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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITY POWER
STRUCTURES, SCHOOL BOARD TYPES, SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP
STYLES AND THE IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN OKLAHOMA

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By

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AND POLICY STUDIES

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine the degree to which relationships of community power structures , school board behavior types and superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools. The study also explored the impact these relationships have on superintendent tenure and student achievement in Oklahoma. The study is based on the 1971 research of McCarty and Ramsey, with follow up studies by Hess (1994), Smith (1998) and Lere (2004). The study is a descriptive inferential study using the results of surveys mailed to all public school superintendents and school board presidents in Oklahoma. The questionnaire was originally designed by Hess in 1994 for use in Wisconsin and modified by Smith in 1998 for use in North Carolina. The survey sought to determine if the four theoretical categories of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma school districts and the impact they have on student achievement. In addition, selected economic, social, political and demographic variables were examined along with district API scores for possible affects on the relationship types and student achievement.

There was a good (53%) return from the superintendents, but a little weaker (24%) return rate by the school board presidents. The return rate of paired districts (92, 17%) allows some limited inferred predictions. From the paired responses the prediction can be made that relationship types and demographics have some impact on student achievement in Oklahoma. It can also be assumed that the combination of the two will likewise have an impact on student achievement. The data revealed evidence that all categories of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles existed in Oklahoma school districts. This follows and supports prior

research indicating a substantial relationship exists between leadership and student achievement. It was also observed that demographics have an impact on the relationship between superintendents and school boards as well as an impact on student achievement. Also discussed are the implications for a need of staff development programs for superintendents and school board presidents and possible need for future studies.

Chapter I

Introduction

Due to recent legislation in public education requiring greater standards of accountability, communities across this nation have expectations for the local school district to provide a challenging educational environment for their children (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). They try to ensure that this will happen by electing school board members who will represent their interests, at least when it comes to educational issues. The citizens expect that these elected board members will enact policies that match this shared interest. Not every citizen is actively involved in school board elections or school board politics. Different groups are influential in different communities. These community power structures are pivotal in community decisions, including decisions regarding school board elections and the selection of a superintendent (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

If the actions, comments or votes of a board as a whole, or as individuals, become consistently out of alignment with the expectations of the community, the community may select new board members at election time and replace them with citizens whose beliefs and interests are more closely aligned with those of the community power structure (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1995). The school board, with pressure from the community, may, likewise, take action to replace the superintendent whose actions, comments and beliefs do not align well with those of the board and/or of the community (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

There have been several studies exploring the interplay of these relationships and the impact on the leadership style of the superintendent, as well as the effect on tenure of the superintendent. This study builds upon the prior information and attempts to gain some insight into the impact these relationships have on student achievement. With the emphasis that is being placed nationally on improved student achievement it is more important than ever to understand the importance of district leadership.

Organization of Study

This study is a descriptive, inferential quantitative study and is developed through five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study and presents an overview. A brief background is followed by the statement of the problem to be studied, rationale for this study and the purpose or significance of the study. An introduction to the research design which includes population, survey instruments, method of surveying, and assumptions and limitations to the study, are also reviewed. The chapter concludes with a definition of terms used in the study.

The study has four additional chapters. The second chapter is a review of relevant literature. Chapter three details the design and methodology of this study. Chapter four presents the information obtained from the study analyzes the data and addresses each of the research questions. The last chapter presents interpretations and conclusions based on the findings. This final chapter also includes recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Background

The McCarty-Ramsey model of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles have been examined in the states of Wisconsin, North Carolina and Colorado. This study will examine the same factors but also add the factor of student achievement in Oklahoma public schools.

The school board members in Oklahoma for the most part serve five year terms on the board of education. In most cases the first twelve to eighteen months tend to be a learning period for the new board members. With possible changes in the board every five years and new board members needing time to acquaint themselves with the vast array of school issues, the relationship between the board of education, superintendent and community becomes a very complex issue. The school districts in Oklahoma have been held accountable for many years through the reform act of House Bill 1017 (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1990) which required rigorous student assessment and the implementation of the *Priority Academic Student Skills* (PASS) curriculum. Now with the passage of the new federal regulation *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) Oklahoma schools along with all schools across the nation face very challenging requirements. This NCLB legislation requires each state to develop a single, effective accountability system to measure the performance and progress of schools and districts. Oklahoma submitted the “Academic Performance Index” (API) for use as Oklahoma’s single accountability system. In addition, NCLB mandated the distribution of “Report Cards,” containing specific education data for each school and district. The purpose of the API is to measure success

and initiate growth in school and district performance in Oklahoma. The data that are used to calculate the API are divided into three categories, Oklahoma School Testing Program (state tests); School Completion (attendance rates, graduation rates, and dropout rates); Academic Excellence (ACT scores and Advanced Placement credit). The API index is how all Oklahoma school districts are gauged in regard to improvement. The pressure for increased student achievement has now reached it's greatest point with the recent passage of Senate Bill 1792, which created the *Achieving Classroom Excellence* (ACE) (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2006), a framework for all Oklahoma school systems to implement standards, curriculum and assessments with rigor and relevance necessary for Oklahoma students to be prepared for college and the world of work. These demands for greater student achievement require a tremendous cooperative effort from the superintendent and school board.

As school districts in the State of Oklahoma move into the 21st century they are, like the school districts described in Carter & Cunningham (1997) and Konnert & Augenstein (1995), confronted with an untrusting public; greater criticism and demands from state and national government for accountability. The school board of a public school district is charged with the final decision on hiring all school district employees. These board members are elected by the citizens of the school community. Those who get elected to the school board are usually elected based on the political structure of the local community. The selection of personnel is often influenced by the political structure of the local community. Joel Spring (1984), in his study of the Cincinnati school system, addresses the political nature of the school board and how a community power structure

dominated the school system. Spring's observations are based on the model developed by Donald McCarty and Charles Ramsey, both of the University of Wisconsin.

McCarty and Ramsey (1971) developed categories of community power structures, types of school boards and superintendent leadership styles. The model describes four types of community power structures: Dominated, Factional, Pluralistic and Inert. These four community power structures are related to four types of school boards: Dominated, Factional, Status Congruent and Sanctioning. The corresponding superintendent leadership styles include: Functionary, Political Strategist, Professional Advisor and Decision-Maker. The 1971 study by McCarty and Ramsey is based on the premise that the community power structure determines the type of school board that is elected and this board in turn selects and retains a superintendent whose dominant leadership style is compatible with the school board type. The flip side of that premise is that if the superintendent has a leadership style that is incompatible with the community power structure and/or the school board type, the result will be increased conflict between the superintendent, school board and community and a lack of attention to student achievement.

Since McCarty and Ramsey presented their theoretical model in 1971 these relationships have been explored on a state wide basis in three studies. Hess (1994) surveyed 302 superintendents in Wisconsin, focusing on the leadership style of the superintendent. He relied solely on the superintendent's response to describe the relationships of the board and community. Smith (1998) conducted a

similar study in North Carolina, but included responses from school board presidents to define and describe the characteristics and relationships of the school board and community. Lere, (2004) replicated the studies of Smith and Hess, but added the focus on how the relationships affected the longevity of the superintendent.

This study seeks to add to the literature that examines the relationships of community power structures, school board types and superintendents leadership styles as they exist and interact in the public school districts of Oklahoma. This research focuses on how these relationships affect student achievement.

Problem Statement

Research and literature surrounding school districts and leadership have assumed, and in some cases demonstrated, that good working relationships between the superintendent, school board and community are important to increased student achievement. Without compatible relationships between superintendents and school boards, sustainable increased student achievement is very difficult to obtain. Good compatible professional relationships between the superintendents, school board and community allow both the superintendent and the school board to effectively and efficiently govern and administer the local public school system (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Hess, 1994; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Smith, 1998; Lere, 2004). According to Waters, Marzano & McNulty, in a meta-analysis of studies done over a thirty year period, data demonstrated that there is, in fact, a substantial relationship between leadership

and student achievement. As important as their findings were, there was another finding that was equally as important. That was, just as leaders can have a positive impact on achievement, they can have a marginal, or worse, a negative impact on achievement. Disharmony, or contentious issues between any of the three parts of the school governing triad, can easily result in an ineffective school system, a short tenure for the superintendent, and/or election of new, possibly hostile board members (Hess, 1994; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1995; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Smith, 1998; Lere, 2004). Thomas (2001) explains that when the partnership is strained, programs often fail, morale is weakened and mistrust builds. When these issues arise, they present major obstacles to establishing goals and achieving intended outcomes. School boards and superintendents both recognize that a strong working relationship is essential for providing effective leadership (Glass, 1992; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Trotter & Downey, 1989). This study focuses on the existing relationship between community power structures, school board behaviors and superintendent leadership styles in the public schools of Oklahoma, with an emphasis on how these relationships affect student achievement.

Rationale & Purpose

Rationale

There is a common belief that in order for a school system to design and implement education programs and improve student achievement, the superintendents must remain in that position long enough to see these programs through to their full implementation. These same studies present evidence that if

there is not a positive relationship between the governing triad, the superintendent usually does not stay in that position for an extended period of time (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Copeland, 1993; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Hess, 1994; Konnert & Augenstein, 1995; Lere, 2004; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Sharp & Walker, 1997; Smith, 1998; Spring, 1984).

The ability to describe the compatibility of superintendents based upon community characteristics, school board type and superintendent leadership style could enable boards to select a superintendent that fits their profile. It could also assist potential superintendents in making better employment decisions; thus reducing the stress on school districts and communities resulting from superintendent/school board/community conflicts; reduce the disruption in the educational programs resulting from constant superintendent turnover and ultimately enhance the initiation and implementation of long term educational programs that may need time to improve student achievement. The relationships and alignment of these three important groups can bring stability and progress to a school system. Another major potential benefit is in college programs for aspiring school administrators. With this information colleges could institute into their administrator programs the benefits of matching a leadership style with the school board type and avoid the pitfalls of incompatible relationships.

McCarty and Ramsey developed a theoretical framework for these relationships in their 1971 study. Richard Hess (1994) extended the framework as he utilized the McCarty/Ramsey model for his study of superintendent leadership styles in Wisconsin. The Hess-McCarty-Ramsey model predicts the compatibility

of superintendent leadership styles based upon school board behavior and community power structure. Hess concluded that there is a directional relationship between community power structure, school board behavior pattern and superintendent leadership style. He also suggested that the data supported the notion that community power structures drive school board behaviors which in turn drive superintendent leadership styles. Hess contends that an analysis of a community, school board and superintendent could create a “portrait” that should match the “predicted portrait” of compatible styles based upon the “Hess-McCarty-Ramsey” model. Finally, he concludes that if there is not a match the tenure of the superintendent will not be a long one.

Smith, (1998) in her study in North Carolina, examined the relationship between the same three groups; community, school board and superintendent. With an emphasis on leadership theory, superintendent leader style and the impact of these relationships on educational policy and procedures, Smith concluded that while each type of community power structure, school board behavior type and superintendent leadership style does exist in North Carolina, the data did not support all of the components of the McCarty-Ramsey model, the data from the school board president’s survey did not strongly support all of the relationships as predicted by the McCarty- Ramsey model.

These findings are significant because in the Hess study only the superintendents were asked to complete the survey and results were that the superintendent’s perceptions of the school board, the community and themselves all supported the McCarty-Ramsey model, where as in the Smith study, when

board presidents were also asked to complete the survey, their data did not support the model in some areas.

Lere (2004) in his study in Colorado, also researched these same three groups with an emphasis on superintendent tenure. His study focused on the importance of the relationships between the community, school board and superintendent tenure. Lere concluded that the data suggested certain alignments of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership style do have a correlation to the longevity of the superintendent. His data show that when all three variables (community, school board and superintendent leadership) align the average years of service of the current superintendent is just over 5 years. When the community power structure and the school board type align or when the school board type and superintendent leadership align the average tenure was also just over 5 years. However, when the community power structure and the superintendent leadership style align or when none of the three variables align, the average superintendent tenure is only about 3.5 years.

Given this information it appears that the type of school board may have the strongest relationship to the longevity of the superintendent. The data reinforce the research that emphasizes the importance of the superintendent/school board relationship (Carter & Cunningham, Glass, et. al., 2000; Konnert & Augenstein, 1995; Peterson & Short, 2001).

With the results from these studies addressing the McCarty-Ramsey model, along with the public scrutiny concerning the need for increased student

achievement in Oklahoma, a study utilizing this model as it applies to school districts in Oklahoma is especially important.

Purpose or Significance of the Study

The purposes of this study are to:

1. Extend the prior studies done by Hess (1993), Smith (1998), and Lere (2004), by surveying the superintendents and school board presidents in the state of Oklahoma, adding the component of student achievement.
2. Determine the frequency of different combinations of community power structures, school board types and leadership styles of superintendents in Oklahoma.
3. Determine what relationship; if any, those specific combinations of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles have with the longevity of the superintendent.
4. Determine the economic, social, political or demographic factors that may influence the tenure of the superintendent.
5. Determine to what degree superintendents and school board presidents share perceptions of community power structures, school board behaviors and superintendent leadership styles.

6. Determine what impact that compatible relationships between superintendents, school boards and community have on student achievement.

The results of this study have both significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically this study involves increasing the knowledge base of information surrounding community power structures, school boards and superintendent leadership styles as they exist and interact in Oklahoma. If the data from this study demonstrate that these factors exist and interact and may be predicted, as described in the McCarty-Ramsey model, there are several practical implications for superintendents, school boards and communities.

By having the knowledge of community power structure and information regarding the expected behaviors of the school board would enable current and future superintendents to analyze and adapt to changes in board composition and any shift in the culture of the community. This would enable superintendents to extend their time as a productive educational leader. With a stable environment the chances for educational reform and improvements are greatly enhanced.

College programs that prepare individuals for district leadership roles would be able to better prepare future superintendents by assisting the student in identifying their own leadership style, recognizing community power structures and different school board types, thus allowing them to develop flexibility and adaptability in leadership style.

State associations and organizations that work with school boards and superintendents could provide in-service and staff development opportunities for

board members and superintendents as part of the superintendent selection process.

Research Design

This study is a descriptive and inferential study based on survey data. The survey instruments used in this study were developed by (Hess, 1994; Smith, 1998), with some minor revisions. This research design and method was determined after an extensive literature review and, in particular, the work of McCarty & Ramsey (1971), Hess (1994), Smith (1998) and Lere (2004), which serves as the framework for studying the interaction of community power structures, school board types, and superintendent leadership styles. The information gained from these four studies, along with concepts from related literature has been used to develop the following research questions.

1. To what extent do dominated, factional, pluralistic, and inert community power structures exist in Oklahoma public schools?
2. To what extent do dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning school board types exist in Oklahoma public schools?
3. To what extent do functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools?
4. What is the relationship between types of community power structures and school board types in Oklahoma public schools?

5. What is the relationship between types of community power structures and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public schools?
6. What is the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public schools?
7. What economic, social, political or demographic variables predict or influence the compatibility of these relationships?
8. Do school board presidents and their superintendents perceive leadership styles, board behaviors and community power structures differently?
9. What impact does compatible relationships between community power structures, school boards and superintendents have on student achievement?

Survey Procedures

A copy of the instrument along with instructions and a cover letter explaining the research and requesting the recipient to complete the questionnaire was mailed to school board presidents and superintendents of all 541 public school districts in Oklahoma. A pre-addressed, stamped envelope was included in each mailing. Follow up mailings were done to increase percentage of respondents.

Analysis of the data focuses on identifying the types of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles and any

correlations between the identified types in each school district. Responses from superintendents and board presidents from the same district were studied for similarities of perception. Pearson's r correlations were used to determine any association between variables and across demographic variables.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions made in this research study are as follows:

1. Superintendents' and board presidents' responses to the survey questions are based on their perceptions and are accurate and valid indicators of their beliefs about the community, school board and superintendent.
2. The surveys used are valid instruments for determining the existence of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles.
3. School Board presidents are typically veteran school board members with enough experience to respond accurately to the survey questions.

