that they increased the opportunities for students to learn and time on task by (a) monitoring off school activities needing district approval; (b) communication with principals; (c) buffering schools from outside distractions; (d) staff development; and (e) the availability of remedial programs. The majority of interviewed superintendents reported that it was through their principals that increased opportunities to learn were encouraged. Most superintendents saw their role in this area as working with their principals and stressing the importance of minimizing distractions that occur in the classroom.

Staff development was also indicated as a method for increasing teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Each interviewed superintendent indicated that they encouraged staff development that either increased teacher management practice or the practice of instruction. These activities included individual, school, and school district staff development opportunities. One superintendent reported that they had increased their number of student half day releases in order to pursue staff development. This practice
was an example of a district practice which limited student opportunities to learn more than enhanced it.

Remedial programs were also offered as a means of increasing opportunities to learn and time on task. These programs included before and after school tutorial classes, summer programs, transition programs, exploratory programs, Saturday study halls, and internships. Many times these programs were offered with a nominal fee and superintendents reported that the use of these programs were increasingly being taken advantage of.

**Opportunity To Learn and Time On Task Conclusions**

The results obtained from the mailed questionnaires and telephone interviews led this researcher to conclude that recognized superintendents had only tertiary roles in providing students with increased opportunities to learn and time on task. While these superintendents did provide some guidance and oversight in this area, by their own admission they stated that encouraging opportunities to learn and time on task were accomplished at the site level, through school principals. In some instances, practices at the district level even hampered efforts to increase opportunities to learn and time on task. One example that was given centered on a staff development policy which removed students from the classroom. Practices such as these conflict with what the effective schools research supports. Therefore, these superintendents were found to not provide significant leadership in the area of opportunities to learn and time on task.

**Clear and Focused Mission**

Recognized superintendents who participated in the study were asked questions which pertained to the types of behaviors they employed relative to developing a clear and focused mission. This was research question number seven. The analysis of the mailed questionnaire results indicated that superintendents had at least three roles when promoting a clear and focused mission. These included the roles of developer/supporter of the
mission, overseer of the mission, and articulator of the mission. Questionnaire items were broken down according to the categories reported above.

**Developer/Supporter of a Clear and Focused Mission**

Five questionnaire items were related to the superintendents role as a developer and supporter of a clear and focused mission. All five of these questionnaire items received relatively strong responses from the sample. These actions included: (a) encouragement of district personnel to participate in decisions which impacted instruction; (b) took steps to hire quality staff; (c) maintained an identified set of basic skills that students had to master at each grade level; (d) made available central office personnel for assistance; and (e) ensured materials and supplies necessary for instruction were in place at each school.

Interview responses found that superintendents were involved in the production of their districts mission statements. They reported that numerous meetings and retreats were scheduled to develop the mission. They also indicated that representatives from the various professional and community groups were involved in those processes.

**Overseer of a Clear and Focused Mission**

Four questionnaire items pertained to the roles that superintendents fulfilled in relation to overseeing a clear and focused mission. These activities and behaviors were related to the goals and objectives generated at individual schools. Superintendents had relatively strong responses to all four items which pertained to the overseer dimension. These superintendents perceived themselves to ensure (a) each school had its own statement of purpose or mission statement; (b) curriculum objectives were the focus of instruction; (c) periodically reviewed each schools objectives; and (d) objectives were monitored and coordinated in all subjects and grades.

No interview questions were specifically asked of superintendents which probed how they monitored each schools goals and objectives. None of the superintendents reported how or how often they monitored or reviewed curriculum goals and objectives. This raises a question as to how the interviewed superintendents saw the review of
individual school goals and objectives. Did they (a) not see it as a method of promoting a clear and focused mission or (b) not feel that close oversight of school goals was a primary function of their role in the area of promoting a clear and focused mission?

**Articulator of a Clear and Focused Mission**

Four questionnaire items corresponded to how superintendents articulated a clear and focused mission throughout their district. Three of the four questionnaire items were strongly responded to. The responding sample of superintendents perceived themselves to: (a) encourage principals to bring instructional items to meetings; (b) maintain a focus of learning for all students; and (c) ensure that instructional goals were clearly communicated to principals. One questionnaire item received a weak response. This was in regard to maintaining an instructional focus for most meetings. Less than 50% of superintendents responded favorably to maintaining this focus in their meetings.

Superintendent interviews revealed that meeting with principals and other administrative teams were the primary means for articulating such things as the goals and mission of the district. Other strategies mentioned by superintendents which communicated a district's mission and/or goals were: (a) the media; (b) newsletters; (c) word of mouth; (d) evaluation activities; (e) performance awards; (f) television broadcast of school board meetings; and (g) modeling.

Interestingly, when asked about a personal vision for their district, only one superintendent had a clear and rehearsed answer. He responded with “The acquisition of basic skills along with ethical responsible citizenship and success in an international workplace.” Each of the other four superintendents gave their responses as vague generalities. The effective schools paradigm reports a mission that all students learn a basic set of skills as well as the average middle income student. Responses made by the remaining four superintendents made statements such as “We want our kids to be the best they can be” or “I want students to become the kind of adult that you want to live next
door to." These do not directly carry a message of learning a basic set of instructional skills.

**Clear and Focused Mission Conclusions.**

The sample of AASA recognized superintendents responded strongly to 12 out of the 13 questionnaire items which were correlated to the characteristic of providing a clear and focused mission. The data therefore led this researcher to conclude that these superintendents did perceive themselves to be acting in a manner consistent with the types of behaviors which promoted a clear and focused mission. Analysis of the questionnaire items revealed that superintendents performed three main roles within the characteristic of a clear and focused mission. The first was the developer/supporter role. The behaviors of superintendents in this area provided an atmosphere which encouraged free discussion and participatory decision making when developing district and school missions, goals, and objectives.

The second role these superintendents provided within the area of a clear and focused mission was as overseer of the clear and focused mission. These activities and behaviors included the periodic review of goals and objectives, and the assurance that instructional objectives were what was driving the taught curriculum. Unfortunately, none of the superintendent interviews touched upon this area, leaving some doubt as to whether these superintendents actually performed this activity on a regular basis.

Finally, the last role these superintendents performed when promoting a clear and focused mission was that of articulator. Superintendents gave many examples of how they and their districts communicated the mission, goals, and objectives throughout the community. Methods used by superintendents personally were those which focused on communicating with various groups through meetings and other similar situations.

While the conclusion of this study was that AASA Superintendents did perceive themselves to behave in a way which supported the three areas of providing a clear and focused mission; an exception to these findings is noted. The sample of AASA
Superintendents usually agreed less with questionnaire items which were action specific. General questions were normally responded to with stronger agreement. Given that 70% or more of responding superintendents strongly agreed with 12 out of 13 items related to providing a clear and focused mission, this finding was not determined to be significant. It did raise a concern that while superintendents were found to believe that they provide a clear and focused mission, their actions may not communicate this message as clearly.

**Differences Between Smaller and Larger Districts**

Analysis of the findings from superintendents of larger districts (5000 students or more) compared to smaller districts (less than 5000 students) revealed some subtle differences in the perceptions of their behavior. Districts were categorized in this way because a district size of 5000 students was close to the mean which also created comparable samples. Notable differences were found between superintendents perceptions of small districts and large districts in the effective schools areas of (a) instructional leadership; (b) high expectations; and (c) maintaining a clear and focused mission.

Under the characteristic of instructional leadership, considerable differences between the perceptions of superintendents of larger and smaller school districts were found. Questionnaire results found that superintendents from smaller districts perceived themselves to operate more as instructional leaders than their counterparts in larger school districts (see Table 5). These findings raised the question, “Do superintendents of larger districts find themselves performing a more political role with greater emphasis on community relations and organizational management, leaving instructional leadership to those administrators closer to the act of instruction?” Interview responses from Superintendent D from a large district seemed to support this conclusion. He indicated that most instructional leadership in his district occurred from his principals and assistant superintendents. If this is the case the question arises, “Are superintendents of larger districts truly concerned with providing an instructional leadership dimension at the school level or is it a dimension that is only a secondary priority?”
In the area of high expectations for students, superintendents from smaller districts felt stronger about the expectation that all students could achieve regardless of background than did superintendents of larger districts (see Table 8). Superintendents from smaller districts responded more strongly to items regarding (a) high expectations for all; (b) students can achieve regardless of background; and (c) low achieving students were to be as well behaved as other students.

Within the area of high expectations for all students, superintendents from larger districts were found to answer questionnaire items relating to bureaucratic actions more strongly than superintendents from smaller districts. Larger school district superintendents indicated more positively that they ensured that instructional goals were developed congruent with district policy and that they more regularly provided the community with information about schools and the school district. These findings indicated that superintendents of smaller districts were more interactive within the organization and out in the community, requiring much less time to be spent on bureaucratic activities. This led the researcher to conclude that superintendents of smaller districts felt more strongly about high expectations for all, because they were in a better position to influence those who played a role in teaching students. In this way they made a more direct impact on increasing the success of students.

Finally, responses in the area of providing a clear and focused mission indicated that superintendents from larger districts played a much stronger role in bureaucratic behaviors than superintendents of smaller districts (see Table 10). Comparing the means found superintendents of larger districts to perceive themselves more strongly in (a) making available central office staff; (b) ensuring each school had a written statement of purpose; (c) ensuring that instructional goals of district were clearly communicated to principals; (d) playing a strong role in the selection of staff; (e) ensuring all materials for instruction were made available; and (f) periodically reviewing written and sequential objectives. These findings supported the conclusion that superintendents of smaller
districts, because of their more personal interactions, did not need to perform as much oversight as a superintendent from a larger district. Superintendents of smaller districts therefore may view themselves less as organizational managers and more as instructional leaders than do superintendents from larger districts.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The mailed questionnaire and telephone interview developed for this study provide the opportunity for further investigation of superintendent perceptions of their behavior in relation to the characteristics of effective schools. This study can be expanded through the following recommendations for further research:

1. Replication of the study should be performed. This would provide a means for validating the findings of this study and therefore provide more robust information which superintendents could use to increase their efforts in the area of school effects.

2. The study should be expanded to explore how superintendents of large, average, and small districts differ in their perceptions of their own behavior in relation to the findings of effective schools research. The data analysis presented in chapter four showed some differences between the perceptions of superintendents from larger and smaller districts. Comparisons of means showed some notable differences on items related to instructional leadership, high expectations, and most strikingly promoting a clear and focused mission. This type of study would provide useful information on how superintendents modify their behavior as the size of the district changes.

3. A study is recommended which determines if and/or how superintendent gender or race impacts the perceptions of superintendent behavior in relation to the findings of the effective schools research. This would provide useful information on the notable leadership behavior differences found between these groups of superintendents in relation to the effective schools research.
4. The study should be expanded by conducting a study which surveyed a random sample of all superintendents throughout the country, not only those superintendents who had been nationally recognized. These results would detail how the general population of superintendents perceived their leadership behaviors in relation to the characteristics of effective schools.

5. A study is recommended which focuses on the effective school behaviors this study found superintendents to use when leading their districts. Samples of superintendents from different populations (e.g. large district/small district, male/female, recognized/general population) could then be compared and tested for statistical significance.

6. A study is recommended which goes beyond the collection of superintendent perceptions, and focuses on observed superintendent behavior. Through observation and other ethnographic approaches a more detailed picture of superintendent behavior in relation to the effective schools research could be obtained.

Summary

In this chapter a summary of the research study and conclusions derived from the obtained data and its analysis were presented. Recognized AASA superintendents of the year for 1999 were mailed a 70 item questionnaire of which 42 out of 49 superintendents responded. Five telephone interviews were also conducted which were used to enrich the data obtained from the mailed questionnaire. These data collection techniques focused on superintendent perceptions of their own leadership behavior in relation to the effective schools research.

The analysis of the obtained data revealed that the responding sample of recognized superintendents did take formidable action in the effective school areas of (a) frequent monitoring of student progress; (b) instructional leadership; (c) safe and orderly
environment; (d) clear and focused mission; and (e) to a lesser degree climate of high expectations. Superintendents were not found to be a driving force in the areas of (a) providing opportunities to learn and time on task and (b) encouraging positive home and school relations.

In the area of frequent monitoring of student progress, superintendents were found to disaggregate standardized and criterion referenced exams as a means of diagnosing student needs and developing action plans to address those needs. Superintendents were also found to provide an instructional leadership dimension at the district level through the roles of (a) promoter of innovation; (b) provider of a clear and focused mission; and (c) teacher and promoter of instructional leadership skills.

Nationally recognized AASA Superintendents were also found to ensure that district schools were clean, safe, and orderly. Outsourcing custodial crews, employing school security, and maintaining positive relations with area police were methods cited by principals to ensure schools were safe, clean, and orderly. Maintaining a clear and focused mission received strong responses from superintendents on 11 out of 12 questionnaire items which pertained to that area. Superintendents were found to fulfill three leadership roles when providing a clear and focused mission. These were: (a) developer/supporter role; (b) overseer role; and (c) articulator role.

The last characteristic which responding superintendents were found to have an impact on, was in the area of creating a climate of high expectations. Superintendents were found to have an expectation that all students were to achieve a basic set of academic skills. Unfortunately these superintendents were not found to provide policies which encouraged students to go beyond basic minimums.

Questionnaire results in the areas of instructional leadership, positive home and school relations, climate of high expectations, and a clear and focused mission indicated that superintendents tended to answer general items more strongly than action specific items. Arguably this finding could indicate that recognized superintendents believe one
thing but do another. Superintendent interviews were used to support the conclusions of this study, but in some regards the above question may still be valid.

Recognized superintendents were not found to be a driving force in providing increased opportunities to learn and time on task. These superintendents did provide some guidance and oversight in this area, but by their own admission they stated that site level leadership was actually the prime movers in this area. It was even found that some district policies even limited or prevented student opportunities to learn and time on task.