In addition to the above assumptions there are some limitations to the study. Those are as follows:

1. The findings are generalizable only to the population used in the study.

2. Some of the surveys may have been completed by school officials, acting as interim superintendent, due to changes in the administration at the time of the survey request.
3. Limited data could lead to less conclusive findings.

Definition of Terms

This study is based on the work of McCarty and Ramsey (1971) and follow up studies by Hess (1994), Smith (1998) and Lere (2004). Terms and concepts key to all four studies are defined as follows;

Community Power Structures

Dominated. Majority power is exercised by a few people or by a single person. There is no strong opposition (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Factional. Two or more factions, that tend to rally around specific issues, compete for influence with each sharing equal or near equal power. These groups have differing values and hold opposing viewpoints. They exert their power through individuals, groups or institutions (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Pluralistic. There is competition between several interest groups for power and influence, with no single group dominating. There is usually strong community interest in the schools (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Inert. The status quo is the power structure. There is little public interest in school matters and little competition board membership (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

School Board Types

Dominated. A school board that shares the beliefs of the dominant community group. Decisions, actions and policies reflect the beliefs and desires of the dominant community power structure (McCarty & Ramsey).

Factional. Votes by the board are more important than discussion of the issues. Votes are along factional lines. Elections are hotly contested. The control of the board may shift from election to election (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Status Congruent. Board members do not represent any one faction or interest group. Discussion of the issues prior to the vote is seen as very important and consensus is a goal of the board (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Sanctioning. The sanctioning board has no philosophical direction from the community; it is relatively inactive and tends to take its lead from the administration and approves the recommendations of the superintendent (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Superintendent Leadership Styles

Functionary. Identifies with the dominant power structure. Usually acts to carry out policy rather than developing policy (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Political Strategist. Takes direction from the faction that is in control at the time. Builds coalitions between factions rather than identifying with any single faction. Takes a middle of the road stance on divisive issues and often uses committees to resolve conflict (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Professional Advisor. Provides the board with information and recommendations based on research and theory. Does not align with any power group and assists the board in making objective decisions (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Decision-Maker. Initiates decision-making and policy. Influences board actions and membership. Is not hampered by community factions or controversy. Is expected to make decisions and takes actions to get things done (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Student Achievement

No Child Left Behind. (NCLB) Federal legislation enacted in 2004, with mandates of accountability for all public schools in the United States. The legislation has benchmarks of performance and timelines for implementation.

Academic Performance Index. (API) Oklahoma's accountability system that is used to fulfill the federal accounting regulations in NCLB. This score is used to measure the growth in school and district performance in Oklahoma.

Priority Academic Student Skills. (PASS) A curriculum guide and student assessment standards implemented in 1990 under the reform act of Oklahoma House Bill 1017.

Achieving Classroom Excellence. (ACE) A framework for Oklahoma schools, implementing new standards, curriculum and assessments. This legislation was passed through Oklahoma Senate Bill 1792 in 2006.

The next chapter is a literature review of research in the areas of the history of school boards and superintendency, superintendent leadership, turnover in the superintendency, and relations between the community, school board and superintendent. There is also an in-depth review of the McCarty-Ramsey theoretical model.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

School districts, regardless of size, benefit from good consistent leadership. Studies have indicated a positive correlation exist between superintendent tenure and student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006). There are some indications that in many districts the tenure of the superintendent is too brief to create, implement, and sustain meaningful increased student achievement. The reasons for this reduced tenure are many, but two factors that many researchers acknowledge are superintendent/school board relations and the “fit” with the community (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Glass et.al., 2000; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Johnson, 1996; Newell, 1997).

It has been argued that at the heart of this tenure issue is the compatibility of the superintendent, school board and community. If there are not compatible relationships among these variables a “revolving door syndrome” will occur with superintendents. As Bryant & Grady (1989) describes, a rapid turnover of superintendents will create a difficulty in establishing consistent policy and administrative rule. In turn this will have a negative impact throughout the organization as participants face an internal uncertainty that detracts from their work. Goals are likely to become ambiguous, employees are likely to divert their loyalty from organizational goals, and a crisis-oriented management style will

dominate (Bryant & Grady, 1989, p. 34). Leadership issues become vital in this quest for compatibility.

The argument has also been made that student achievement is influenced by district-level leadership. In a study by Waters & Marzano, 2006 it was determined that a statistically significant relationship exists between district-level leadership and student achievement.

There have been numerous studies over the past thirty-five years that analyzed the relationships between Superintendents and School Boards as well as the impact these relationships along with superintendent tenure have on student achievement. However, prior to looking at these studies, it is important to briefly examine the history of school boards and the superintendency and get a picture of how the system evolved to where it is today in regard to relationships between the school boards and superintendents.

History of School Boards

Looking at the history of boards of education, it is commonly accepted that the first board of education was created in the mid 1600's. Historically, boards of education have been used by aspiring politicians to begin building patronage and payback network essential to seeking a higher office (Bullard & Taylor, 1993). Until the creation of the position of superintendent in 1837, school board members handled all aspects of setting up a school and hiring a teacher. In the early years all families shared in the cost of operating the school. As schools grew boards realized the need for someone to oversee the day to day operations of the school.

In its infancy, school boards were extremely low profile, low conflict positions. Only in the last few decades have board members been thrust into the middle of politically turbulent issues (Wirt & Kirst, 2001). In the process, their roles changed; some became champions of lay groups, but others supported professional groups. Current board members need to know and judge issues on finance, discrimination, textbooks, teacher demands, and so on- a lengthy list of crucial and excruciating demands on school resources. Board membership has become challenging in terms of the ancient Chinese curse, “May you live in exciting times” (Wirt & Kirst, 2001, p. 123).

Boards are small political systems, reflecting the ever present tensions in a democracy among the demands of school values of quality, equity, efficiency and choice. The expectation is that education is decided by and responsive to the people in general but also, and simultaneously, technically advanced and determined by standards of quality. These two expectations do not always coincide, thus leaving the board caught in an ideology of an informed citizenry participating in democratic decision-making. However, in reality citizens are poorly informed on such matters and seemingly disinterested in acquiring such information; hence they participate little. But do not take this as meaning the community does not affect the school and decisions.

While school boards have power, they are usually unpaid, part-time, and untrained except for the information presented to them by the superintendent or perhaps what they gather informally, they know little of the underlying issues for the scores of complex decisions requiring their approval at each board meeting (Cuban, 1976). Therefore, school boards historically have relied on the professional judgment of the superintendent in handling educational matters.

History of Superintendency

As we examine the history of the superintendency, we find that the first superintendent was appointed, first in Buffalo, New York, and next in Louisville, Kentucky in 1837 (Sharp & Walter, 1993; Danforth Foundation, 1992). Within 25 years there were 27 urban school districts with superintendents, but the rural superintendent would not become common until after 1900, (Danforth Foundation, 1992). This however did not mean the superintendency was a well established position of authority). “Their duties and powers were very obscure and the board members decided most questions and even details like the choice of desks” (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, rapid urban growth increased the size and complexity of school districts, creating a more centralized governance structure and a greater need for a chief executive officer, or superintendent, to manage the school district (Sharp & Walter, 1997; Danforth Foundation, 1992; Flinchbaugh, 1993). Despite the need for centralized leadership, school board members considered superintendents to be little more than “clerks who were hired to enforce regulations” (Flinchbaugh, 1993, p. 24-25).

A typical superintendent of this era was a married, white, middle-aged male from a favored ethnic group, who was Protestant, Republican, native born and from a rural area (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Amazingly, the Copeland study in 1993 demonstrated that long-term superintendents, at least in Oklahoma, in the 1990’s, shared almost all of these characteristics (Copeland, 1993).

Following the industrial revolution of the early 1900's, a belief emerged that proposed education be managed more like the successful businesses of that time. These ideas were based on the "scientific management" theories of Taylor. The implementation of these ideals brought about larger, more centralized school systems, which, while more efficient, were generally less responsive to the needs of children (Flinchbaugh, 1993).

This period of "enlightened" organizational and management theory suggested that "experts" should run the school systems, not the lay public (school boards) (Flinchbaugh, 1993, p. 28). Despite an "anti executive attitude" school boards increasingly turned over the power to run schools to superintendents due to the growing complexity of school systems, the recognition of educators as professionals, and the desire to reduce the increasingly "political" nature of school board actions, especially in the area of school personnel (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985, p. 74).

During the 1920's and 1930's the superintendency reached a high level of respectability and prestige in the larger school districts, but still remained more of a clerical position in the small rural school districts. According to a study by Fred Ayers, in 1929, many rural superintendents taught classes, made daily mail runs, inspected toilets, and typed their own letters (cited in Tyack & Hansot, 1982). You will find this is true even in 2007 across rural America.

The 1950's brought about a calm period for schools, school boards, and superintendents. The position of superintendent was well established, and in most cases, a respected position within the community. The superintendent of the

1950's guided public education in an era when familiar goals, systems of governance, program, and professional norms seemed to work. Superintendents, "typically grew up in the communities they served in or in ones much like them" (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 178), "Their general socialization probably inclined them to reinforce the traditional values of the community and to perpetuate the structures and styles of pedagogy that they had known and their patrons preferred" (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 178).

As the school districts of the United States moved into the sixties, a period of questioning authority and the assertion of civil rights, the calm was gone. Superintendents became the lightning rod for protests and contending pressure groups, mediator between conflicting factions, and the "fall guy" for split school boards (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 256).

As the superintendency struggled forward into the 70's the New York Times (1972) portrayed the public school superintendent as a "harried, embattled figure of waning authority... browbeaten by once subservient boards of education" (Bryant & Grady, 1989, p. 34). The average tenure continued to drop from a peak of 10 years in 1950 to 6 years by the end of the 70's.

In the eighties and nineties the superintendent continued to be the target of many and varied groups. Community members openly ran for the school board on a "fire the superintendent" platform, and often won a seat.

While the turmoil and pressure of being a superintendent is not confined to the large urban school district, it is important to note that "there are still many small towns where superintendents and schools closely mirror the values of their

communities and where public education has been little touched by the tumultuous events and increasing skepticism of recent years” (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 256-257). But, while these enclaves of civility do exist, polls of superintendents from all sizes of school districts indicate they believe that human relations, especially superintendent/school board relations, are much more important than in the past (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982; Glass et.al., 2000).

Why is it important to look at the history of the school board and superintendent? Only through investigating this history can one get an explanation as to the relationship between the superintendent and the school board and how we evolved into our current state of relationships. Those “tumultuous events” and the “increasing skepticism” have brought us where we are today in regard to the relationship between the superintendent and school board, which is a growing concern that superintendents are exiting their positions before they can make a positive impact on their school districts, bringing about a perpetual state of “crisis-oriented management.” This tenure issue is one of the major pieces of this larger relationship puzzle between the superintendent and the school board.

“Although school boards are representative bodies, they are expected to defer to the expertise of the superintendent and choose the “best” educational policies regardless of community preferences” (Greene, 1992, p. 220). Numerous studies have classified board orientations as either hierarchical or bargaining (Tucker & Zeigler, 1980), elite or arena (Lutz & Gresson, 1980), political or professional (Greene, 1992) in examining their influence on decision-making and school district governance. These studies as well as other investigations

examining board behaviors (Hentges, 1986; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Nowakowski & First, 1989; Scribner & Englert, 1977; Zeigler, Jennings, & Peak, 1974) have chronicled the often times conflicting roles, responsibilities, and expectations of boards and their willingness or hesitancy to defer to the expertise of the superintendent in policy decisions. This dynamic continues to generate areas of tension in the margin of control, governance of the school district and relationship with the superintendent. Zeigler (1975) argues that because of the conflicting expectations, “school boards behave like typical schizophrenics. On one hand they willingly (indeed eagerly) give power away to the experts... on the other hand, they espouse an ideology of lay control” (p. 8).

District leaders, such as superintendents and board members, are faced with a variety of often conflicting forces and issues. Federal and state laws and regulations, demands for greater accountability, changing demographics, competing community interests, limited resources, legal challenges, political agendas, and a general disrespect for the education profession create an increasingly difficult environment for educators to remain focused on and be successful in attaining the goal of increased student achievement (Usdan, McCloud, Podmostko, & Cuban, 2001, p.26).

With the passage of the federal legislation No Child Left Behind (NCLB) public school leaders are accountable for showing proof of increased student achievement each year. In Oklahoma this is done with the Academic Performance Indicator (API) which measures the performance and progress of school districts each year. This API index score is derived from three categories;

(state tests), (school completion – attendance rates, graduation rates and dropout rates), and (academic excellence – ACT scores, advanced placement credit and college remediation rates). This score is what the public sees as a district's report card and a gauge as to the level of performance. This score is also used to compare districts of similar demographics.

Given the complexity of these shared responsibilities it is not surprising that numerous researchers have articulated the significance of a strong working relationship between the superintendent and the school board (Allison, 1991; Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998; Peterson & Short, 2001). Musella and Leithwood (1988), discussed system factors that impact student achievement. Two of the main factors were trustee (board) – administrator (superintendent) relations, and board – community relations. As more emphasis is placed on effective school district leadership, the relationship between school boards and their superintendents become more critical (Allison, Allison, & McHenry, 1995; Danzberger, Kirst, & Usdan, 1992; Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986; McCurdy, 1992; and Thomas, 2001). The dynamics of this interaction is the single most important factor contributing to their ability to effectively govern the district (Bailey, 1982; Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985; Chance & Chapps, 1990; McCurdy & Hymes 1992; Nygren, 1992; Shannon, 1989; Smoley, 1999). When this partnership is strained, programs often fail, morale is weakened, mistrust builds, and political power blocks come to fore (Norton et al., 1996). When these issues arise, they present major obstacles to establishing long-term goals and achieving intended outcomes (improved student achievement). Waters, Marzano,

& McNulty (2005), in a paper titled *Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*, state that data from their meta-analysis demonstrate that there is, in fact, a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement

The successful superintendent must be adept at building and sustaining good relations with the school board (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001). Part of being successful in the role of the superintendent is the development of shared mission and goals with the board. The study done by Nestor-Baker & Hoy (2001) also indicates the successful superintendents openly support board decisions and work to maintain unity. Overall, the research indicates that the degree of success that a superintendent enjoys in the critical relationship with the school board “appears to be predicated on how well the superintendent has understood and acted upon the tacit expectations of the board and community (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001).

Traditionally the superintendent’s role has been characterized as implementers of policies set by the board of education (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995). Typical duties include maintaining the school budget, managing school personnel, and serving as public relations director. Yet, current challenges faced by school administrators, coupled with increasing demands for greater accountability and improved student academic achievement, have added to the already complex nature of school leadership. As a result, the superintendent’s role can no longer focus solely on public relations and finance; it must be responsive to innumerable demands including the management of conflicting expectations and multiple agendas (Carter & Cunningham, 1977). The

superintendent's effectiveness is largely dependent on his or her ability to influence critical policy decisions. This ability is centered on the relationship the superintendent has with the school board.

With the school boards' perception that some superintendents are seen as endeavoring to control policy direction and school district action by providing insufficient information on issues, attempting to squelch board deliberations, failing to place important issues on the board agenda for public discussion, and not being evenhanded in dealings with all board members; this relationship issue becomes a delicate stressful process and relies heavily upon the leadership style of the superintendent.

Noting that there are over 350 definitions of leadership, researchers have moved from theories of leaders to theories of leadership styles (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This change is based on the notion that it is important to understand not who the leaders are or how they emerge, but rather how they "look" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Researchers also acknowledge that leadership, and specifically superintendent leadership is multidimensional and is a combination of different components which result in a personal leadership style (Vasu, Stewart & Garson, 1990).

Most theorists view leadership in one of two ways. Leaders are either task oriented (Theory X) or person oriented (Theory Y). Theory X sees people as untrustworthy, basically lazy and in need of constant supervision or direction. The focus is on the task to be completed and the structure necessary to do so. Theory Y says people are basically trustworthy, valuable and inherently

motivated. Leaders are achievement oriented but supportive and participatory (McGregor, 1975). Theorists who support the two dimensional view believe that those who score high in both task-oriented style and person-oriented style make the best leaders.