One other effective school area superintendents were found to have only a limited leadership role in was creating positive home and school relations. Responding superintendents were found to provide or encourage "the usual" opportunities to involve parents and the community. These superintendents were the first to admit that these opportunities were not effective. Recognized superintendents stated that much more needed to be done in the area of creating positive home and school relations, yet participating superintendents had no programs or policies which addressed those needs.

Finally, comparisons were made between the responses of superintendents from smaller districts and those from larger districts. Notable differences were found between larger and smaller districts in the areas of instructional leadership, providing a clear and focused mission, and maintaining a climate of high expectations. What was found was superintendents from smaller districts tended to have greater expectations for their students than did their counterparts in larger school districts. Perhaps the smaller size of the district allowed them more direct involvement with principals, teachers, and students, and thus they were able to focus more directly on the instructional concerns of their districts. Superintendents from larger districts relied on practices such as meeting with groups of individuals, newsletters, oversight processes and other similar practices to provide leadership in the areas mentioned above. These findings supported the conclusion that
superintendents of smaller districts, because of their more personal interactions, did not need to perform as much oversight as a superintendent from a larger district.

Overall, this study added to the knowledge on the superintendent and the effective schools research. It found that AASA superintendents of the year did perceive themselves to be behaving consistently with the characteristics of effective schools research. These superintendents perceived themselves to make notable efforts in the areas of frequent monitoring of student progress, instructional leadership, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations, and a clear and focused mission. This study provided insights as to how these recognized superintendents provided leadership in each of these areas and in a small way validated the findings of the effective schools research.

This research study also generated many questions. Are superintendent perceptions consistent with their behavior? Can superintendents be expected to provide leadership in the areas of creating positive home and school relations as well as increasing opportunities to learn and time on task? Are superintendents from larger districts more bureaucratic and political than instructional leaders? Are superintendents from smaller districts more hands on while possibly providing less vision? These questions provide directions for further research.
APPENDIX I

SUPERINTENDENT MAILED QUESTIONNAIRE AND TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
# Professional and Personal Background Information

[Name of Superintendent], (ID ###)
[Name of School District]
[Address of School District]
[City, State, Zip Code]

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<td>2. Age (fill in blank)</td>
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<td>3. Ethnic origin (circle one or fill in blank)</td>
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<td>Mexican-American;</td>
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<td>4. Marital Status (circle one):</td>
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<td>5. Number of children?</td>
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<td>6. How many years did you serve as a teacher?</td>
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<td>7. How many years did you serve as an assistant principal or principal?</td>
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<td>8. How many years have you served as a school superintendent?</td>
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<td>9. Please list any other administrative positions you have held and the number of years in each job description.</td>
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<td>10. Total number of years you have served in education?</td>
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<td>11. What category best describes the amount of formal education you have received with regard to education (circle one):</td>
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<td>Master + 32</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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12. Size of school district currently serving in:
   (a) number of elementary schools
   (b) number of middle/junior high schools
   (c) number of high schools
   (d) approximate number of students in district
   (e) approximate number of teachers employed
Superintendent Questionnaire

Instructions

1. Please circle the appropriate number that best reflects your perceptions, beliefs, and actions in regard to your current school district. There are no right or wrong answers.

2. All answers have seven possible responses arranged on a scale of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7. The scale represents the amount of agreement with the item.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
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Strongly disagree (The condition is not present)                      Strongly Agree (The condition present to the highest degree.)

3. Once finished, place the completed survey and background information sheet in the stamped return envelope and mail.

4. Please indicate if you would like a copy of the survey results (please circle yes or no).
   YES | NO

5. Would you be open to a telephone interview as a means of improving the results of this study (please circle yes or no)?
   YES | NO

As superintendent, I . . .

1. Encourage principals to bring instructional issues to principal meetings for discussion.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Ensure that each school has a written statement of purpose that is the driving force behind most important decisions.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Involve the community in district decision making and district programs.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Encourage change and innovation at the school level.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Ensure that the primary focus of most meetings is on instructional issues.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Provide school and district newsletters to parents as a means of keeping them informed about school activities, changes in rules or procedures, or on instructional matters.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Support principals when developing and implementing innovative programs designed to increase school effectiveness and student achievement.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Provide educational leaders with clear guidelines on important instructional leadership activities and the amount of time that should be devoted to each.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Regularly provide the community with information assessing the effectiveness of individual schools and the district as a whole.

10. Communicate to principals and school staff the importance of a positive classroom atmosphere which is conducive to learning for all students.

11. Periodically review each school's written and sequential objectives to establish congruency with district goals.

12. Involve district staff when making decisions that impact instructional practice.

13. Recognize academic accomplishment of students.

14. Ensure school support services are provided in a prompt and courteous manner.

15. Ensure that school personnel are using systematic procedures for monitoring student progress.

16. Promote individual school programs which encourage active parent/school interaction and participation.

17. Ensure that school instructional goals are developed congruent with district policy.

18. Maintain clear and understandable guidelines for grouping students for instruction.

19. Use the principal as the primary instrument for change.

20. Ensure that each school is neat, bright, clean, and comfortable.

21. Ensure that most problems facing a school are dealt with at that level without a great deal of outside help.

22. Encourage teachers, administrators, and parents to work cooperatively to support the discipline policy in each school.

23. Strive for a promotion rate across all grades that sees low income students being proportionally advanced as well as student populations of the middle class.

24. Ensure all materials and supplies necessary for instruction are available at each individual school.

25. Provide incentives for schools to be creative, innovative, and risk takers with regard to increasing instructional effectiveness.
26. Maintain a positive public image/viewpoint about the schools and the overall school district.

27. Ensure that the instructional goals of the district are clearly communicated to the principals of each school within the district.

28. Promote the concept that the principal make informal contacts with students, teachers, and community members around the school.

29. Provide parents with individual school report cards describing school efficiency aspects (pass/fail rates, graduation rates, dropout rates, teacher student ratios, percentage of teachers teaching out of emphasis area, etc.).

30. Play a strong role in the selection of top quality staff.

31. Ensure that curriculum objectives are the focus of instruction in all grades.

32. Provide guidelines for the integration of special instructional programs with classroom instruction and the school curriculum.

33. Ensure that each school is continually striving to provide a safe and secure place to learn and work.

34. Encourage community businesses to become involved with the school -- for example, by providing speakers, donating material and equipment, serving on advisory committees, etc.

35. Establish discipline procedures that ensure that low achieving students are as well behaved as other students.

36. Ensure that discipline procedures at each school are being enforced consistently and fairly.

37. Review and support each school’s mission, goals, and objectives.

38. Implement successful preventative strategies for helping students at risk of failure.

39. Observe each principal’s instructional leadership methods within the school setting.

40. Foster a strong and cooperative relationship with union leaders that is built on trust.

41. Analyze achievement scores for all subgroups of students (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, social class) to assure that all populations of students are achieving.