Many researchers view leadership as multi-dimensional. A combination of different identified components of leadership result in a leadership style. Burns, in his book *Leadership* (1978), identified two types of political leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange on something valued; that is, “leaders approach followers with an eye toward exchanging” (p. 4). Transformational leadership is based on more than the compliance of followers; it involves shifts in the belief, the needs, and the values of followers. Bass (1985) applied Burn’s (1978) ideas to organizational management. He argued that transformational leaders “mostly consider how to marginally improve and maintain the quantity and quality of performance.

Superintendent Leadership

Moving this to superintendent leadership styles, Johnson (1996) found that expectations for superintendents’ leadership could be categorized among three types of leadership. Some looked for educational leadership, defined by vision and values rooted in pedagogy, curriculum, and a strategy for educating all children. Others looked to the superintendent for political leadership in building coalitions for support and exercising influence on behalf of the schools. Many

others looked to the superintendent for managerial expertise to ensure that the bureaucratic functions of the organization were carried out effectively and efficiently (Johnson, 1996, p. 24).

Johnson (1996) found that successful superintendents employed all three styles at various times. Johnson's characterization of superintendents' leadership resembled an earlier classification of superintendent roles. Cuban (1985) described three roles that generally define a superintendent's approach to leadership. One role is that of manager-superintendent, a person who keeps the fires out and keeps the board out of trouble. Another is the politician-superintendent who puts out the fires that inevitably erupt. The third is the teacher-superintendent who starts fires by visioning and preparing the board to meet the future. Unfortunately, according to Cuban (1985), when conflict occurs, the latter style (i.e., the most proactive approach) suffers the greatest attrition at exactly the same time that there is the greatest need for a leader's vision.

According to much of the current literature on school leadership, today's school reform agenda requires a style of leadership different from the traditional top-down, hierarchical style. In a brief by the National Institute on Educational Governance, (1999) the following was concluded: The top-down model of a superintendent who makes all the decisions and charges others with carrying them out does not reflect the real distribution of power or the true source of motivation in today's schools. Contemporary researchers who study educational leadership describe it as a shared process involving leaders, teachers, students, parents and the community at large (p. 6).

Smylie and Hart (1999) described a shift in thinking about effective school leadership. They found that, through most of the 20th century, educators subscribed to a hierarchical, bureaucratic model of leadership in which power and authority were vested, primarily, with the superintendent. DeBlois (2000) explained that good leaders recognize and depend upon the talent, commitment, and leadership of many within the school organization. Heifetz (1994) focused on the shared leadership promoted by transformational models. Leadership, in Heifetz's view, is concerned with assisting the organization to adapt to changing forces, environments and pressures.

According to Lambert (1995), however, the future direction of public schools will be determined by school leaders' ability to perceive patterns of change and react accordingly, in other words, their ability to lead rather than just fill positions of authority. Senge (1990, 2000) proposed the need for school leaders to develop the capacity for "systems thinking" through mental models that transcend traditional "linear thinking." According to Senge (1990), "linear thinking" tends to deal with problems as they occur in sequence or priority order. However, with complex issues such as school reform, events do not occur in priority order. Thus, it is necessary to identify and consider all of the problematic features and issues within the context of a "whole system perspective" in which all stakeholders, at all levels, and is actively engaged in solving problems and improving the system (p.5).

According to Bass (2006), transformational leadership has become the approach of choice for research and application of leadership theory. In many ways,

transformational leadership has captured the imagination of scholars, noted practitioners, and students of leadership. Why has the interest in transformational leadership risen? Perhaps it is due to its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and positive development of followers, representing a more appealing view of leadership compared to the seemingly “cold”, social exchange process of transactional leadership. In his publication *Leadership*, James Burns (1978), introduced the concept of transforming leadership.

Inspired by this, and by Robert House’s (1976) theory of charismatic leadership, Bass and his colleagues developed the model of transformational leadership and the means to measure it. Transformational leadership has much in common with charismatic leadership, but charisma is only part of transformational leadership. The Weberian (Weber, 1924/1947) notion of charismatic leadership was fairly limited. The modern conceptions of charismatic leadership takes a much broader perspective (eg., Conger & Kanungo, 1998), however, and have much in common with transformational leadership.

The following are brief descriptors of the components of transformational leadership:

Idealized Influence: Transformational leaders behave in ways that allow them to serve as role models for their followers. The leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. In addition, these leaders are willing to take risks and are consistent rather than arbitrary.

Inspirational Motivation: Transformational leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers’ work. Enthusiasm and optimism are displayed.

Intellectual Stimulation: Transformational leaders stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumption, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Creativity is encouraged.

Individualized Consideration: Transformational leaders pay special attention to each individual follower's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor.

As we examine the current literature about the relationships of school boards, community power structures and superintendents we find a great deal of interest in the transformational leadership theory.

In a study by Burgess (2002), he concludes that superintendents and school board presidents showed a considerable agreement about the importance of various transformational leadership approaches. He found however, that some differences were troubling. Board presidents rated the inspirational motivation subscale as the most important attribute of transformational leadership. This suggests that board presidents may be looking for the "heroic" leader that Cuban (1984) suggested had a wide public appeal. Superintendents' ratings, however, revealed a significantly lower level of support for this approach to leadership. The findings suggested that even though superintendents did not view themselves as "inspirational leaders," their board presidents placed a high priority on their ability to inspire.

Burgess's findings contradicted much of the literature claiming that boards of education prefer a traditional, hierarchical model of leadership and that boards of education and superintendents tended to disagree over leadership issues (Alvey & Underwood, 1985; Brunner, 1998; and Glass, 1993). Although significant differences

were revealed in superintendents' and board presidents' preferences among the individual subscales of transformational leadership, the overall preference of both groups fit well with a transformational approach to leadership.

The research also countered the claims by Johnson (1996), who maintained that, in times of uncertainty and pressure, school boards tend to look for strong, authoritarian leadership.

School Board Leadership

With this in mind the question arises; how important is the role of the school board in student achievement? According to the *Lighthouse studies* conducted by the Iowa School Boards Foundation, (Iowa School Board Compass, Fall, 2000) school boards have an important role in improving student achievement. "The Lighthouse studies show that boards in high-achieving districts are very different from boards in low-achieving districts," stated Lisa Bartusek, IASB leadership development director. "There's some pretty clear evidence that if we want great gains in student learning, school boards must master their role as strong leaders for school improvement". In the Lighthouse study some key points stood out in the successful school districts with regard to the board of education and superintendent. The first was caring about children, even though specific attitudes were different, in all cases there were deep concerns for doing the right thing for children. The second and most important was peaceable relationships. In all cases the board/superintendent team had amicable (compatible) relationships. There was a strong belief and trust in each

other. Another key component was the board's understanding and focus on school renewal. In the high-achieving districts, school board members were very knowledgeable about topics such as improvement goals, curriculum, instruction, assessment and staff development. The study clearly shows the importance of board leadership as well as superintendent leadership.

The key to a superintendent's success in the contemporary environment is his or her ability to inspire others to assume leadership and responsibility and to work collaboratively toward a shared vision of improved education (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Leadership in public schools tends to follow the pattern explained by Dilenshneider (1990) in his book; *Power and Influence; Mastering the Art of Persuasion*. He describes a "power triangle," with the three components being communication, recognition, and influence.

The current research on leadership styles is focusing on "transactional and transformational" leadership. According to Silins (1994) transactional leadership does not bind leaders and followers. Transactional leadership relies on the top-down decision process or the power to control staff, the allocation of resources, and the process of change. According to Mitchell & Tucker (1992), superintendents in this category are highly sensitive to organizational hierarchy and standardization of practices.

Transformational leadership has been defined as the kind of educational leadership necessary to take schools into the twenty first century (Schlechty, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1990; Fullan, 1991). Transformational leadership bonds

leader and follower within a collaborative change process that impacts the performance of the whole organization. Although the early perspective on leadership focused on the dichotomy or directed (task-oriented) versus participative (people-oriented) leadership, recent work by (Bass & Riggio, 2006) has indicated it does not have to be an either or proposition.

Fiedler (1993) describes this contingency model of leadership as having two effective, but mutually exclusive styles, task oriented and human-relationship oriented. The most critical component is the “fit” between the personality of the leader and the situation. The style varies with the situation.

On the other side of the table is the board’s expectation of leadership style from the superintendent. In spite of recent research and writings describing transformational leadership as an effective leadership model for effecting lasting school improvement, there is evidence that many school boards are expecting a leadership style more closely related to the transactional hierarchical model. Many boards of education are under increasing pressure from their constituents to increase the achievement of students, make schools safe from violence, and control spending. Donaldson (2001) maintained that boards of education appear to be less interested in leaders who can take charge and bring about improvements in the shortest possible time.

In a study conducted by Sutton (1999) a conclusion was made that board presidents held high expectations for their superintendents to be decisive and in-charge, control spending, maintain orderly and well-disciplined schools, hold teachers accountable, and report regularly to the board. Sutton (1999) also

concluded that the board presidents' views about leadership were shaped, primarily, by personal experiences in the military, religious upbringing, educational experiences and personal beliefs. None of the board presidents reported being influenced by research and writings about leadership and leadership theory.

Fisher (1995) compared the characteristics of transformational leadership with the hiring criteria listed by Iowa school boards that recruited for superintendents. Fisher (1995) found that only 155 of the listed criteria were descriptive of "managerial" functions such as, supervising, evaluating, budgeting and implementing policy. Fisher concluded that there was little congruence between hiring criteria for superintendents and the transformational leadership characteristics identified in the literature as necessary for effective school improvement.

A study by York (1991) indicated that school board presidents rated managerial tasks such as preparing and managing a school budget, collective bargaining, and supervising personnel as more important than sustaining a working relationship with staff, establishing short and long term goals, and providing direction for the instructional program.

Thomas (2000) reported three significant characteristics as being most important: (1) knowledge of and experience with budgeting and school funding, (2) good communication skills, and (3) experience with hiring and supervision of staff.

These studies indicate significant differences in the perceptions of board members and superintendents regarding leadership styles of superintendents. Board presidents saw a “directive” style of leadership as more prevalent. For superintendents, a “participating” leadership style was identified as more prevalent.

These studies offer compelling evidence that a lack of agreement between board and superintendent over leadership roles and methods, can lead to damaging and often unresolved conflict. The evidence provided by these studies suggests that the leadership role of the superintendent is complicated by a lack of agreement about how roles and responsibilities are divided between a board of education and its superintendent. This lack of consensus often leads to a level of conflict that severely damages the working relationship between the superintendent and the board and diverts attention away from the school’s primary mission of educating children.

Superintendent Turnover

Research has consistently articulated that a poor relationship between the superintendent and the board of education deters school improvement (Danzberger, Kirst, & Usdan, 1992), affects the quality of educational programs (Boyd, 1976; Nygren, 1992), and weakens district stability and morale (Renchler, 1992). It also negatively influences the superintendent’s credibility and trustworthiness with board members (Peterson & Short, 2001), impedes critical reform efforts, such as district restructuring (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995),

collaborative visioning and long-range planning (Kowalski, 1999), and eventually results in an increase in the “revolving door syndrome” of district leaders (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Renschler, 1992).

Countervailing pressures and expectations are negatively impacting the superintendency by contributing to a common set of problems plaguing today’s school leaders. The average tenure of a superintendent in today’s school environment is alarmingly brief, less than four years (Johnson, 1996).

The impact of a superintendent turnover can be traumatic for a school district and the community involved. Board members believe that the turnover “has a tendency to split or divide your community” and that “this negative impact filters down, in the form of morale, in the faculty, the staff and into the students” (Capps, 1992, p.92).

Bryant and Grady (1989), in their work on superintendent turnover found: when there is rapid turnover of superintendents, there will be difficulty in establishing consistent policy and administrative rule. In turn this will have a negative impact throughout the organization as participants face an internal uncertainty which detracts from their work. Goals are likely to become ambiguous, employees are likely to divert their loyalty from organizational goals, and a crisis-oriented management style will dominate (p. 34).

A high rate of turnover in the leadership position in a school district can cause turmoil and lessen the effectiveness of the educational program. Without a degree of stability in the district’s leadership, productivity is limited (Capps, 1992, p. 101).

Consistent leadership on the part of the board is also an important factor in retaining good superintendents over time. Referring to a study of long-term superintendents in Oklahoma, Chance (1992) found that “superintendents specifically mentioned that a stable school board was directly responsible for their longevity in the district” (Chance, et.al., 1992).

In addition to the superintendent/school board relationship, the match or fit between the superintendent and the community is also an important factor when examining superintendent tenure. While much of the research regarding these relationships focused on the larger, if not urban school districts, a much higher percentage of the research dealing with the interaction of the superintendent and the community examines that relationship in the smaller, if not rural, school district. Neither of these facts should be surprising since usually a superintendent’s tenure is shorter in either a large urban school district or in small school districts (Newell, 1997). In addition, there is usually much more direct contact between the superintendent and community members in a small district as opposed to a larger district, because small rural school districts tend to have more “porous organizational boundaries” than larger districts which may have multiple layers of bureaucracy isolating the superintendent from additional direct interaction with the community (Grady & Bryant, 1991, p.10)

The nature of the community and the superintendent’s relationship to the community can have a positive or negative impact on the tenure of the superintendent. According to Copeland (1993), successful long term superintendents display “community sensitivity” in which they... accurately

interpreted and understood the cultures of their communities. By having quality interaction with the stakeholders, and by being completely immersed and involved in the community, they were accepted as one of the community's pillars. The pride and happiness they experienced in their jobs was evidenced in their support of school and community activities alike. Copeland concluded that the characteristics and attributes that allowed these superintendents to enjoy such longevity "were learned and/or earned, they were not innate" (p. 384). In their study of Nebraska superintendents, Grady and Bryant (1991) found that "superintendents from outside the community were described as individuals who did not understand small towns because they had not grown up in one" (p.11).

Superintendents in large school districts often have local politics and national movements to contend with. "School boards, teachers unions, and parent councils are linked to their counterparts across the country through national networks, and these networks may have created mechanisms that affected school administration in each city" (Yee & Cuban, 1996, p.628). In studying urban school districts and their superintendents, Jackson and Cibulka (1991) reported that the "pattern of frequent succession" at the superintendent's level was a result of internal organizational characteristics and cumulative community political demands.

Regardless of the size of the school district "most superintendents find themselves in trouble when they are out of step with the social, civic, and public expectations of the community in which they practice" (Carter & Cunningham,

1997, p. 130). Superintendents themselves admit “they can only succeed if they have the support of the community” (p.140).

All of the characteristics of a community are reflected in the type of leaders that emerge in any community. School board members are no exception. School board members are elected by community members who hope to put someone into positions that will carry out the wishes of the community, provide the kind of education that community members want for their children, and protect and preserve the local culture.

If one assumes that a positive relationship between the superintendent, school board and community power structure is critical to the success of any educational reform and to maintain initiatives in progress, identifying factors influencing those relationships could be a basis for improving them. The three variables, superintendent leadership style, school board behavior type and form of community power structure, experience changes in different ways.

Theoretical Models

The locus of power in communities and community systems generally resists shifts in structure or power. School boards, as a reflection of the communities they represent, are unlikely to implement lasting or drastic changes in structure that are incompatible with the community power structure (Cristone, 1975). Such attempts to restructure would most likely result in incumbent defeat in the next election (Zeigler & Jennings, 1974).

The superintendent becomes the single variable in the relationship with a realistic option of flexibility. Knowing that an incompatible leadership style will result in difficulties with both the board and community, the superintendent is faced with limited, but viable alternatives: maintain an incompatible leadership style, deal with controversy throughout tenure and leave the system, or identify the superintendent leadership style necessary to work productively with the board and community and proceed (Mazzarella & Smith, 1989). With this in mind, analyzing the superintendent and school board relationship should begin with an understanding of various leadership theories and the role of the community power structure.

Community power structures affect the decision-making in formal recognized public organizations. The role of individuals or groups outside the organization varies from community to community. While researchers disagree on who has power and influence in the communities, categories of influence are frequently defined by the size of the group having political influence ranging from a small group of great influence, producing a closed political system, to a wide range of diverse individuals or groups of varying influence, described as an open political system (Ross, Levine, 1990).

Problems exist with the definitions of power, with much of the debate centering on the issue of whether power relations in a community represent an “elite” model or a “pluralistic” one. The classic definition of power, cited at some point by almost every student of power, is that of Max Weber, who defined power in a way which set the pattern for most later definitions: “In general, we understand by power the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.”

Most studies on leadership usually begin with the classical “Great Man” and “Big Bang” theories of leaders. The “Great Man” theory is based on the concept that no matter how intelligent or motivated a society may be it is impossible for a society to rule itself. There must be a superior leader who emerges with the ability to lead. History has been shaped by such people who were born to be leaders. This leadership capacity is seen as being vested in a limited number of individuals whose right and destiny it is to be leaders. Society is therefore composed of leaders and followers. Under this theory leadership is not learned or taught.

The “Big Bang” theory or environment theory offers the idea of leaders as a function of timing. Leaders move to the forefront based upon a special interaction of time, place and circumstances. Under this theory it is the situation confronting a group which forces an individual to emerge, not innate qualities of the individual. The idea is that the “timing was right” for someone who just happened to be located at the right place to exert influence. As Bennis & Nanus (1985) explain this theory, “presumably Lenin was just milling about when a revolution pounced on his deliberations, and Washington was simply on hand when the colonies opted for countrydom.”

The charismatic leader is the representation of the psychoanalytical leadership theory. The belief is that a person possessing qualities that inspire, mesmerize and energize followers emerges based on the needs of the followers. The qualities of the leader include a father-like image, the ability to arouse either love and or fear in followers, high energy levels and the ability to communicate optimism and evoke deep loyalties.

Another theory is interaction and expectation. This is more group focused than the prior three, and is based on a mutual action/interaction among two or more members

of a group. The group members express mutual sentiments and the actual leadership that emerges results from one or more members guiding the interaction in the group. They set the group goals and the means to obtain these goals as well as devising the positive and negative sanctions related to goal attainment.

Elitism, Pluralism and Regime Theory

In analyzing the theories surrounding community power structures, much of the research has been focused on urban areas. One of the first major theories to evolve, elitism, was through the research efforts of sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd and Floyd Hunter. The Lynds (1929, 1937) conducted extensive research in Muncie, Indiana, where they identified a group of influential business leaders as controlling all important aspects of the city's governmental activities. It was determined that the group was dominated by a single influential family.

Floyd Hunter's study in Atlanta (1953) confirmed the Indiana study by identifying a private business elite as the dominant economic and political force in Atlanta. He reaffirmed his findings in a follow-up study in 1980, also in Atlanta.

The concept of domination by a power elite was taken to a national level by C. Wright Mills (1956) in his book *The Power Elite* in which he argued that the United States was controlled by a power elite composed of three interlocking hierarchies: the military, industry and politicians. He held that these power elite interchanged status and produced an establishment that shared common experiences, privileges and political premises. They relied upon one another to "rule society" from their network of mutual exchanges and agreements for personal advantage.

Arnold Rose (1967), concluded that elites do exist and that power structures are always pyramidal, but refuted Mills argument regarding an interlocking power elite. In his work, *The Power Structure*, he argued that no single political doctrate did or could exist in a society with constant political competition and a public electorate. The elites identified by Mills, economic, military and political had historically been unable to coordinate actions and decisions.

The power elite theory has been challenged by several political scientists who attack both the reputation approach to research and the findings of Hunter and others. These researchers focused on behavior to determine community power and influence. Behavior can be observed and investigated. According to the theory of pluralism, power is unequally, but widely shared by many diverse groups with specialized interests and influences (Dahl, 1961).

Dahls' study found a historical, progressive change in the power structure in New Haven, Connecticut that could be of interest to researchers comparing rural, small towns and urban areas. Pre-industrial New Haven displayed strong characteristics of a power elite society, but as industry and growth occurred, the power structure became more pluralistic. While this finding supported Dahl's pluralistic theory, it also supported the existence of elitism. Anti-pluralists claim that elitists have become more in-depth at operating behind the scenes and developed techniques for influencing decision making without attracting attention. The criticism of the pluralists' approach to research, is the ignoring the behind the scenes behaviors that keep issues from reaching a public platform.

Clarence Stone (1989) suggests that regime theory explains the decision making process in urban communities. Simply put, the theory states that public officials must work with whoever has the resources required to make the organization operate. Alliances and coalitions are formed out of mutual needs and individual deficits. Hall (1987) and Freeman (1979) found that decision making within school systems is especially impacted by the influences of external coalitions when changes in available resources necessitate reallocation of funding or changes in programs.

A conclusion from the research debate over power theory in urban areas is that the distribution of power varies from community to community. This argument can equally be made for small rural communities. Researchers continue to find a power elite in some communities, pluralism in others and variations of both through coalition-building.

Community Coalitions.

The impact of community interest groups on school systems varies according to the degree of group organization and method of exerting influence. Coalitions are groups formed around common values and needs who organize to determine the distribution of power. Mintzberg (1983) describes three types of coalitions external to schools: dominated, divided, and passive. Each coalition has its own unique influences on the internal condition of the school system.

Dominated external coalition is comprised of a single, powerful individual or set of individuals acting together. It is such a powerful coalition as to dominate the actions and decisions of both the board of education and the superintendent which in turn, determine the direction of policies and procedures for the system. Mintzberg found that

over time dominated coalitions are challenged by other powerful influencers. Schools with dominated external coalitions have strong bureaucratic organizations. There is little individuality and risk-taking. Structure is simple and authoritarian.

If two or more different sets of influences of equal power and influence exist in the same community, their power struggles over curriculum, personnel, instruction or other issues may create a division within the system. This divided coalition tends to politicize the board and system employees. Conflict and disagreement from the divided external coalition is reflected in a division within the school system.

A third coalition, the passive external coalition, is the result of a large number of coalitions with a dispersion of power and influence to the point of limiting the impact of any one group. The result is passive coalition activity, community apathy and a strengthening of power within the organization. The organization experiences little pressure from external sources. The leadership within the organization determines the power structure within the system.

McCarty/Ramsey Model

The theoretical model that is most noted in the exploration of the community power structure was developed by D.J. McCarty and C.E. Ramsey of the University of Wisconsin. The model is detailed in their book, *The School Managers: Power and Conflict in American Public education* (1971).

McCarty and Ramsey suggest that there is a “match” of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles that creates a situation that “works,” or at least does not create undue conflict (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971, p.16).

In their study of fifty-one rural, small city, suburban, and large urban school districts in the Midwest and Northeast in the early 1960's, they challenge the well accepted notion that communities had a "power elite" that control many social and political activities in the community or that they are "pluralistic" in nature, where power is "situational and temporary, and even the participation of persons in the decision making process is not predictable from one situation to another" (McCarty and Ramsey, 1971, p.4). They contend that the situation is more complex than this and there are at least four models of power structures that should be examined (p. 17-22).

The McCarty and Ramsey model is based upon four theses:

1. Power varies from community to community in patterns that can be described.
2. The community power structure holds some power over the school board and the district administrator who is implementing the board policies.
3. The power structure is evident by observing the relations and interactions of the community power figures, the school board, and the superintendent.
4. The power structure varies and that the variation forms patterns, some of which can be predicted and some which cannot be predicted (p. 16).

In the model McCarty and Ramsey identify four types of community power structures. These include:

The Dominated Power Structure: In this structure the majority of power is in the hands of a few or a single person. There is usually no strong opposition. The decisive

group is often the economic elite of the community and opposing viewpoints have little influence over the behavior of the school board or the superintendent (p. 17).

The Factional Power Structure: In this structure two or more factions, with differing views and values compete for and share power. These factions often rally around opposing views of religion, politics, and education (p. 17-18).

The Pluralistic Power Structure: In a community with a pluralistic power structure there is competition among many interest groups for influence and power. Power is contestable and there is usually strong community interest in the schools (p. 18).

The Inert Power Structure: In this situation there is no visible power structure. There is usually little interest in the schools on the part of the community, so there is little competition for power and influence. It is often difficult to find candidates for vacant board seats. This structure occurs most frequently in small rural school districts (p. 18).

These power structures are mentioned and detailed prior to the types of school boards and the leadership style of the superintendent because, according to McCarty and Ramsey, the community power structure is the determining factor of how the school board implements the community's wishes and how effective the leadership style of the superintendent is in that community (p. 16).

Similarly, McCarty and Ramsey propose that there are four types of school boards that correspond with each kind of community power structure. They are;

Dominated Board: On the dominated board, members share and reflect the beliefs of the dominant community group. Often economic control by the community power structure contributes to that control. Board members who are part of this

community power group or are controlled by it, exercise power so that policy follows the desired direction. There is no significant opposition vying for office or control (p. 19).

Factional Board: In this situation elections are hotly contested, board members vote in line with the faction they represent, the vote outcome is more important than the discussion of issues, and the balance of power may shift from election to election (p. 19).

Status Congruent Board: On this board the discussion of issues is very important as members are not tightly bound to a single position. Board members are treated with equality and as individuals with independent minds. The board acts as a “community of peers whose decisions are characterized by full discussion of problems and arrival at consensus in an atmosphere of detachment from the interests of any particular segment of the community” (p. 20).

Sanctioning Board: The sanctioning board does not represent any community group nor does it receive significant input from the community so it tends to simply sanction the advice or recommendations of the professional staff without taking into account the needs or desires of the community (p 20).

As a point of clarification, the McCarty-Ramsey model pairs up the following from the community power structures and the types of school boards:

<u>Community Power Structures</u>	<u>School Boards</u>
Dominant	Dominant
Factional	Factional
Pluralistic	Status Congruent
Inert	Sanctioning

McCarty and Ramsey also examine superintendent leadership styles. Again, they identify four leadership styles that correspond to the community power structures and the types of school boards. The four leadership styles are described as:

Functionary: The dominant school board will usually choose a superintendent who is in agreement with the dominant community group. The superintendent then carries out policy, as opposed to developing policy. He/she will take cues for action from this group. The superintendent actually must play this role if he/she is to be effective in matching school programs to community desires (p. 20-21).

Political Strategist: In a factional community with a factional school board the superintendent must work well with the majority without becoming too closely identified with any one faction. The superintendent must be positioned to remain effective even after a power shift has occurred. Frequently the political strategist takes the middle ground, especially on controversial issues (p. 21).

Professional Advisor: In a community with a pluralistic power structure and a status congruent board the superintendent can assume the role of statesman. The

superintendent is able to not only carry out policy but can actively develop and guide the creation of policy. He is able to honestly and effectively point out alternatives and possible consequences of any and all alternatives (p. 21).

Decision Maker: When the school board acts merely as a “rubber stamp” for the administration the superintendent acts as the decision maker for the school district. Since there is no dominant group or groups to receive advice or pressure from, and since there is little interest from the board, the superintendent is free to take action in significant matters, and in fact, must if the system is to function (p. 21-22).

To summarize the McCarty-Ramsey model the following chart shows the relationship and interaction of the community power structures, types of school boards and superintendent leadership styles:

<u>Community</u>	<u>School Board</u>	<u>School Board</u>
Dominant	Dominant	Functionary
Factional	Factional	Political Strategist
Pluralistic	Status Congruent	Professional Advisor
Inert	Sanctioning	Decision-Maker

One last piece of theoretical framework that needs to be explored is that of Iannaccone and Lutz (1978), as they describe the “dissatisfaction theory” which provides a dynamic model of both quiescence and turbulence as sequences in community life. Simply stated, at some point in a community’s life, a rough agreement will exist among citizens, board and superintendent. However, this satisfaction can suddenly break down with new ideas and protests of old policies thus resulting in election of new board

members and the inevitable firing of the superintendent. This strongly supports the idea of the superintendent identifying the leadership style necessary to prevent this dissatisfaction.

According to research by Straley (1987) and Johnson (1996) it was concluded that when board members and superintendents were able to agree on leadership issues, an effective positive organizational culture was established. Research suggests that superintendents develop or adopt a personal leadership style that “works” for them. When confronted with a school board and /or a community which is incompatible with a specific leadership style, superintendents have options. First, they may choose to remain in their current position using a leadership style that is incompatible with their own personal leadership style, yet compatible with that of the board and /or community. Second, they may choose to leave the district and pursue a position which is compatible with their own leadership style. Or, third, they may decide to stay in their current position, use their own personal leadership style and hope for the best with the incompatible board and /or community (Mazzarella & Smith, 1989).

In their 1971 book titled *The School Managers: Power and Conflict in American Public Education*, McCarty and Ramsey suggested that there is a connection between the community power structure, school board types and superintendent leadership styles. They maintain that incompatibility in these relationships can bring about turnover in the superintendency. Research clearly shows that a compatible relationship between the superintendent and school board leads to a longer tenure on the part of the superintendent and in turn has a positive correlation with student achievement.

Research demonstrates that varying forms of community power structures exist in communities and in school districts. It is generally agreed upon by researchers that these power structures work to achieve specific goals that have some impact on the decisions made in a community and in a school district. Ultimately these decisions affect the leadership of the school district and their effectiveness. Studies have found a significant positive correlation between the district leadership and student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

The McCarty-Ramsey model was tested and refined in 1994 in a study conducted by R.G. Hess. Hess (1994) studied over 300 superintendents in Wisconsin. Using a questionnaire he surveyed these superintendents in an effort to identify the combination of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles in the Wisconsin school districts. He concluded that there was a statistically significant correlation between all of the matched types from the McCarty-Ramsey model (Community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles) except for the functionary leadership styles in the dominated school board type (Hess, 1994). Hess attributes this single aberration in the results of this study to the fact that most superintendents would be hesitant to label themselves as “functionary” (p. 84).

Overall, the Hess study supports the McCarty-Ramsey model and concludes: factional-competitive community power structures have factional school boards and political strategist superintendents. Plural-rational community power structures have status-congruent school boards and professional advisor superintendents. Also validated is the existence of inert-latent community power structures with sanctioning boards and decision-making superintendents. While monolithic-elitist community power structures

exist with dominated school boards, the existence of functionary superintendents in these communities is not certain (p.87).

Summary

District leaders, such as superintendents and board members, are faced with a variety of conflicting forces and issues. Federal and state laws and regulations, demands for greater accountability, changing demographics, competing community interests, limited resources, legal challenges, political agendas, shortages of qualified educators, and a general disrespect for the education profession create an increasingly difficult environment for educators to remain focused on and be successful in attaining the goal of increased student achievement (Usdan, McCloud, Podmostko, & Cuban, 2001, p. 26).

The successful superintendent must be adept at building and sustaining good relations with the school board (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001). Overall, research indicates that the degree of success that a superintendent enjoys in the critical relationship with the school board “appears to be predicated on how well the superintendent has understood and acted upon the tacit expectations of the board and the community (Nestor-baker & Hoy, 2001). There have been only a few studies which examined the three-way relationship of the superintendent, school board and the community; and even fewer studies relating to the impact these relationships have on education reform and student achievement.

The theoretical model used in this study to research these phenomena of compatible relationships among superintendents, school boards and community

power structure, is the one developed by D.J. McCarty and C.E. Ramsey of the University of Wisconsin. McCarty and Ramsey suggest that there is a “match” of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles that creates a situation that “works”. Or at least does not create undue conflict (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971, p.16).

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

This study examines the relationships between community power structures, school board types, and superintendent leadership styles in the public schools of Oklahoma, and the impact that these relationships have on student achievement. This chapter describes the procedures used in this study. The chapter consists of seven parts: 1) design and research questions, 2) population and sample, 3) survey instruments, 4) survey items and research questions, 5) data collection, 6) data analysis, 7) summary

Design

This study was a descriptive, inferential study based on survey data. The survey instruments used in this study were developed by (Hess, 1994; Smith, 1998), with some minor revisions. The research design and methods was determined after an extensive literature review and, in particular, the work of McCarty & Ramsey (1971), Hess (1994), Smith (1998) and Lere (2004), which served as the framework for studying the interaction of community power structure, school board types, and superintendent leadership styles. The information gained from these four studies, along with concepts from related literature was used to develop the following research questions.