42. Make available central office personnel to assist in curriculum implementation and effectiveness improvement efforts.
43. **Review with the principals of each school standardized test results in an effort to develop action plans for improvement.**

44. **Encourage the use of technology so that students are better able to monitor their own learning and where necessary adjust their own behavior.**

45. **Participate in the formulation of district goals.**

46. **Promote the concept to principals that it is important to be highly visible in the school setting.**

47. **Clearly communicate to everyone high expectations for student academic achievement.**

48. **Establish and enforce a district wide attendance policy that maintains high standards.**

49. **Provide principals with instructional issues to be shared with their faculty members.**

50. **Ensure that schools are enforcing a school wide homework policy.**

51. **Make regular visits with the staff of each individual school.**

52. **Develop policies in which pull out programs (e.g., Chapter 1, special education, instrumental music) do not disrupt or interfere with basic skills instruction.**

53. **Regularly use many indicators to assess student progress (e.g., grades, tests, attendance, discipline, referrals, extracurricular).**

54. **Provide good working conditions for both staff and students.**

55. **Communicate to principals what it means to be an instructional leader and the expectation that they must fulfill that role.**

56. **Communicate to everyone a concern for all students, including those who are labeled “average.”**

57. **Establish policies and procedures which encourages teachers to maintain communication with parents in a variety of methods (e.g., home visits, phone calls, progress reports, newsletters, regular notes).**

58. **Ensure that a school’s daily schedule does not interfere with the goals of the school and district instructional program.**

59. **Promote district staff development activities designed to meet the needs of students.**

60. **Assist principal or school personnel to increase effectiveness after systematic observations.**
61. Ensure that each school is primarily focused on learning for all.

62. Assist principals in securing additional resources, arranging opportunities, and promoting staff development activities for the school, teachers, and community.

63. Ensure that there is an identified set of objectives for all subject areas that all students must master in all grades.

64. Believe that a student's home background is not the primary factor that determines individual student achievement in this school district.

65. Ensure that the testing programs are an accurate and valid measure of the curriculum taught in the school district.

66. Clearly and succinctly communicate to everyone that all students can succeed regardless of socio-economic background.

67. Exhibit problem-solving skills related to resolving instructional concerns.

68. Encourage parents to become involved in school activities and school advisory boards.

69. Ensure that objectives are coordinated and monitored in all subjects and grades.

70. Make use of shared decision making processes.
I. Instructional Leadership

1. Describe in what ways you provide instructional leadership to schools and the school district as a whole.

Potential follow up Questions:
   a) How often do you visit schools and classroom?
   b) How often do you talk with teachers and students?
   c) When meeting with principals, what is your primary focus?
   d) How would you describe your own personal mission in the field of education?
   e) What do you consider to be the purpose of staff development?
   f) In what ways do you feel a superintendent should monitor student achievement?
   g) How do you provide feedback to the various groups interested in student achievement?

2. How do you communicate to principals, teachers, and parents what you feel is important for their schools to be accomplishing?

Potential follow up Questions:
   a) Under what circumstances do you visit schools, teachers, parents, students?
   b) How often and under what circumstances are principal meetings held?
   c) How are principals evaluated and is it a systematic process?
   d) Describe any expectations you hold for teachers and students and how are these communicated?
   e) Do you have a general goal identified for each school?
   f) How are objectives identified/do you participate in this process?
   g) Is there district oversight in the pursuit of these goals/objectives?
   h) In what ways do you protect principals from outside distractions?
   i) How do you encourage principals to take risks for the sake of improving?

II. Frequent monitoring of student achievement

3. In what ways does your district evaluate students.

Potential follow up Questions:
   (a) What efforts have been made to align the intended, taught, and tested curriculum?
   (b) Other assessment (i.e. gifted and talented assessments)?
   (c) How is technology used to assess student achievement?
   (d) How are scores analyzed (i.e. gender; ethnic; economic)?
4. Describe what happens when student assessment results yield poor, average, and exceptional results?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) Describe the districts actions.
(b) Describe any state involvement.
(c) How do you as the superintendent react to each situation?

5. How are student assessments/performance reports prepared and to whom and how are these data communicated?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) Community; does each school receive a report card?
(b) How are these reports communicated to the administrators and teachers of each individual school site?

III. Clear and Focused Mission

6. What is the focusing mission you have set for your school district?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) What goals have grown from this mission?
(b) How were these goals identified?
(c) How are the mission and goals communicated to various groups?

IV. Positive Home School relations

7. In what ways are parents encouraged to participate in school operations/activities?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) What actions do you take to communicate these opportunities to parents and the community?
(b) In what ways are parents taking advantage of these opportunities?

8. What opportunities exist for participation in the school by other community groups?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) How are civic and business associations encouraged to participate?
(b) Are the schools in the district available for use by community groups for educational or other programs?
(c) Are these organizations taking advantage of these opportunities?
V. Climate of high expectations

9. What district programs or initiatives exemplify high expectations for student success?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) Does your district have any programs that provide innovative remediation in basic skills or other areas?
(b) Is resource allocation a means used to communicate high expectations?
(c) Policies/programs which focus on insuring the learning of all (homework; social promotion; exit exams; etc.)
(d) Policies which challenge students to go beyond basic requirements? (such as students not allowed or discouraged from taking easy courses once meeting requirements)

VI. Safe and Orderly Environment

10. In what ways do you ensure that schools are clean, safe and orderly?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) How do you ensure that schools are properly maintained?
(b) How do you ensure that schools are safe for children to learn in?
(c) How do you show support for student discipline?

VII. Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task

11. What policies and procedures does your office promote to ensure the effective use of time available for teaching and learning at the classroom level?

Potential follow up Questions:
(a) Define any staff development practices designed to improve teacher management practices.
(b) Define any policies or procedures which are designed to buffer instructors and students from inside and outside interruptions.
(c) Describe any innovative programs designed to increase student learning time. (free summer remediation programs etc.)
APPENDIX II

RAW DATA AND PERCENTAGES ON EACH ITEM
OF THE MAILED QUESTIONNAIRE
## Raw Data and Percentages of Each Item of the Mailed Questionnaire

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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX III

SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE
Subject: RE: Permission to use the Connecticut School Effectiveness Questionnaire

Date: Tue, 20 Jul 1999 13:20:11 -0400

Sender: "Abigail Hughes" <abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us>

Reply-To: <abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us>

To: "Warren McKay" <wemckays@worldnet.att.net>

I think a copy of the email would be appropriate and very modern. Let me know if you need something formal on letterhead. Abigail

-----Original Message-----
From: Warren McKay <wemckays@worldnet.att.net>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 1999 2:23 PM
To: abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us
Subject: Re: Permission to use the Connecticut School Effectiveness Questionnaire

Abigail Hughes wrote:
> 
> Sorry for the delay. Of course you may use the questionnaire as long as you cite the department. Abigail L. Hughes
> 
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Warren McKay <wemckays@worldnet.att.net>
> Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 1999 12:15 PM
> To: abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us
> Subject: Permission to use the Connecticut School Effectiveness Questionnaire
> 
> Dear Mrs. Hughes,
> 
> I am a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. As part of my degree program I am conducting research in the area of effective schools research. If possible, I would like to use the 1989 Connecticut School Effectiveness questionnaire as part of my research instrument. If granted permission I would properly cite the Connecticut State Department of Education within my research.
> 
> Thankyou very much for your help.
> 
> Sincerely,
> 
> Warren P. McKay
> 507 Desert Summit Ct.
> Henderson NV, 89052
> (702)-897-5767
> 
> Mrs. Hughes,

Thankyou for your permission to use the effective school questionnaire. I am planning on using a copy of our e-mail as an appendix of my dissertation, given the permission of my professor. If he says that this is not appropriate, could I get a formal typed response from your office. This would be greatly appreciated. Thankyou for your support and I will be in touch.