1. To what extent do dominated, factional, pluralistic, and inert community power structures exist in Oklahoma public schools?
2. To what extent do dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning board types exist in Oklahoma public schools?
3. To what extent do functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools?
4. What is the relationship between types of community power structures and school board types in Oklahoma public schools?
5. What is the relationship between types of community power structures and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public schools?
6. What is the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public schools?
7. What economic, social, political or demographic variables predict or influence the compatibility of these relationships?
8. Do school board presidents and their superintendents perceive leadership styles, board behaviors and community power structures differently?
9. Do compatible relationships between school boards and superintendents have a positive impact on student achievement?

Population and Sample

This study describes the relationship between community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles in the public

schools of Oklahoma. Two subgroups have been selected for surveying, superintendents and school board presidents. Questionnaires will be sent to school board presidents and superintendents of all 541 public school districts in Oklahoma. Their names were obtained from the Oklahoma State School Boards Association.

Instruments

This is a descriptive inferential study. The quantitative surveys include similar demographic sections and using paired questionnaires to survey Oklahoma school board presidents and superintendents. The school board presidents and superintendents from all 541 public school districts in Oklahoma received copies of the respective instruments.

This part of the study relied on two surveys, one survey was given to superintendents and another, a parallel, was sent to school board presidents. Both surveys were based on a questionnaire developed by Richard Hess for his 1994 study in Wisconsin. The original instrument was designed to obtain information on community power structures, school board behaviors and superintendent leadership styles by surveying public school superintendents. A panel of university professors from the University of Wisconsin, which included Dr. Donald Ramsey, one of the original authors of the McCarty-Ramsey Model designed this original instrument. The survey was validated by experts at the University of Wisconsin in the areas of superintendency and school board and was piloted in eight school districts in Wisconsin. Dr. Hess granted permission

for a modified version of his instrument to be used to survey superintendents in Oklahoma.

The instrument used in this study to survey school board presidents was based on the Hess (1994) survey for superintendents. Smith (1998) adapted the questionnaire for her study in North Carolina, in which she surveyed both superintendents and school board presidents. Dr. Smith granted permission to use a modified version of her instrument in this study.

The Hess (1994) questionnaire, given to superintendents, addresses nine behavior characteristics for each of the three variables addressed in this study: community, school board and superintendent. Each of the nine behaviors is represented by a selected response statement which has four different responses that can be used to complete the statement. Each of the four possible responses represents one of the four operational behaviors defined by McCarty and Ramsey (dominated, factional, pluralistic and inert). Respondents were asked to rank order each of the responses, 1 being the highest or most common and 4 being the lowest or least common. The higher the rank assigned, the more usual that behavior. Social, economic and political variables are addressed through additional questions, including length of tenure in the district and API scores for the district.

The following section describes the three variables and the corresponding behavior characteristics for survey instrument one (Superintendent Questionnaire, Appendix A). In parentheses following each possible response, the corresponding

community power structure, using the following abbreviations:

Dominated Power Structure (DPS)

Factional Power Structure (FPS)

Pluralistic Power Structure (PPS)

Inert Power Structure (IPS)

Community Variables:

1. When critical issues develop in my school community, they are
 - discussed and decided openly. (PPS)
 - subjected to controversy by competing community groups. (FPS)
 - resolved by one person or group of people. (DPS)
 - not discussed.(IPS)

2. My community can best be described as socioeconomically
 - homogeneous.
 - heterogeneous.
 - changing.

3. Power and influence in my community tends to be
 - divided relatively equally. (PPS)
 - divided between two or more factions. (FPS)
 - concentrated unequally in one or two individuals or small groups.(DPS)

4. The following behaviors tend to best describe my community when general elections are conducted
 - candidates surface from a single community-wide leadership group. (DPS)
 - candidates surface from competing groups. (FPS)
 - it is difficult to find candidates. (IPS)
 - candidates tend to represent specific issues across the community. (PPS)

5. When general elections are conducted in my community, the results tend to be
 - predictable. (DPS or IPS)
 - unpredictable. (FPS or PPS)

6. Which of the following best describes public concern for issues in my community?
 - The same individuals and group(s) tend to get involved in all issues. (DPS)
 - There tends not to be much interest or involvement in all issues. (IPS)
 - Groups of individuals involved with educational issues are generally not involved in other community issues. (PPS)
 - Groups mobilize or disappear based on specific issues. (FPS)

7. Leadership in my community tends to be
- centered on one or two individuals. (DPS)
 - divided among the leaders of different groups. (FPS)
 - shared by a number of individuals. (PPS)
 - delegated to school administrators. (IPS)
8. People who use power or influence in my community could be describes as
- persons with financial resources. (FPS)
 - persons linked by long-standing friendships and social relationships. (DPS)
 - persons who hold elected office or appointed position. (PPS)
 - there is little evidence of people using power or influence. (IPS)
9. Elections in my community tend to be
- uncontested with organized support for the candidate. (DPS)
 - contested with no apparent organized support or opposition for the candidate. (PPS)
 - contested with organized support and opposition for the candidate. (FPS)
 - uncontested with no apparent organized support for the candidate. (IPS)

The second variable in the superintendent survey relates to the type of school board. I have, as above, indicated after each response the type of school board that corresponds to the response. I have used the following abbreviations;

Dominated Board (DB)

Factional Board (FB)

Status Congruent Board (SCB)

Sanctioning Board (SB)

School Board Variables:

1. School Board members in my school district tend to represent
 - a specific group and its interests. (FB)
 - broad community interests. (SCB)

2. Board membership tends to be
 - unstable over time with unpredictable change of members. (FB or SCB)
 - stable over time with predictable changes of members. (DB or SB)

3. Power and influence on my school board tend to be
 - divided equally among all board members. (SCB)
 - divided equally between two or more factions. (FB)
 - concentrated unequally in one to two board members. (DB)
 - difficult or impossible to identify. (SB)

4. Votes on significant or critical issues tend to be (adjust for different size boards)
 - 3-2 with the same people tending to vote the minority. (FB)
 - 4-1 with same people tending to vote in the minority. (DB)
 - 4-1 with different people tending to vote in the minority. (SB)
 - 4-1, or 3-2, but different members will be voting in the minority. (SCB)

5. When significant issues face my school board, members tend to rely on
 - information and data. (SCB)
 - the opinion of influential school board or community member(s). (DB)
 - the superintendent's recommendation. (SB)
 - the opinions of the community groups they represent. (FB)

6. The following best describes my school board at election time
 - it is difficult to find candidates. (SB)
 - candidates are supported by two or more general interest groups. (FB)
 - candidates are supported by educational interest groups. (SCB)
 - candidates surface from the general community (DB)

7. My school board's relationship with the community can best be described

as

- adversarial with the community interests. (FB)
- supportive of the community interests. (SCB)
- indifferent to the community interests. (SB)
- compliant with community interests. (DB)

8. The resolution of conflict over issues by the school board can best be

described as the school board

- going along with the “conventional wisdom” of community decision-makers. (DB)
- acting as a “corporate board of directors.” (SCB)
- exposing the conflict to a “marketplace of competing interests and ideas.” (FB)
- relying on the “superintendent as a decision-maker.” (SB)

9. The school board uses research-based information and data about schools

to

- sort rationally through alternative proposals. (SCB)
- support only the prevailing policies. (DB)
- fuel the differences between competing factions. (FB)
- support only the superintendent's recommendations. (SB)

The third variable on the superintendent survey relates to the superintendent's leadership style. Again, I have added to each response the superintendent leadership style that is indicated by the responses. I have used the following abbreviations:

Functionary (F)

Political Strategist (PS)

Professional Advisor (PA)

Decision-Maker (DM)

Superintendent Variables:

1. When the school board is making a decision on a critical issue, I tend to
 - provide information and recommendations. (PA)
 - make the decisions. (DM)
 - analyze board factions to shape recommendations. (PS)
 - meet with the board leader(s) for advice. (F)

2. When the school board is making a decision on a critical issue, I tend to
 - use citizen committees to resolve conflict. (PS)
 - encourage discussion among the board. (PA)
 - make a recommendation for action. (DM)
 - consult with the board leader(s). (F)

3. When the school board agendas are developed, I tend to
 - seek advice from the board leaders. (F)
 - develop the school board agenda alone. (DM)
 - balance the interest of different board factions. (PS)
 - use professional staff and school board suggestions. (PA)

4. When a decision on a significant issue has to be made without a meeting of the school board, I tend to
 - make the decision and inform the board. (DM)
 - consult with the informal board leader(s). (F)
 - consult with all factions on the school board. (PS)
 - seek expert advice before making the decision. (PA)

5. Prior to board elections when people may be nominated or think about running for the school board, I tend to
 - let community leader(s) solicit nominees. (F)
 - encourage all qualified people to run. (PA)
 - keep out of school board politics. (DM)
 - recruit specific individuals to run for the board. (PS)

6. My feeling and experience about working with the school board can best be described as a
- leadership experience. (PA)
 - social experience. (F)
 - political experience. (PS)
 - management experience. (DM)
7. If I lose my job as superintendent, it would probably be because
- the board has lost confidence in me as a professional educator. (PA)
 - a few board members or community leaders decided to terminate my contract. (F)
 - a new faction became the majority on the board. (PS)
 - I ran afoul of some unforeseen community norms, beliefs, or values. (DM)
8. If my school board had one expectation of me as a superintendent, it would be that I had
- conflict resolution and community relation skills. (PS)
 - effective interpersonal and social skills. (F)
 - professional and leadership skills. (PA)
 - administrative and operational skills. (DM)

9. When I have a job-related stress as a superintendent the stress was probably caused by
- the differences between board and community leaders. (F)
 - conflict between two or more board factions. (PS)
 - school board rejection of my recommendations. (PA)
 - little board and community interest in education. (DM)

These questions were designed to elicit responses that would allow the researcher to identify the respondent with specific types of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles. Weighing the answers provides an aggregate score that while indicating an individual's basic behavior pattern, allows for some deviation. For example, a series of responses by a school board president may indicate that this individual may see his or her community as a pluralistic community, but additional responses may indicate that there are elements of a factional community present as a subculture, or dependent upon certain issues.

In addition to the above response statements, demographic and experience questions identify variables that frequently occur with or support specific behaviors and styles. Responses to the following items assist in answering research questions 7 and 9.

Social /Economic/Demographic and Political Variables:

1. Have you considered leaving your current job as superintendent of schools as a result of economic, social and political changes that have taken place in the last three years? Please explain.

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender? Male _____ Female _____

4. What is your highest degree?

BA/BS _____ MA/MS _____ Ed. S _____ Ph.D/Ed.D _____

5. What is the median income of your community?

_____ below \$35,000

_____ above \$35,000

6. The majority of households in my community tend to have at least one

member with a

_____ a college degree

_____ post high school / two year technical college degree

_____ high school degree or less

7. The enrollment in my school district this year is

_____ 0 – 499

_____ 500 – 999

_____ 1000 – 2,999

_____ 3,000 – 5,999

_____ 6,000 – 8,999

_____ 9,000 +

School Board / Superintendent Experience:

8. How many years have you served as superintendent of schools in your current district?

Hess's study supported the McCarty/Ramsey model, but one major limitation was that Hess relied solely on the responses of superintendents and their perceptions of the types of school boards and the community power structures present in their districts. Hess did not survey the school board presidents of the school boards. Smith (1998), in her study in North Carolina, extended and modified the survey to include school board presidents. This allowed for the comparison of perceptions and a more complete study of superintendent leadership styles, types of school boards and community power structures. The questionnaire used by Smith (1998) is the same format and structure as the one used for the superintendents. Each question addresses one of nine behavior characteristics and each of the possible response align with one of the four types of superintendent, school board and community combinations.

Survey Items and Research Questions:

This section summarizes the alignment between the survey item on the instruments used and the research questions by organizing the research question, survey items and the respondents to each question.

Research Question	Survey Items	Superintendent	School Board Pres.
1. To what extent do dominated, factional, pluralistic and inert community power structures exist in Oklahoma public schools?	Community Variables 1-9	X	X
2. To what extent do dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning school board types exist in Oklahoma public schools?	School Board Variables 1-9	X	X
3. To what extent do functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools?	Superintendent Variables 1-9	X	X

<p>4. What is the relationship between types of community power structures and school board types in Oklahoma public schools?</p>	<p>Community Variables 1-9 Superintendent Variables 1-9</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>5. What is the relationship between types of community power structures and superintendent leadership styles?</p>	<p>Community Variables 1-9 Superintendent Variables 1-9</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>6. What is the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership styles?</p>	<p>School Board Variables 1-9 Superintendent Variables 1-9</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>7. What economic, social, political or demographic variables predict or influence the compatibility of these relationships?</p>	<p>All variables and demographic information</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>8. Do school board presidents and their superintendents perceive leadership styles, school board types and community power structures differently?</p>	<p>All variables and demographic information</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>

9. Do compatible relationships between school board boards and superintendents have a positive impact on educational reform?	All variables	X	X
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Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The 42 item questionnaires were mailed to the 541 school board presidents and their superintendents. The names and addresses were made available through the Oklahoma State School Boards Association. Although each survey remained anonymous, superintendent and school board presidents had coded pair numbers to assure that respondents from the same school district were analyzed for similarities and differences. Superintendents and board presidents were informed of the purpose of the coding and assured of the confidentiality of the information provided. Each subject received a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the completed questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The first twenty-seven questions of the survey are divided into three sections consisting of nine questions each. These three sections address behaviors of the community, school board and superintendent. Respondents were asked to rank order all of the possible answers to each of the twenty-seven questions. Each answer is an example of a behavior associated with one of the four types of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership

styles. Individual point totals were converted to rank order for analysis. These rank orders were used to determine the highest-ranking response by the group.

The results were compiled in a spreadsheet program. The research questions 1, 2 and 3, “To what extent do dominated, factional, pluralistic and inert community power structures exist in Oklahoma public school districts?”, “To what extent do dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning school board types exist in Oklahoma public school districts?”, and “To what extent do functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public school districts?” were analyzed by the rank orders assigned to the first twenty-seven questions of the survey. For each survey the structure, type or style was determined by the one that was the highest ranked. The results were formatted into two charts (one for superintendents and one for school board presidents) displaying the number and highest ranking response of each style or type.

Research questions 4, 5 and 6, “What is the relationship between types of community power structures and school board types in Oklahoma public school districts?”, “What is the relationship between types of community power structures and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public school districts?”, and “What is the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public school districts?” were analyzed using Pearson’s r correlation. Using the data from the results of questions 1, 2 and 3, correlations were determined for each of the relationships

examined by questions 4, 5 and 6. Pearson's r correlation tested the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables.

Research question 7 was analyzed by descriptively examining the data between the stated years of service of the superintendent in the current district and the responses to the questions in the demographic section of the survey that addressed gender, education level, income level and school district size.

Question 8 was analyzed by determining the correlations between the highest-ranking scores from the school board presidents and the highest-ranking scores from the superintendents. This question could only be analyzed for those paired questionnaires that were returned. The differences between the perceptions of school board presidents and superintendents were analyzed using the Pearson's r correlation for paired samples.

The final question number 9 was analyzed by the ranking of responses from survey question 39, "How many innovative programs have been initiated in your school district in the last five years?" along with the district scores from survey question 40, "What is your school district's overall District API score for regular education students? 2003-04?, 2004-05? And 2005-06?" The larger the number of programs and an increasing API index score indicated student achievement. The information from questions 41 and 42 pertaining to the school board president's perception of student achievement and his/her knowledge of the overall school program, were also utilized.

The data analysis of this study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics. The relationships between variables were analyzed using Pearson's r

correlation, which determines the strength of the relationship. This allowed for inferences concerning the overall population of school district leadership in Oklahoma. The demographic data were informative and descriptive and analyzed by predicting the effect these intervening variables have on the relationships between superintendents and school boards as well as the impact on student achievement in Oklahoma. However the demographics do not allow for conclusions to the overall population.