Warren McKay
Subject: RE: More Information on the Superintendent of the Year Award  
Date: Sat, 24 Jul 1999 20:43:28 -0400  
From: "Carney, Shari" <SCamey@aasa.org>  
To: 'Warren McKay' <wemckays@worldnet.att.net>

Hi Mr. McKay,

Darlene Pierce is still the director of the National Superintendent of the Year Award Program. She has been on extensive travel and is to return back to the office on Monday, July 26th. However, I will be more than happy to send you information on the program. Should you have further questions, you may contact Darlene directly. Her email address is: dpierce@aasa.org or you may call her at (703) 875-0736.

Thanks.

-----Original Message-----
From: Warren McKay [mailto:wemckays@worldnet.att.net]  
Sent: Friday, July 23, 1999 7:42 PM  
To: scarney@aasa.org  
Subject: More Information on the Superintendent of the Year Award

Dear Sharon,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. My advisor, Dr. Edward Chance, instructed me to contact Darlene Pierce to obtain some information on the AASA Superintendent of the Year Award. Dr. Chance has worked with Darlene in the past, but unfortunately because she has been out of town I have been unable to contact her. I have subsequently been directed to you. Could you please help me?

If possible, could you please send me as much information as possible on the AASA superintendent of the year award. I am especially interested on any written instructions and procedures given to local organizations on how to select, document, and submit names for this award. Additionally, I would also like to know how the AASA superintendent award is selected once all the applications have been received. This information will be extremely helpful in the pursuit of finishing my degree. Thankyou so much for your help

Warren P. McKay  
507 Desert Summit Ct.  
Henderson, NV, 89052  
(702)-897-5767

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[Date], 1999

[Name of Validator]
[Name of University]
[Address of University]
[City, State Zip Code]

Dear [Name of Validator]:

Thank you very much for agreeing to review my telephone survey. Please take a look at it and write down any suggestions that you feel would improve it. I have included a return envelope so that you can mail it back to me (this will serve as the master for the dissertation appendix).

I again thank you for all your efforts in my behalf and I apologize for any inconvenience I may have caused you.

Sincerely,

Warren P. McKay
507 Desert Summit CT.
Henderson, NV 89052
[Date], 1999

[Name of Validator]
[Name of University]
[Address of University]
[City, State Zip Code]

Dear [Name of Validator]:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and I am planning on conducting research with public school superintendents in relation to the characteristics of effective schools. I have developed a survey instrument and I would very much appreciate your thoughts and recommendations to improve the questionnaires design.

I would also like to send this survey to other leading experts in the field of effective schools research for further review. Could you please recommend any other educational scholars and their addresses who may be willing to validate my instrumentation.

Any additional suggestions you may have regarding my topic will be appreciated. Thank you so much for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Warren P. McKay
507 Desert Summit CT.
Henderson, NV 89052
(702) 897-5767
Dear [Name of Superintendent]:

As part of a doctoral study, the attached survey focuses on superintendent perceptions of their work attitudes and behaviors in relation to the characteristics of effective schools. The intent of this study is to augment the literature about superintendent behavior and the research on school effects. I am particularly interested in your responses as a means of field testing and validating the instrument. This is a very important step in the overall design of the study.

It will be extremely appreciated if you could complete the enclosed survey prior to [date], 1999 and return mail in the stamped self addressed envelope included. Please be assured that all responses will be kept in the strictest of confidence. I welcome any comments you may have concerning the superintendency and effective schools research not covered in the instrument. If you have any questions, please contact Warren McKay at (702)-897-5767.

I will be pleased to send you a summary of the survey results if you desire. Please mark the appropriate space on the survey questionnaire. Thank you so much for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Warren P. McKay
Doctoral Candidate
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dear [Name of Superintendent]:

My name is Warren McKay and I am a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. As part of my degree program, I will be conducting a survey which focuses on how nationally recognized superintendents perceive their own work behaviors in relation to the characteristics of effective schools.

Since you have been distinguished as Superintendent of the Year for your state in 1999, it is my hope that you will take the time to complete the questionnaire when it reaches you in about a weeks time. Your response to this questionnaire is crucial to the findings of my study and the pursuit of my degree. I thank you in advance for your efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

Warren P. McKay
Doctoral Candidate
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
[Date], 1999

[Name of Superintendent]
[Name of School District]
[Address of School District]
[City, State Zip Code]

Dear [Name of Superintendent]:

Two weeks ago you should have received a questionnaire concerning the superintendent and their perceptions of themselves in relation to the effective schools research. This survey is part of a doctoral study which will serve to increase the understanding of the role a superintendent plays in increasing the effectiveness of schools and the school district as a whole.

I am confident that due to an oversight on my part or because of your demanding schedule you were unable to complete the survey questionnaire. This is understandable. It is my hope that this second mailing clears up any misunderstanding and that within the next two weeks you will have the time to complete the survey.

Please remember that your responses are special because you were recognized as Superintendent of the Year for your state during the 1999 school year. No study in the literature could be found which looks at this distinct population.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (702)-897-5767. I again thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Warren P. McKay
Doctoral Candidate
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dear [Name of Superintendent]:

Two weeks ago you should have received a questionnaire concerning nationally recognized superintendents and their perceptions of themselves in relation to the effective schools research. I know that your time is precious, but to this point I have not attained a 70% response rate (I am five responses short at this time). If you could please fill out the survey and return it in the enclosed self addressed envelope I will be extremely grateful. I appreciate all your efforts and I am sorry for any inconvenience that I have caused you.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (702)-897-5767. I again thank you for your help and cooperation.

Happy Holidays,

Warren P. McKay
Doctoral Candidate
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
[Date], 1999

[Name of Superintendent]
[Name of School District]
[Address of School District]
[City, State Zip Code]

Dear [Name of Superintendent]:

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in a telephone interview with me on your superintendency in relation to the effective schools research. This letter is a gentle reminder that the interview is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 8 from 11:00 am - 12:00 PM. Enclosed is an outline of the areas we will be covering during the interview.

I again thank you for all your effort and I look forward to talking with you on these issues.

Sincerely yours,

Warren P. McKay
Doctoral Candidate
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Enclosure
Outline for Superintendent Interview

I. Instructional Leadership
II. Monitoring of Student Achievement
III. Clear and Focused Mission
IV. Positive Home and School Relations
V. Climate of High Expectations
VI. Safe and Orderly Environment
VII. Opportunity To Learn and Time On Task
**Questionnaire Field Test Summary**

A field test of the mailed questionnaire was conducted to ensure a sound research plan (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 77). Seventeen currently employed superintendents from the state of Nevada were asked to participate in the pilot study. This pilot study helped to: (a) identify any survey questions that were ambiguous or unclear; (b) determine any changes needed to the questionnaire or the administration of the questionnaire due to the number of responses; (c) perform a brief analysis of the data obtained using the methods planned to be used in the actual study, and; (d) to determine if any additional questions may be needed to highlight concepts underdeveloped in the original instrument (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 345-346). Each participant was asked to circle questions which seemed difficult to understand or unclear and to write any suggestions for improvement.

The field test ran over a six week period. At the end of six weeks, approximately 59% (10/17) of the pilot population had returned the mailed survey. Data entry and analysis were made on the pilot data as a means of preparing for the actual study. Comments made on the survey stated that the instrument itself was clearly understandable and required little revision. It was found that the postcard reminder (3rd stage mailing) resulted in no additional returns of the mailed survey. To increase the return rate of the actual study, an introductory letter was mailed one week prior to the first mailing of the questionnaire and a third complete mailing and telephone calls were made to non-responding superintendents in place of the reminder postcard.

A personal and professional background information sheet was included with the survey questionnaire in an attempt to better understand the population of the study. Of the ten responding superintendents, nine were Caucasian American and one was African American; with seven being male and three being female. The mean age was 51 years, with a minimum age of 41 and a maximum age of 57 being reported. Seven were married, two were single and one superintendent was separated. The median number of children raised in the household of these superintendents were 2.5 children.
Professionally, these superintendents served a mean of 5.9 years as a classroom teacher. They also served an average of 6.2 years as an assistant principal and/or principal. The median number of years served as an assistant superintendent was 5.5 years and as superintendent the median number of years served was also 5.5 years. These superintendents also reported an average of 2.25 years in other administrative positions. These other positions included: (a) counselor; (b) university administrator; (c) assistants to the superintendent, and; (d) director of education. In total, the pilot sample had a median number of years served in education being 27 years with a formal education level of approximately 20 years (Masters + 32).

In addition to asking superintendents about aspects of their personal and professional backgrounds, superintendents were also asked about the size of the district they were currently serving in. Each superintendent was asked the number of elementary, junior/middle schools and high schools they were responsible for. They were also asked the number of students and teachers employed in their district. After evaluation of the data, it was decided that the number of students currently being served best described the size of the district. A summary of these findings for the field test sample of Nevada superintendents are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Size Measured By Student Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Superintendents Reporting Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students per district ranged from a minimum of 960 students in a school district to a maximum of 53,000 students in a school district. The median best
described the central tendency of this data at 5750 students per district; the mean was not used because of an outlier.

**Questionnaire Field Test Results**

The population for the field test was identified as those superintendents who were currently serving as a superintendent in a Nevada school district in 1999. This is what McMillian and Schumacher (1997) would classify as a convenience sample. Names of the 17 superintendents and their district mailing addresses were obtained through the State of Nevada Education web page (see Appendix VI).

A questionnaire was mailed to each of the 17 superintendents for the year 1999. Each mailed questionnaire contained a stamped self addressed envelope, a personal and professional background information sheet, cover letter, and a questionnaire. Respondents were asked to return the questionnaire and personal and professional background information sheet to the researcher within two weeks of each mailing. The first mailing yielded a total of 6 responses for a 35% return rate.

A second complete mailing was sent two weeks from the first mailing to those superintendents who had not responded to the initial mailing. This yielded another four responses, for a total of 10/17 or a 59% return rate. A third mailing, a reminder postcard, was sent four weeks from the first mailing. This reminder postcard was mailed to those subjects who had not responded. This strategy yielded no additional returns of the questionnaire.

Superintendent perceptions were organized under the seven characteristics of effective schools as identified under the literature review in chapter 2. Superintendent responses to each item of the mailed questionnaire were grouped under two classifications; these classifications were: (a) weak responses, range 1-5 and, (c) strong responses, range 6-7. Percentages of responses across these weaker and stronger response areas for each questionnaire item were then made. Maximum and minimum scores were also reported for
each questionnaire item as a means of describing how spread out the scores were for each item.

When analyzing the data, the percentage of strong responses for each item were used to determine if that item was perceived by the superintendent population to be a characteristic they employed in their leadership behavior. Questionnaire items receiving strong response scores of 70% or higher by superintendents were identified as being a characteristic employed by superintendents in their leadership behavior. Items receiving less than 70% strong agreement scores were classified as weak and therefore not identified as characteristics used by the sample population in the way they lead their school districts. The following sections each focus on a main area identified in the effective schools research.

**Safe and Orderly Environment**

Superintendents who participated in the field test reported strong agreement responses to items 4, 10, 14, 22, 33, 36, 51, and 54 of the mailed questionnaire (see table 6 below). Every responding superintendent (100%) strongly agreed that they continually strove to provide a safe and secure place for students to learn and work and that disciplinary procedures at each school must be consistently and fairly enforced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Frequency 1-5/Percentages</th>
<th>Frequency 6-7/Percentages</th>
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<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>8/80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>0/0%</td>
<td>10/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
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<td>10/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2/20%</td>
<td>8/80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eighty percent of the responding superintendents indicated that they encouraged change and innovation at the school level. These superintendents also perceived themselves to act in a manner which sought prompt and courteous support services for schools. Finally, eighty percent of Nevada superintendents strongly agreed that they encouraged teachers, administrators, and parents to work cooperatively to support the discipline policy at each school, and that they provided good working conditions for both staff and students.

Seventy percent of the superintendents indicated that: (a) it was important for them to clearly communicate to principals and staff members the significance of a positive classroom atmosphere as being conducive to learning for all, and; (b) they made regular visits with the staff of each individual school.

Weaker responses were made on items 20 and 40. Sixty percent of the pilot population felt that it was their responsibility to: (a) to ensure that each school was neat, bright, clean, and comfortable, and; (b) foster a strong and cooperative relationship with union leaders built on trust.

**Clear and Focused Mission**

In the area of a clear and focused mission, the pilot sample of superintendents reported strong agreement responses to items 1, 12, 24, 27, 30, 31, 42, 61, and 69 of the mailed questionnaire. Every responding superintendent (100%) strongly agreed they played a strong role in the selection of top quality staff and that they also ensured each school was primarily focused on learning for all.
Ninety percent of the responding pilot sample indicated that they ensured that the instructional goals of the district were clearly communicated to the principals of each school within the district. Eighty percent of the superintendents saw themselves to: (a) encourage principals to bring instructional issues to principal meetings for discussion; (b) ensure that all materials and supplies necessary for instruction were available at each individual school; and, (c) made available central office personnel to assist in curriculum implementation and effectiveness improvement efforts. Seventy percent of the responding pilot superintendents believed that they acted in a manner which ensured that curriculum objectives were the focus of instruction in all grades and that objectives were coordinated and monitored in all subjects and grades.