Summary

This chapter has described the procedures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public schools and their relationship with tenure and student achievement. The chapter presented nine research questions, identified the population to be surveyed, explained the procedure for distributing and collecting the surveys and described the surveys to be used. The review of the procedures for data analysis was also included.

Chapter IV

Results of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of a survey of the superintendents and school board presidents in the state of Oklahoma regarding the types of community power structures, types of school boards and superintendent leadership styles as they exist in Oklahoma. The study also examined the impact these relationships have on student achievement. This chapter consists of three sections. The first describes the population of superintendents and school board presidents surveyed and those who participated by completing and returning the survey. The second section consists of the statistical analyses of the data obtained from the surveys investigating community power structures, types of school boards and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the findings of the study.

Surveyed Population

The public common education system in the State of Oklahoma is comprised of 541 school districts varying in size and population. 111 of these districts are dependent districts with grades K-8 while the remaining 430 are independent districts with grades K-12. They range in student population from districts with less than 20 students to the largest district of over 43,000 students. Oklahoma is predominately made up of small rural schools with over 300 districts having fewer than 500 students. Twenty-five districts enroll half of the states 620,000 students. The largest districts are in and around the two metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City (Oklahoma State Department of Education).

This study examines the community power structures, school board types, superintendent leadership styles along with the demographics in the school districts of Oklahoma. This was done by asking superintendents and board presidents of all school districts to respond to a series of questions designed around the model developed by McCarty and Ramsey at the University of Wisconsin in 1971 and later refined by Hess in 1994. The survey asks for the perceptions of the superintendents and school board presidents about their community, school board and the superintendent of the school district and how they interact as they govern a school system. This chapter begins with a look at the demographics of the responding superintendents and school board presidents.

Demographic Information

Gender has become an important factor in recent studies and one that has gained increased attention in the last decade as society attempts to move beyond the stereotypes associated with both sexes. The vast majority of the superintendents in Oklahoma are male (86.8%). At the time of this survey there were 71 female superintendents in the 541 school districts in the state. Over half of the female superintendents in the state are employed by districts with less than 800 students (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2007). The majority of the board presidents are also male (78.4%), but considerably more school districts have female board presidents than those with female superintendents (116 versus 71), as reported by (Oklahoma State School Boards Association, 2007).

Table 1 describes the demographics of the responding superintendents.

Table 1

Demographics of Responding Superintendents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	
	(n)	(%)
Age		
25-29	0	0.0
30-34	4	1.7
35-39	11	3.5
40-44	32	12.9
45-49	48	16.7
50-54	78	26.2
55-59	60	20.9
60-64	48	16.7
65-69	4	1.4
70+	2	0.7
Total n	287	
Gender		
Male	255	88.5
Female	33	11.5
Total n	288	
Education		
Masters	211	73.3
Specialist	41	14.2
Doctorate	36	12.5
Years as Superintendent In Current District		
1-2	68	23.9
3-4	58	20.3
5-6	55	19.3
7-8	29	10.2
9-10	17	5.9
11-12	15	5.3
13-14	12	4.2
15-16	9	3.2
17-18	2	0.7
19-20	6	2.8
20+	16	4.9
Total n	284	

Table 2 describes the community and school district characteristics

Table 2

Community and School District Characteristics

Median Community Income		
Below \$35,000	221	
Above \$35,000	64	
<hr/>		
Total n	285	
<hr/>		
Community Education		
College Degree	18	23.9
Post High School / 2 Year	59	20.7
High School or Less	208	73.0
No Response		
<hr/>		
Total n	285	
<hr/>		
Student Enrollment		
0-499	142	49.7
500-999	66	23.1
1000-2999	54	18.9
3000-5999	13	4.5
6000-8999	6	2.1
9000+	5	1.7
<hr/>		
Total n	286	
<hr/>		

Table 3 describes the demographics of the responding board presidents.

Table 3

Demographics of Responding Board Presidents

Demographic Variable	Frequency (n)	(%)
Age		
25-29	0	0.0
30-34	1	0.8
35-39	9	7.0
40-44	18	14.7
45-49	24	18.6
50-54	31	24.0
55-59	28	11.7
60-64	9	7.0
65-69	4	3.1
70+	5	3.9
Total n	129	
Gender		
Male	97	75.2
Female	32	24.8
Total n	129	
Education		
Bachelors	2	1.7
Masters	99	82.5
Specialist	5	4.2
Doctorate	14	11.7
Years as Board Member In Current District		
1-2	7	5.6
3-4	19	15.4
5-6	15	12.1
7-8	16	12.9
9-10	19	15.3
11-12	11	8.9
13-14	5	4.0
15-16	7	5.6
17-18	5	4.1
19-20	6	4.8
20+	14	11.3
Total n	124	

Table 4 describes the community demographics of the responding board presidents.

Table 4

Community Demographics of Responding Board Presidents

Median Community Income		
Below \$35,000	93	73.2
Above \$35,000	34	26.8
<hr/>		
Total n	127	
	Frequency	
	(n)	(%)
<hr/>		
Student Enrollment		
0-499	54	43.2
500-999	24	19.2
1000-2999	29	23.2
3000-5999	10	8.0
6000-8999	3	2.4
9000+	4	3.2
<hr/>		
Total n	125	
<hr/>		

Copies of the survey were mailed to all 541 superintendents and all 541 school board presidents in the state of Oklahoma for the 2006-2007 school year. These school officials were identified through the Oklahoma State School Boards Association directory. The initial mailing resulted in the return of 202 surveys from the superintendents, or a return rate of 45% and 112 surveys from board presidents or a return rate of 24%. The results also included 78 complete and useable “paired” responses (surveys from the superintendent and the school board president of the same school district) or a total of 16% of the total school districts in the state. The paired superintendent and school board president were identified by a code on each survey that corresponded to each school district in the state of Oklahoma. Following a reminder

postcard mailing ten days later an additional 85 responses were received from the superintendents and 15 from the school board presidents. This produced 92 useable “paired surveys.” Although these results do not include responses from all superintendents and school board presidents in the state, the respondents are an adequate representation of the surveyed population.

Table 5 describes the gender and district size of the school districts whose superintendents and school board presidents responded to the survey.

Table 5

Gender and District Size of Responding School Districts

Student Population	Superintendent				Board President			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
0-499	127	44.4	15	5.2	43	33.3	11	8.5
500-999	66	23.0	0	0	19	14.7	10	7.7
1000-2999	38	13.2	16	5.5	25	19.3	4	3.1
3000-5999	12	4.1	1	0.3	8	6.2	2	1.5
6000-8999	6	2.0	0	0	1	0.7	2	1.5
9000+	4	1.3	1	0.3	1	0.7	3	2.3
Total n	253		32		97		32	

The demographic information received as part of this study provides a background for the portion of the study that deals with community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles. The next section details the survey used in this study and provides the statistical analysis to answer the nine research questions proposed by this study.

Survey Used In Study

This study is based on twenty-seven survey questions related to the relationship between community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public schools. The survey used in this study was mailed to superintendents and school board presidents. The first twenty seven questions of this survey consist of three sets of nine behavioral questions. Each respondent was asked to rank order the possible responses according to how similar that behavior or condition was to the behavior and condition in their school district. The first section related to community power structures, the second relates to the types of school boards and the third set of nine questions describes superintendent leadership styles. Based upon the definitions in the model developed by McCarty and Ramsey (1971), each of the four possible responses provides an example of a type of community, school board or superintendent leadership style.

Statistical Analysis of Survey Data

This part of the study is organized by the nine research questions. Each question and data from the survey related to that question are presented and discussed. For research questions 1-3, only the number and percentages of the types of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles are presented. For the remainder of the research questions, the Pearson's r correlation formula was used to determine correlations between variables.

Research Question 1: To what extent do dominated, factional pluralistic and inert community power structures exist in Oklahoma public school districts?

Table 6

Highest Ranking Community Power Structures

Community Type	Dominated		Factional		Pluralistic		Inert		Total n
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	
Superintendent	83	29.0	26	9.1	103	35.2	75	26.2	286
Board President	35	27.5	20	15.7	41	32.2	31	24.4	127

The results of the survey indicate that superintendents and board presidents in the public schools of Oklahoma believe that all four types of community power structures are present in the state. However, both groups indicate a very low percentage of factional power structures. They also demonstrate a high level of agreement regarding the percentage of districts that are perceived to be each type of community power structure. The percentage distribution is very similar between the two groups. The largest difference in opinion between the superintendents and school board presidents was less than 7%, 9.1% (26) vs. 15.7% (20) for factional community power structures. Both groups identified the dominated and pluralistic community power structures as almost equal in numbers and the as the most common in the state, and both indicated that the factional community power structure as the least common.

Research Question 2: To what extent do dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning school boards exist in Oklahoma public school districts?

Table 7

Highest Ranking School Board Types

School Board Type	Dominated		Factional		Status Congruent		Sanctioning		Total n
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	
Superintendent	60	20.9	14	4.8	107	37.2	106	36.9	286
Board President	26	20.4	4	3.1	55	43.3	42	33.0	127

The superintendents and school board presidents indicate that they perceive all four types of school board types exist in the state. While both groups believe that the status congruent school board type is the most common, the superintendents believe that the sanctioning is equally represented in the state. The school board presidents believe that number to be considerably less. Both groups were very similar in regards to the number of dominated school board types (20.9% for superintendents and 20.4% for school board presidents) and both groups had very few individuals identifying with the factional board type.

Research Question 3: To what extent do functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public school districts?

Table 8

Highest Ranking Superintendent Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Functionary		Political Strategist		Professional Advisor		Decision Maker		Total n
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	
Superintendent	29	10.0	38	13.2	125	43.5	95	33.1	286
Board President	19	14.9	15	11.8	43	33.0	50	39.1	127

As witnessed with the community power structures and the school board types, responding superintendents and school board presidents perceive that all four types of superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools, comparable to the responses given on the school board types. Both groups agreed that one type of leadership style, the professional advisor, is the most common. Individuals from both groups disagree as to how frequent the professional advisor superintendent leadership style occurs in the state. Almost half of the superintendents, 44% (125), indicate that they perceive their leadership style as being professional advisor. On the other side the school board presidents feel that only about 33% (43) stated that they believe their superintendent's leadership style is the professional advisor. Both groups were similar in regards to the percentage in the decision-maker style, 34% by superintendents and 39% by board presidents. Both groups had very few individuals perceiving the superintendent in the functionary or political strategist styles. This supports and follows the leadership theory of Bass & Riggio (2006). They discuss the two types of leadership being transactional and transformational. Transactional being task oriented, hierarchal top-down and transformational being collaborative people oriented styles of leadership. Transactional would support the decision-maker style and the transformational matches the professional advisor style of leadership.

Prior to examining the data related to the next three research questions it is important to review the McCarty-Ramsey model of community, school board and superintendent relationships. To summarize the McCarty-Ramsey model the following chart shows the relationship and interaction of the community power structures, types of school boards and superintendent leadership styles:

Community	School Board	Superintendent
_____	_____	_____
Dominant	Dominant	Functionary
Factional	Factional	Political Strategist
Pluralistic	Status Congruent	Professional Advisor
Inert	Sanctioning	Decision-Maker

The McCarty-Ramsey model suggests that a stable system, or at least one with less conflict, would be made up of similar types of community power structures, school board types and leadership styles. For example, a dominated community power structure usually elects a dominated board, which requires a functionary superintendent leadership style in order to make the system function effectively. The model likewise predicts that if there is a misalignment, professional advisor superintendent in a factional community with a factional board, there is a greater possibility of conflict, a dysfunctional system and a reduced tenure of the superintendent.

Table 9

Community Power Structure and School Board Types Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Superintendent Survey Results

Community	Dominated	Factional	Pluralistic	Inert
<hr/>				
School Board				
Dominated	.316**	.222	-.019	.339
Factional	-.401*	.199	-.122	-.244
Status Congruent	-.133	-.335*	.458**	.388
Sanctioning	.218	.408**	.266	.512**

School Board Survey Results

Community	Dominated	Factional	Pluralistic	Inert
<hr/>				
School Board				
Dominated	.265**	.138	.232	.334
Factional	.138	.330	.202	-.557**
Status Congruent	-.090	-.127*	.412**	-.021
Sanctioning	.331	.134	.175	.456**

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

The following research questions are designed to determine if the relationships of community power structure, school board types and superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools, according to the perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between types of community power structures and school board types in Oklahoma public school districts?

Table 9 presents the correlations between community power structures and school board types as perceived by the responding superintendents and school board presidents. The portion of table 9 that describes the data from superintendents indicates a strong positive relationship (.316) significant at the .01 level between dominated community power structures and dominated school boards. The data also indicate a strong positive relationship between the relationship inert community power structure and the sanctioning school board. There is also a positive relationship (.458) significant at the .01 level between the pluralistic community power structure and the status congruent board type, as well as the factional community and the factional school board (.199). This would follow the McCarty-Ramsey model. There were also strong negative relationships (-.401) significant at the .05 level between the dominated community power structure and the factional school board and between the factional community power structure and the status congruent school board (-.335) also significant at the .05 level.

The data received from the school board presidents' survey regarding the relationships between community power structures and school board types are similar in some areas but vary somewhat in some of the correlations with the data from the superintendents. The school board presidents, like the superintendents indicated that they believed there is a strong relationship (.265) significant at the .01 level between the dominated community power structure and the dominated school board. The board presidents also indicated a strong positive relationship (.456) significant at the .01 level between the inert community and the sanctioning board. The board presidents however indicated a positive relationship (.232) between the pluralistic community power structure and the dominated school board, as well as a positive relationship (.090)

between the dominated community and the status congruent board. Similar to the superintendent data are strong negative relationships (-.557) significant at the .01 level between the inert community and the factional board as well as the factional community power structure and the status congruent board (-.127) significant at the .05 level. The numbers from the board presidents were not as strong either positively or negatively as the superintendents.

Table 10

Community Power Structure and Superintendent Leadership Styles Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Superintendent Survey Results

Community	Dominated	Factional	Pluralistic	Inert
Superintendent Leadership Style				
Functionary	.237	.120	.257	.138
Political Strategist	.118	.323	-.354*	-.331*
Professional Advisor	.305	.148	.351**	.139
Decision-Maker	.042	-.408**	.132	.404**

School Board Survey Results

Community	Dominated	Factional	Pluralistic	Inert
School Board				
Functionary	.265	.116	.162	.117
Political Strategist	.233	.289	.343	-.203
Professional Advisor	.323	.102	.301**	-.598**
Decision-Maker	.172	-.004	.122	.267*

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Research Question 5: What is the relationship between types of community power structures and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public school districts?

In reviewing the data from research question #5, which examines the relationship between community power structures and superintendent leadership styles, there is a corresponding pattern to the data from research question #4. Although the data indicate some of the same positive and negative relationships the degree was not as great and there were more positive relationships. The correlations are found in table 10.

Strong relationships are indicated between the inert community power structure and the decision-maker leadership style (.404) significant at the .01 level and between the pluralistic community power structure and the professional advisor superintendent leadership style (.351) also significant at the .01 level. There were also positive relationships between the dominated community and the functionary leadership style (.237) and the factional community structure and professional advisor superintendent (.148). Likewise, a negative relationship exists between the pluralistic community power structure and the political strategist superintendent leadership style (-.354) significant at the .05 level and the factional community power structure and the decision-maker superintendent style (-.408) significant at the .01 level.

The data from the school board presidents indicate weaker relationships between defined community power structures and superintendent leadership styles. While there are positive relationships between all of the “paired variables,” the degree was not as great as with the superintendents. The strongest positive relationship (.301) significant at the .05 level was between the pluralistic community power structure and the professional advisor superintendent leadership style. The relationship between the inert

community power structure and the functionary leadership style (.117) was actually almost as strong as that of the decision-maker (.267) significant at the .05 level, which would be predicted by the McCarty-Ramsey model. There was a strong negative relationship (-.598) significant at the .01 level between the inert community power structure and the professional advisor superintendent leadership style.