Weaker responses (60% strongly agree and below) were found for questionnaire items 2, 5, 11 and 63. Sixty percent of the sample agreed that they ensured an identified set of objectives existed for all subject areas which all students must master in each grade. Fifty percent agreed that each school should have a written statement of purpose that drives the most important decisions. Fifty percent of the superintendent sample also agreed that they periodically reviewed each schools written and sequential objectives to establish
congruency with district goals. Finally, only forty percent of the responding superintendents perceived themselves to focus most meetings toward instructional issues.

**Instructional Leadership**

In the area of instructional leadership, the pilot sample of superintendents reported strong agreement responses to items 7, 37, 39, 45, 46, 55, 59, 60, 62, 67, and 70 of the mailed questionnaire. Every responding superintendent (100%) strongly agreed they: (a) supported principals when developing and implementing innovative programs designed to increase school effectiveness and student achievement; (b) participated in the formulation of district goals; and, (c) assisted principals or other school personnel to increase effectiveness after systematic observations.

### Instructional Leadership Response Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<th>Frequency 6-7/Percentages</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<td>6/60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5/50%</td>
<td>5/50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
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<td>5/50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
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<td>1/10%</td>
<td>9/90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>67</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2/20%</td>
<td>8/80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninety percent of superintendents indicated that they promote district staff development activities designed to meet the needs of students. While eighty percent of respondents strongly agreed that they: (a) review and support each school's mission, goals, and objectives; (b) observe each principal's instructional leadership methods within the
school setting; (c) promote the concept to principals that it is important to be highly visible in the school setting; (d) communicate to principals what it means to be an instructional leader and the expectation that they must fulfill that role; (e) assist principals in securing additional resources, arranging opportunities, and promoting staff development activities for the school, teachers, and community; and, (f) they make use of shared decision making processes. Finally, seventy percent of the respondents perceived themselves to exhibit problem-solving skills related to resolving instructional concerns.

Weaker responses (60% strongly agree and below) were found for questionnaire items 8, 19, 21, 25, 28, and 49. Sixty percent of the superintendents believed that they: (a) provided educational leaders with clear guidelines on important instructional leadership activities and the amount of time that should be devoted to each; (b) provided incentives for schools to be creative, innovative, and risk takers with regard to increasing instructional effectiveness; and, (c) promoted the concept that the principal make informal contacts with students, teachers, and community members around the school. While only 50% of superintendents indicated that they: (a) used the principal as the primary instrument for change; (b) ensured that most problems facing a school were dealt with at that level without a great deal of outside help; and, (c) promoted the concept that the principal make informal contacts with students, teachers, and community members around the school.

**High Expectations for Student Achievement**

In the area of high expectations for student achievement, the pilot sample of superintendents reported strong agreement responses to items 9, 13, 17, 23, 35, 47, 56, 64, and 66 of the mailed questionnaire. Ninety percent of the responding superintendents strongly agreed they: (a) regularly provided the community with information assessing the effectiveness of individual schools and the district as a whole; (b) recognized academic accomplishment of students; (c) clearly communicated to everyone high expectations for student academic achievement; (d) communicated to everyone a concern for all students,
including those who were labeled “average”; and (e) clearly and succinctly communicated to everyone that all students could succeed regardless of socio-economic background.

### High Expectations For Student Achievement Response Summary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Frequency 1-5/ Percentages</th>
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</tr>
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<td>9/90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>6/67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2/20%</td>
<td>8/80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1/10%</td>
<td>9/90%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Eighty percent of the pilot sample indicated that they ensured that school instructional goals were developed congruent with district policy and that they also believed a student’s home background was not the primary factor that determines individual student achievement in this school district. In addition, sixty seven percent of responding superintendents perceived themselves to strive for a promotion rate across all grades that saw low income students being proportionally advanced as well as student populations of the middle class and established discipline procedures that ensured that low achieving students are as well behaved as other students.

Only item 18 of the mailed questionnaire received a weak (60% strongly agree or below) response rating. Only thirty percent of the responding superintendents indicated that they maintained clear and understandable guidelines for grouping students for instruction.

**Opportunity To Learn & Time On Task**

In the area of opportunity to learn and time on task, the pilot sample of superintendents reported strong agreement responses to items 43 and 58 of the mailed questionnaire. Ninety percent of the responding superintendents strongly agreed they reviewed with the principals of each school standardized test results in an effort to develop
action plans for improvement. Item 58 showed seventy percent of superintendents perceived themselves to ensure that a school's daily schedule did not interfere with the goals of the school and district instructional program.

**Opportunity to Learn/Time on Task Response Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Frequency 1-5/ Percentages</th>
<th>Frequency 6-7/ Percentages</th>
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<td>9/90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9/90%</td>
<td>1/10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Weaker responses (60% strongly agree and below) were found for questionnaire items 32, 48, 50, and 52. Sixty percent of the superintendents believed that they: (a) provided guidelines for the integration of special instructional programs with classroom instruction and the school curriculum; and, (b) established and enforced a district-wide attendance policy that maintained high standards. Forty percent of the responding pilot superintendents indicated that they developed policies in which pull-out programs (e.g., Chapter 1, special education, instrumental music) did not disrupt or interfere with basic skills instruction. While only ten percent of superintendents ensured that schools were enforcing a school-wide homework policy.

**Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress**

In the area of frequent monitoring of student progress, responding pilot superintendents reported strong agreement responses to items 15, 38, 41, 53, and 65 of the mailed questionnaire. Ninety percent believed that they implemented successful preventative strategies to assist students at risk of failure. Eighty percent of superintendents indicated that they ensured that school personnel were using systematic procedures for monitoring student progress. And, seventy-eight percent of respondents perceived themselves to ensure that the testing programs were accurate and valid measures.
of the curriculum taught in the school district. Finally, seventy percent of responding superintendents believed that they regularly used many indicators to assess student progress (e.g., grades, tests, attendance, discipline, referrals, extracurricular activities).

### Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Response Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Frequency 6-7/Percentages</th>
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<tr>
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<td>9/90%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7/70%</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>2/22%</td>
<td>7/78%</td>
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</table>

Only one item was recorded with a weaker response rate (60 strong agreement or lower) in the area of frequent monitoring of student progress. This was item 44. Sixty percent of superintendents responded that they encouraged the use of technology so that students were able to monitor their learning and where necessary adjust their own behavior.

### Home and School Relations

In the area of frequent monitoring of student progress, responding pilot superintendents reported strong agreement responses (70% and above 6/7 responses) to items 26, 29, 57, and 68 of the mailed questionnaire. Ninety percent believed that they encouraged parents to become involved in school activities and school advisory boards. While seventy percent of responding superintendents perceived themselves to: (a) Maintain a positive public image/viewpoint about the schools and the overall school district; (b) provided parents with individual school report cards describing school efficiency aspects (pass/fail rates, graduation rates, dropout rates, teacher student ratios, % teachers teaching out of emphasis area, etc.); and, (c) established policies and procedures which encouraged teachers to maintain communication with parents in a variety of methods (e.g., home visits, phone calls, progress reports, newsletters, regular notes).
Positive Home & School Relations Response Summary

<table>
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<th>Item</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Frequency 1-5/ Percentages</th>
<th>Frequency 6-7/ Percentages</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6/60%</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
</tr>
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<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3/30%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1/10%</td>
<td>9/90%</td>
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</table>

Weaker responses (60% strongly agree and below) were found for questionnaire items 3, 6, 16, and 34 in the area of positive home and school relations. Only sixty percent of the responding pilot sample indicated that they: (a) provided school and district newsletters to parents as a means of keeping them informed about school activities, changes in rules or procedures, or on instructional matters; (b) promoted individual school programs by encouraging active parent/school interaction and participation; and, (c) encouraged community businesses to become a part of the school (for example, by providing speakers, donating material and equipment, serving on advisory committees, etc.). While an even smaller percentage of superintendents, forty percent, believed they involved the community in district decision making and district program processes.
APPENDIX V

EXEMPTION FROM FULL REVIEW BY THE UNLV SUBJECTS INSTITUTION REVIEW BOARD
DATE: October 1, 1999

TO: Warren P. McKay
Educational Leadership
3002

FROM: Dr. William E. Schulze, Director
Office of Sponsored Programs (X1357)

RE: Status of Human Subject Protocol Entitled:
"Nationally Recognized Superintendents: Perceptions On How
They lead in Relation to the Characterization of Effective
Schools Research"

OSP #303s1099-113e

The protocol for the project referenced above has been reviewed by the Office of
Sponsored Programs and it has been determined that it meets the criteria for
exemption from full review by the UNLV human subjects Institutional Review
Board. This protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of this
notification and work on the project may proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond a
year from the date of this notification, it will be necessary to request an
extension.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Office of
Sponsored Programs at 895-1357.

cc: OSP File
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Superintendent
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Enterprise, AL 36330-1860

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Superintendent
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Suellen Skeen
Superintendent
Cape Henlopen School District
District Office
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Lewes, DE 19958

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Superintendent
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Superintendent
Teton School District 401
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Driggs, ID 83422-0775

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Superintendent
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Robert J. Storer
Superintendent
Walton-Verona ISD
16 School Road
Walton, KY 41094

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>School District/School</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City, State, Zip</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>William A. Korach</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Lake Oswego School District</td>
<td>2455 S.W. Country Club Road</td>
<td>Lake Oswego, OR 97034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert A. Hicks</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District</td>
<td>859 Nooseneck Hill Road</td>
<td>West Greenwich, RI 02817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Fritz</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Colman-Egan Area School District 50-5</td>
<td>200 S. Loban</td>
<td>Colman, SD 57017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara F. Erwin</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Allen Independent School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 13</td>
<td>Allen, TX 75013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne T. Murray</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Essex North Supervisory Union #19</td>
<td>P.O. Box 100</td>
<td>Canaan, VT 05903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James F. Shoemake</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Schools</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1357</td>
<td>Tacoma, WA 98401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederic D. Frick</td>
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<td>School District of Holmen</td>
<td>P.O. Box 580</td>
<td>Holmen, WI 54636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn F. Smartschan</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Mt. Lebanon School District</td>
<td>7 Horsman Drive</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA 15228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggie Christopher</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Anderson County School District One</td>
<td>801 Hamilton Street</td>
<td>Williamston, SC 29697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Gerry House</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Memphis City Schools</td>
<td>2597 Avery Avenue Room 214</td>
<td>Memphis, TN 38112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrell K. White</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Davis School District</td>
<td>45 East State Street</td>
<td>Farmington, UT 84037</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodrow Mullins, Jr.</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Tazewell County Public Schools</td>
<td>209 West Fincastle Turnpike</td>
<td>Tazewell, VA 24651</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Lawrence Jones</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Ohio County Schools</td>
<td>2203 National Road</td>
<td>Wheeling, WV 26003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig H. Beck</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Fremont County School District #24</td>
<td>112 W. Third Street</td>
<td>P.O. Box 327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>City, State</td>
<td>Zip Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. James Perry</td>
<td>Carson City School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 603</td>
<td>Carson City, NV</td>
<td>89702</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Brian Cram</td>
<td>Clark County School District</td>
<td>2832 East Flamingo Road</td>
<td>Las Vegas, NV</td>
<td>89121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Bandera</td>
<td>Elko County School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1012</td>
<td>Elko, NV</td>
<td>89803</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert Aumaugher</td>
<td>Eureka County School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 249</td>
<td>Eureka, NV</td>
<td>89316</td>
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<td>Dr. Leon Hensley</td>
<td>Lander County School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1300</td>
<td>Battle Mountain, NV</td>
<td>89820</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Nat Lommori</td>
<td>Lyon County School District</td>
<td>25 E. Goldfield Ave.</td>
<td>Yerrington, NV</td>
<td>89447</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Geraldine Harge</td>
<td>Nye County School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 113</td>
<td>Tonopah, NV</td>
<td>89049</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Dan Piel</td>
<td>Storey County School District</td>
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<td>Virginia City, NV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Mark Shellinger</td>
<td>White Pine County School District</td>
<td>1135 Avenue C</td>
<td>Ely, NV</td>
<td>89301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Ronald Flores</td>
<td>Churchill County School District</td>
<td>545 E. Richards Street</td>
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<td>Dr. Pendery Clark</td>
<td>Douglas County School District</td>
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<td>Esmeralda County School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Tony Wiggins</td>
<td>Humboldt County School District</td>
<td>310 East Fourth Street</td>
<td>Winnemucca, NV</td>
<td>89445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Vaughn Higbee</td>
<td>Lincoln County School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 118</td>
<td>Panaca, NV</td>
<td>89042</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Richard Stokes</td>
<td>Mineral County School District</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1540</td>
<td>Hawthorne, NV</td>
<td>89415</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Daniel Fox</td>
<td>Pershing County School District</td>
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<td>Lovelock, NV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. James Hager</td>
<td>Washoe County School District</td>
<td>425 East Ninth Street</td>
<td>Reno, NV</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pilot Study Address List

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


Brookover, W.B. (1985). Can we make schools effective for minority students?  


Brookover, W.B. (1985). *Can we make schools effective for minority students?*  

*Dissertation Abstracts International, 54,* AAC 9413070.


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Dissertation Title: Nationally Recognized Superintendents: Perceptions On How They Lead In Relation To The Characteristics Of Effective Schools Research

Dissertation Examination Committee:
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Committee Member, Dr. Robert McCord, Ed. D.
Committee Member, Dr. Carl Steinhoff, Ed. D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative, Dr. Porter Troutman, Ed. D.