Research Question #6: What is the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public school districts?

Table 11 describes the relationships between the types of school boards and the leadership style of superintendents. The superintendent data indicate strong relationships between the following: factional school boards and political strategist leadership styles (.466) significant at the .01 level; status congruent boards and professional advisor leadership styles (.240) significant at the .05 level; and sanctioning school boards and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles (.162), as predicted by the McCarty-Ramsey model.

The responses from the superintendents also suggest that there are negative relationships between the following: dominated school boards and political strategist superintendents (-.299) significant at the .05 level; dominated school boards and professional advisor superintendents (-.066); and sanctioning school boards and professional advisor superintendent leadership styles (-.237).

The relationships suggested from the data provided by board presidents have some similarities, both positively and negatively, as the data from the superintendents in regards to the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership

styles. While the most positive relationships are between the “paired” variables, as would be predicted by the McCarty-Ramsey model, only the dominated school board and the functionary superintendent leadership style (.296) and the status congruent board and professional advisor superintendent leadership style (.470) were significant at the .01 level. The strongest negative relationship existed between the sanctioning school board and the political strategist superintendent leadership style (-.209)

Table 11

School Board Types and Superintendent Leadership Styles Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Superintendent Survey Results

School Board Types	Dominated	Factional	Status Congruent	Sanctioning
Superintendent Leadership Style				
Functionary	.156*	-.045	-.128	.242
Political Strategist	-.299*	.466**	.370	.306
Professional Advisor	-.066	-.104	.240*	-.237
Decision-Maker	.151	.202	.134	.162

School Board Survey Results

School Board Types	Dominated	Factional	Status Congruent	Sanctioning
School Board				
Functionary	.296**	-.104	-.031	.187
Political Strategist	.079	.120	.128	-.209
Professional Advisor	-.047	.231	.470**	.238
Decision-Maker	-.079	.137	-.072	.122

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Research Question #7: What economic, social, political or demographic variables predict or influence the compatibility of these relationships?

The McCarty-Ramsey model suggests that when the community power structure, school board type and superintendent leadership style “line up” there is less conflict and the years of service of the superintendent tends to be longer. Thus a more productive environment is created. Table 12 details the data obtained from the surveys of the superintendents and school board presidents related to the alignment of community power structures, school board types, superintendent leadership styles and superintendent longevity.

The data in table 12 indicate that when all three variables (community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles) align, the superintendent longevity of current superintendents averages slightly more than 5 years. The data also demonstrate that the years of service of the superintendent that the years of service of the superintendent is similar when the kind of community power structure and the school board type align (4.92) and when the school board type and the superintendent and superintendent leadership style align (5.07). However, when the community power structure and the superintendent leadership style align, or when none of the three variables align, the average superintendent tenure drops to 3.12 and 3.01 respectively. This would suggest support for prior research that consistently articulated a poor relationship between the superintendent and school board deters school improvement, weakens the district stability and morale and eventually results in the “revolving door syndrome” of district leaders (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Renchler, 1992)

The information contained in Table 12 is descriptive and is based on reported data from superintendents and board presidents. These descriptive data are informative and inferences may be drawn from the data, but the nature of the data does not allow statistical analyses utilizing Pearson's r correlation. The data however does allow a prediction as to the influence these demographic variables have on the compatibility of the relationships between community, school boards and superintendents.

Table 12

Relationships of Community Power Structures, School Board Types
Superintendent Leadership Styles and Superintendent Tenure

	Years in Current Position
All Variables Align	5.02
Community Power Structure and School Board Type Align	4.92
Community Power Structure and Superintendent Leadership Style Align	3.12
School Board Type and Superintendent Leadership Style Align	5.07
No Alignment of Variables	3.01

The survey sent to all superintendents and school board presidents asks for responses to 27 specific questions, but also asks several demographic questions as well. The data gathered from these demographic questions are compared to the years that the current superintendent has served in that position in an effort to gain some insight into the relationship between these demographic variables and the years of service of the superintendent.

Tables 13 – 17 detail the relationships between the years that the current superintendent has served in that position and the educational level of the superintendent, the community income level and the community education level.

Table 13 compares the age of the superintendent with the number of years that the superintendent has served in that school. This table demonstrates that more than 75% of the responding superintendents have served less than 7 years in their current school district and typically the older the superintendent the longer they have served as the superintendent in their current school district. The most common combinations of age brackets and tenure are 40-44 years old serving 1-2 years; 45-49 years old serving 3-4 years; 50-54 years old serving 5-6 years. It should be mentioned that other categories were very closely associated with these three. It is also interesting to note that almost 20% of the responding superintendents are 60 years and older and most of those have served 5 or more years in their current position. Two of the 287 responding superintendents are over the age of 70 and still active.

Table 13

Age of the Superintendent and Years as Superintendent in Responding School Districts

(Reported as a percentage of the total responding school districts)

Age	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
Years as Supt.										
1-2	0.0	1.0	2.0	4.9	4.9	4.4	3.8	2.9	1.0	1.0
3-4	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	6.9	3.9	5.9	2.9	0.0	0.0
5-6	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.9	7.8	3.9	1.0	0.0
7-8	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	4.9	2.0	0.0	0.0
9-10	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
11-12	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.4	1.0	0.0	0.0
13-14	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
15-16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.0	0.0
17-18	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
19-20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
20+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	1.0

Table 14 examines the relationship between the age of the school board president and the tenure of the superintendent. Like table 13, which looked at the superintendent's age and years of service of the superintendent; this table shows that the majority of the school board presidents have served less than 10 years. This table also shows that board presidents are very similar in age with the superintendents and may have served in their current position for less time than their superintendents. These data may be skewed because the term of office is five years and there could be off setting time frames for the superintendent and the term of office for the board member.

Table 14

Age of the Board President and Years and Superintendent Tenure in Responding School Districts

(Reported as a percentage of the total responding school districts)

Age	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
Years as Supt.										
1-2	0.0	1.0	2.0	4.8	5.9	7.7	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
3-4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9	4.8	7.8	2.9	2.0	1.0	2.0
5-6	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.9	1.0	2.9	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
7-8	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
9-10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
11-12	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
13-14	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
15-16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
17-18	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
19-20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 15 examines the level of education of the superintendent and the years of service as superintendent. Table 15 shows that over 60% of the superintendents have served less than 7 years in their current position. It also shows that over 70% of the responding superintendents with a Master’s degree as the highest degree, while only slightly over 10% have earned their Doctorate degree. It also reveals that almost 80% whose highest degree was a Master’s degree have served less than 7 years and slightly less than 50% of those with a Doctorate degree have likewise served less than 7 years in their current position.

Table 15

Level of Education of the Superintendent and Years as Superintendent of Responding School Districts

(Reported as a percentage of the total responding school districts)

Level of Education	Masters		Specialist		Doctorate		Total (n)
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Years as Superintendent							
1-2	18.4	53	3.4	10	1.7	5	68
3-4	13.9	40	4.1	12	2.0	6	58
5-6	14.9	43	2.0	6	2.4	7	56
7-8	7.3	21	2.0	2	2.0	6	29
9-10	0.6	2	0.6	2	0.3	1	5
11-12	4.8	14	0.6	2	0.3	1	17
13-14	2.0	6	1.3	4	0.6	2	12
15-16	2.4	7	0.6	2	0.0	0	9
17-18	0.6	2	0.0	0	0.6	2	4
19-20	2.0	6	0.0	0	0.0	0	6
20+	4.8	14	0.0	0	0.6	2	16
Total n		208		40		32	

The survey sent to all superintendents and school board presidents also asked about the community income level and community level of education. Table 16 examines the relationship between the income level of the community and the length of service of the current superintendent. While this table again points out that most superintendents have served less than seven years in their current position, it also indicates a trend towards more years of service for superintendents in lower income communities. This can easily be observed by the fact that over 50% of the superintendents in communities with incomes of less than \$35,000 have served more than 7 years in their current position, while only 30% have served over 7 years in communities

with incomes over \$35,000. It must be noted that over 75% of the responding superintendents are serving in communities with incomes less than \$35,000.

Table 16

Community Income level and Superintendent Tenure in Responding School Districts

(Reported as a percentage of the total responding school districts)

Yrs as Supt.	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20	20+
Community Income Level											
Below \$35,000	4.0	5.5	6.0	7.2	4.9	9.8	10.1	14.2	6.5	5.4	3.4
Above \$35,000	3.4	2.0	1.4	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.8

Table 17 examines the relationship of community level of education and the years of service of the superintendent. Table 17 demonstrates that the average educational level of education of most Oklahoma communities is at the two year post high school level or lower. Although this may not seem to have as much of a factor in the relationship of the school board, community and superintendent, the data does show that superintendents enjoy slightly more years of service in communities with lower levels of community education. In communities with a college level of education only about 5% of the superintendents have served more than 7 years. This could be skewed with the fact that almost 75% of the responding superintendents reported that their communities had high school or less education.

Table 17

Community Level of Education and Superintendent Tenure in Responding School Districts

(Reported as a percentage of the total responding school districts)

Community Level of Education	College Degree		Post HS or 2 year		High School or Less	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Years as Superintendent						
1-2	0.6	2	5.2	15	17.7	51
3-4	0.6	2	5.2	15	13.9	40
5-6	0.3	1	2.0	6	16.3	47
7-8	2.0	2	2.0	6	7.3	21
9-10	0.6	2	2.0	6	3.1	9
11-12	0.6	2	2.4	7	1.3	4
13-14	1.3	4	0.3	2	3.1	9
15-16	0.6	2	0.3	1	2.0	6
17-18	0.6	2	0.0	0	0.6	2
19-20	0.0	0	0.0	0	1.3	4
20+	0.0	0	0.3	1	5.2	15
Total n		19		59		208

Research Question 8: Do school board presidents and their superintendents perceive leadership styles, school board types and community power structures differently?

Responses from superintendents and school board presidents were compared in terms of how they perceived community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles in their own school districts. The correlation between the superintendent and school board president was determined by comparing the frequency of agreement on responses to the questions in each of the three construct areas by the 92 pairs of superintendents and school board presidents. The paired educators are those superintendents and school board presidents from the same school district.

When examining the perceptions of the superintendents and school board presidents there was significant agreement. All of the correlations were positive with the highest being dominant (.449) and pluralistic (.442) community power structures significant at the .01 level.

The paired superintendents and school board presidents also had a strong agreement regarding their perceptions of the type of school board they had in their district. Again, all correlations were positive, with the strongest being status congruent (.289) and sanctioning (.548) both significant at the .01 level.

The most interesting result of this research question was the differences in the perception of the leadership style of the superintendent between the school board presidents and superintendents. All of the correlations were positive but there was a clear difference of agreement as compared to the previous two constructs of community power structures and board types. The strongest level of agreement was in professional advisor (.212) and significant at the .05 level. This could suggest a degree of support for the research of Zeigler (1975), that states boards on one hand want to give the power to the experts, but on the other hand they espouse an ideology of lay control.

Table 18

Correlations of Superintendent and School Board Presidents Responses

Community Power Structure	Correlation
Dominant	.449**
Factional	.231
Pluralistic	.442**
Inert	.212*

School Board Type	Correlation
Dominant	.082
Factional	.219
Status Congruent	.289**
Sanctioning	.548**

Superintendent Leadership Style	Correlation
Functionary	.191
Political Strategist	.062
Professional Advisor	.212*
Decision Maker	.192

* Significant at the .05 level
 * * Significant at the .01 level

Research Question 9: Do compatible relationships between school boards and superintendents have a positive impact on educational reform?

This area is a vital part of this study and concentrated on the data from the 92 paired surveys from superintendents and school board presidents of the same district. Tables 19 and 20 examine the districts that showed an increase and a decrease in API scores over a 3 year period (2003-2004, 2004-2005 & 2005-2006). These tables look at demographic information as well as relationship alignment.

Table 19 examines the districts with increased API scores over a three year period and reveals that all of the school districts showed an alignment between the superintendent and the school board president in at least two of the three relationships constructs. Most of the districts had an alignment in all three areas of community power structure, school board type and superintendent leadership style (51%), or alignment of

school board and superintendent (36.9%). The data also shows that nearly 75% of the districts have incorporated five or more innovative programs in the past three years. In 80% of the districts the school board president and superintendent revealed they had proficient knowledge of the district's goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development. This is supportive of the research done in the Lighthouse studies conducted by the Iowa School Boards Association (2000), where they showed that school boards and superintendents in high-achieving districts exhibited the following: trust in each other; peaceable, compatible relationships; and knowledge about the districts goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development.

Most of the superintendents ranged between the ages of 41-55 (48) and had three or more years of experience in the district. The fact that 80% were male is not surprising due to the fact that about that same percentage makes up the states population. The board presidents also typically ranged between the ages of 41-55 (45). The important aspect of the gender data is that of the 92 paired surveys 10 were women and all were in the districts with increasing scores. There were 24 female board presidents in the 92 pairs and all 24 were also in the districts with increasing API scores. This could be attributed to both leadership skills and the community structure. The fact that females have to battle to overcome the gender stereotype in education leadership; it almost becomes a necessity to make as large an impact as possible once given an opportunity to lead. This is why most women in leadership roles will be more proactive than their male counterparts. Sixty percent of the districts were in communities with a median income of less than \$35,000. However it is important to note that of the 92 paired districts 23 were in communities with a median income above\$35,000, and 22 of those were in the districts

showing increased API scores. Another important detail is that in the 92 pairs, 13 indicated a doctorate level of education and all were in the districts showing increased scores. Nearly 40% of the districts showing increased scores were in districts of 1000 or greater.

Table 19

Districts with Increasing API Scores
Percentages of total paired (92)

Superintendent Demographics												
Age	(n)	(%)	Years in District	(n)	(%)	Gender Total for All				Degree Total for All		
						Male (n)	Male (%)	Female (n)	Female (%)	M	S	D
36-40	5	5.4	1-2	20	21.7	74	80.4	10	10.8	58	13	13
41-45	13	14.1	3-4	22	24.0							
46-50	13	14.1	5-6	12	13.0							
51-55	22	24.0	7-8	8	8.6							
56-60	20	21.7	9-12	8	8.6							
60+	10	10.8	13-17	4	4.3							
			18+	8	8.6							

District Size	(n)	(%)	Community Income	(n)	(%)	Innovative Programs		(%)
						(n)	(%)	
0-499	29	31.5	Below 35,000	60	65.2	0-	19	24.6
500-999	19	20.6	Above 35,000	22	24.0	6-10	49	53.2
1000-2999	21	22.8				10+	14	15.2
3000-5999	6	6.5						
6000-8999	4	4.3						
9000+	3	3.2						

Relationship Alignment of Variables

All Variables Community School Board Superintendent		Community and School Board		School Board and Superintendent		Community and Superintendent		No Alignment
(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	
47	51.0	2	2.0	28	30.4	6	6.5	0

Table 20 examines the districts with decreasing API scores over the same three years and reveals that most of the districts had no alignment of the relationship constructs. Two of the districts had an alignment of community power structure and superintendent leadership style, while one had an alignment of the community and school board. The data reveals that eight of the nine districts had initiated three or fewer new innovative programs during the past three years. One surprising detail was that only one district (both superintendent and board president) stated they did not feel they had proficient knowledge of the district's goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development. This supports the research by (Norton, et.al., 1996) that found when the superintendent/school board partnership is strained, programs often fail, morale is weakened, and political power blocks come to fore. When these issues arise, they present major obstacles to establishing long-term goals and obtaining improved student achievement.

Most of the superintendents were in the age range of 41-55 (6) and less than five years of experience in the district. This follows and supports the research of Chance (1992) that stated consistent leadership and a stable board along with the match and fit between the superintendent, community and school board were critical in superintendent tenure, thus the opposite results in superintendent turnover.

Over half of the board presidents were over the age of 55 and all nine were male. All nine superintendents in the districts with decreasing scores were male. All but one of the districts was in communities with median incomes below \$35,000. None of the superintendents had a doctorate level of education and all nine were in districts with less than 500 students.

Table 20

Districts with Decreasing API Scores (3 years)

Percentages of total paired (92)

Superintendent Demographics

Age	(n)	(%)	Years in District		Gender Total for All				Degree Total for All			
			(n)	(%)	Male (n)	Male (%)	Female (n)	Female (%)	M	S	D	
36-40	2	2.0	1-2	3	3.2	9	9.8	0	0	7	2	0
41-45	1	1.0	3-4	4	4.3							
46-50	2	2.0	5-6	2	2.0							
51-55	3	3.2	7-8	0	0							
56-60	1	1.0	9-12	0	0							
			13-17	0	0							
			18+	0	0							

District Size	(n)	(%)	Community Income		Innovative Programs			
			(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(%)	
0-499	5	5.4	Below 35,000	8	8.6	0-	1	1.0
500-999	3	3.2	Above 35,000	1	1.0	1-3	7	7.6
1000-2999	1	1.0				4+	1	1.0
3000-5999	0	0						
6000-8999	0	0						
9000+	0	0						

Relationship Alignment of Variables

All Variables		Community and School Board		School Board and Superintendent		Community and Superintendent		No Alignment	
(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
0	0	1	1.0	0	0	2	2.0	6	6.5

Summary of Results

The statistical analyses indicate that the typical responding superintendent is male, 45-59 years of age, has a Masters degree, and has served for less than seven years in the current district. The typical responding board president is also in the 45-59 age range and has served 3-10 years on the board of education.

Nearly 50% of the superintendents in the study work in districts with a student enrollment of 0-499 and 83% describe their district as rural. The board presidents are similar in numbers with (43.2%) reporting in the 0-499 student population and 74% indicating their district is rural. Both groups indicated that the majority of the districts were in communities with a median income of less than \$35,000 and education levels of 2 years of post high school or less. This compares to the state median income of \$35,634 and 80.6% of population with education levels of two year post high school and less.

Superintendents and school board presidents believe that all types of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles exist in the state of Oklahoma. The data also suggest support for the McCarty-Ramsey model of relationships, with a stronger indication by the superintendents than by the school board presidents. Both groups identified the pluralistic community power structure, status congruent board and the professional advisor style as the most prevalent combination. However, in general, both groups showed a significant number of dominated power structures, sanctioning board types and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles.

The data also supports McCarty-Ramsey premise, that the alignment of the different types of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles have a relationship with the tenure of a superintendent. The alignment

of all three factors and the alignment of the school board and superintendent tend to have the greatest positive relationship.

The data suggests a relationship between the alignment of community power structures, school board types, superintendent leadership styles and demographics as it relates to API scores. This relationship will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Interpretations and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present conclusions, limitations and recommendations derived from the analysis of data obtained from a survey of superintendents and school board presidents regarding community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles as they exist and interact in Oklahoma public school districts. This research is based on a model of interactions among community power structures, school boards and superintendents developed by McCarty and Ramsey (1971). Follow up studies were conducted by Hess (1994) in Wisconsin, Smith (1998) in North Carolina and Lere (2004) in Colorado. It was designed to examine the relationships of community power structures, school board types, and superintendent leadership styles as they exist in Oklahoma. This study will examine:

- the existence of dominant, factional, pluralistic and inert community power structures,
- the existence of dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning school boards,
- the existence of functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendents,
- the relationships between community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles,
- the relationship that economic, social and demographic characteristics have to the longevity of the superintendent,

- the relationship of the combinations of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles have to the longevity of the superintendent,
- the similarities of the perceptions of the superintendents and school board presidents regarding community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles, and
- the impact that the relationships between superintendents and school boards have on student achievement.

This chapter contains two sections. The first section is a discussion and interpretation of the findings and conclusions from the analysis of data and presentation of the limitations of this study. The second section discusses the implications, predictions and inferences of the study and recommendations based on the results of the study. The second section also includes any suggested revisions and recommendations for future research.

Findings and Conclusions

Research Question # 1: To what extent do dominated, factional, pluralistic and inert community power structures exist in Oklahoma Public school districts?

The data from both the superintendents and school board presidents indicate that all four types of community power structures exist in the state of Oklahoma. This supports earlier findings of the existence of these groups (Lere, 2004, Smith, 1998, Glass, 1992, and McCarty & Ramsey, 1971). This also reinforces the statement by Ziegler and Jennings (1974) that “public demands vary among the types of communities” (p. 176).

Pluralistic community power structures were identified most frequently (35% by superintendents and 33% by school board presidents), but dominated power structures followed closely with a strong indication by both groups. The factional community power structure was identified the least by both groups. This is in contrast to prior studies by Smith (1998) in North Carolina and Lere (2004) in Colorado where both indicated very strong percentages of factional community structures reported by both superintendents and school board presidents. This could be explained by the difference in size and number of school districts in North Carolina and Colorado as compared to Oklahoma. North Carolina has 117 districts and Colorado has 182, compared to the 541 districts in Oklahoma. The largest district in Oklahoma has 43,000 students while Colorado and North Carolina have districts that exceed 85,000 students. With fewer districts and larger student populations it is reasonable to assume a greater likelihood of factional communities, factional boards and political strategist superintendents. These data reinforce the model of McCarty and Ramsey (1971) in that superintendents and school board presidents identified at least one of the four types of community power structures as the most prevalent in their school district. These data also reinforce the vast amount of research since the 1930's that indicate the theories of Robert and Helen Lynd in the 1930's and those of Floyd Hunter in the 1950's, which suggested that communities and organizations are controlled by an elite few may not be accurate in today's society.

Research Question #2: To what extent do dominated, factional, status congruent and sanctioning school boards exist in Oklahoma public school districts?

Responses from the superintendents and school board presidents participating in the survey indicate that they believe all four school board types exist in the state. While both groups revealed that the status congruent school board type was most prevalent, the superintendents reported the sanctioning type almost as frequently as the status congruent. The school board presidents indicated a strong occurrence of the sanctioning type but considerably less than the superintendents. Both groups agree that very few factional school board types exist in the state. As with other states it appears that factional school boards exist in larger urban districts. The fact that Oklahoma is made up mostly of small rural districts would account for the low response to factional board types. There was a low return rate from the urban districts in this study.

These data are in agreement with the Smith (1998) study in North Carolina, which found that more than half of the superintendents (51%) and school board presidents (71%) believed that they have a status congruent school board. This was also the case in Lere's study in Colorado, where he found that 56% of superintendents and 75% of school board presidents identified with the status congruent board type. The data suggest that most superintendents and school boards want to identify with the quote "ideal type" of board. The status congruent board is one of collaboration and sharing of ideas. Everyone shares in the vision and goal setting for the district. This is supported by the research of Bass, 2006 in his theory of transformational leadership. He states that transformational leadership is people-oriented and has more emphasis on intrinsic motivation.

Research Question #3: To what extent do functionary, political strategist, professional advisor and decision-maker superintendent leadership styles exist in Oklahoma public schools?

Along the lines of the previous two research questions, the responses of the superintendents and school board presidents demonstrate that they believe all four types of superintendent leadership styles exist in the state. Research suggests that individual superintendents develop a leadership style that “works” for them (Mazzarella & Smith, 1989). These data suggest that individual superintendents in Oklahoma have developed different leadership styles, with half identifying one style. Speaking as a practicing superintendent in Oklahoma, I feel that I develop different styles as the situation dictates. While my leadership style migrates to a particular style in general day to day operations it can and does change from time to time. This was also the case with the Lere (2004) study in Colorado.

Following the pattern from research question #1 and #2, the superintendents and school board presidents identified the professional advisor leadership style as the most common in the state. This matches with McCarty and Ramsey’s model, in which they state that, generally, a pluralistic community will elect a status congruent school board who will in turn select a professional advisor superintendent. The data also shows that, as in research question #2, the superintendents and school board presidents are similar in percentages about the functionary superintendent leadership style (which matches with the dominated community and school board). However, the responses were greater with regards to the community power structure than those given on school board type or

leadership style. The superintendents indicated a strong response to the decision-maker leadership style as well as the professional advisor.

These data match other studies by Smith (1998) and Lere (2004) in regards to the professional advisor being the most prominent leadership style. The data were in contrast with the Smith (1998) study in the frequency of the political strategist style. Smith reported a greater response in North Carolina with the political strategist than in Oklahoma. One can conclude that this difference is due in large part by North Carolina's fewer and much larger districts, thus creating more factional communities, factional boards and political strategist superintendents.

While the questionnaire used in this study is structured to identify four different types of superintendent leadership styles, it is acknowledged that superintendent leadership is multidimensional and is a combination of different factors and influences that result in a personal leadership style (Vasu, Stewart & Garson, 1990).

The data from Research Questions #1, #2 and #3 show that the most common combination of community power structure, school board type and superintendent leadership style, as suggested by the McCarty and Ramsey model and reinforced by the results of Lere (2004), Smith (1998) and Hess (1994), is the pluralistic community, status congruent board and the professional advisor superintendent. The data also indicated that superintendents and school boards matched in other community power structures, board types and superintendent leadership styles.

This data not only support the assertion by McCarty and Ramsey (1971) that community power structures, different school board types and a variety of superintendent leadership styles exist, they also support other researchers who have found that there are

political forces within communities that may impact the performance and tenure of the superintendent (Beaumont, 1993, and Iannaccone & Lutz, 1978).

Research Question #4: What is the relationship between types of community power structures and school board types in Oklahoma public school districts?

The data from both superintendents and school board presidents support the McCarty-Ramsey model of community, regarding school board and superintendent interactions. There is a positive relationship between: Dominated community power structures and dominated school boards; pluralistic communities and status congruent school boards; and between inert community power structures and sanctioning school boards (all significant at the .01 level). The relationship between the factional community and factional board was the weakest of the positive relationships (.199) and not significant.

These data support the prior studies of Lere (2004), Smith (1998), and Hess (1994). All three studies found that school districts with dominated community power structures have dominated school boards; factional power structures are associated with factional boards; pluralistic community power structures are associated with status congruent boards and inert community power structures are associated with sanctioning boards. While Smith (1998) and Lere (2004) found weak relationships between the dominated community power structure and the dominated school board (correlations of .052 & .127 for superintendents and .049 & .099 for board presidents), this study found a considerably stronger correlation of .316 & .265 and both significant at the .01 level.

In support of the McCarty-Ramsey model of relationships, for both superintendents and school board presidents, the relationship between dominated communities and factional school boards and between factional communities and status congruent boards are strongly negative by superintendents (-.401 & -.335). The school boards listed the relationships between inert communities and factional boards and factional communities and status congruent boards as the most negative (-.557 & -.127) significant at the .01 and .05 levels.

Research Question #5: What is the relationship between types of community power structures and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public school districts?

As with question #4, the data from question #5 supports the McCarty-Ramsey model, although not as strongly. The data indicates some of the same positive relationships with regard to the dominated community power structures and functionary superintendent leadership styles; pluralistic communities and professional advisor leadership styles, and the strongest being inert communities and decision-maker leadership styles (significant at the .01 level). The board presidents indicated a weaker relationship between the defined power structures and superintendent leadership styles. While there are positive relationships between all of the “paired variables,” the degree was not as great as with the superintendents.

These data suggest a somewhat stronger association between community power structures and superintendent leadership styles than does Lere (2004), Smith (1998) and Hess (1994). Higher correlations, especially from the superintendents, were found in this study between all four combinations of community power structures and superintendent

leadership styles with pluralistic community and professional advisor and inert community and decision-maker significant at the .01 level.

Again, as in Research Question #4, data from both groups demonstrate a negative relationship between factional communities and decision-maker leadership styles and between inert communities and political strategist superintendents. The superintendent data indicates a stronger negative relationship than does the school board presidents (-.408 & -.331) significant at the .01 level.

Research Question #6: What is the relationship between school board types and superintendent leadership styles in Oklahoma public school districts?

Prior research has demonstrated the importance of a strong working relationship between the school board and the superintendent (Allison, 1991; Allison, et.al., 1995; Deem et.al., 1995; Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998; Peterson & Short, 2001). Other studies have indicated that the effectiveness of the superintendent is dependent upon this relationship with the school board (Bratlein & Walters; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Glass, 1992; Tallerico, 1989). The data collected from this study indicate that the relationship between the superintendent and school board president is strong and supports the McCarty-Ramsey model of relationships. This supports prior research that both superintendents and school boards recognize that a strong working relationship is essential for providing effective leadership (Glass, 1992; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Trotter & Downey, 1989). Similar to the data gathered for the Research Question #5, the data for question #6 support the McCarty-Ramsey model of interactions between the

community, school board and superintendent, but are more strongly supported by superintendents than by the school board presidents.

The data shows that the following relationships are significantly positive;

Dominated school board	Functionary superintendent sig. .05 level
Factional school board	Political strategist superintendent sig. .01 level
Status congruent board	Professional advisor superintendent sig. .05 level
Sanctioning school board	Decision-maker superintendent

The data from the school board presidents regarding this data are less definitive.

While the board presidents agree with the superintendents that there is a positive correlation between a dominated school board and a functionary superintendent leadership style (significant at the .01 level) and between the factional school board and the political strategist superintendent, they listed the status congruent board and professional advisor superintendent having the strongest positive correlation of (.470) significant at the .01 level. There was a great deal of difference with regards to the relationship between the sanctioning school board and the decision-maker superintendent. The studies of Smith (1998) and Hess (1994) had very similar data in regards to the dominated school board and functionary superintendent leadership style (.231 vs. .246) and between the status congruent school board and professional advisor superintendent for the school board presidents (.223 vs. .464).

In reviewing the data from Research Questions #4, #5, and #6 the following conclusions can be made. First and foremost, the data support the McCarty-Ramsey model. The data, especially from the superintendents, indicate that there is a strong relationship between the types of community power structures, school board types and

superintendent leadership styles. Second, the data indicate that there are some significant differences in the responses from superintendents and school board presidents. The differences tend to be in degree rather than in content. While both groups agree that there are positive relationships between the groups of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles the superintendents assign a much stronger connection between items than do the school board presidents. Finally, there appears to be some difference between the perceptions of the superintendents and the school board presidents when looking at the inert community, sanctioning school board and the decision-maker superintendent. Although the data from both groups indicate a strongly positive relationship between the inert community power structure and the sanctioning school board (.512 for superintendents and .456 for board presidents, .01 level) there was a disagreement when determining relationships between the inert community and decision-maker superintendent and between the sanctioning school board and decision-maker superintendent. The superintendents' responses created a correlation of (.404) .01 level for the inert community and decision-maker superintendent, while the board president responses generated a correlation of (.267) .05 level. A correlation of .162 was derived from the superintendents' data for the sanctioning board: decision-maker relationship, while a correlation of .122 was obtained from the responses of the board presidents for the same relationship.

These differences in perceptions of superintendents and school board presidents are not a surprise. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between the superintendent and the school board and found many differences in perceptions (Cuban, 1992; Feurstein & Opfer, 1998; Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001). One explanation for this

difference in perception could be that school boards don't want to be thought of as "rubber stamping" for the superintendent. By the same token superintendents want to look at themselves as advisors rather than dictators. Each group has an idea that the other portrays more of the quote "negative style" than would be admitted.

Research Question #7: What economic, social, political or demographic variables predict or influence the compatibility of these relationships?

The data for this question examine the relationship that the age of the superintendent, age of the board president, educational level of the superintendent, community income and community educational level. This question also examines the importance of superintendent tenure. McCarty and Ramsey suggest that when the community power structure, school board type and superintendent leadership style "line up" there is less conflict and the years of service of the superintendent tends to be longer. Thus a more productive environment is created. There are some indications that the average years of service of the public school superintendent is too brief to create, implement and sustain meaningful and beneficial change. While there are several reasons for this reduced tenure, two reasons cited by numerous researchers are superintendent/school board relationships and the "fit" with the community (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Glass et.al., 2000; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Newell, 1997). The research indicates that the degree of success that a superintendent enjoys "appears to be predicated on how well the superintendent has understood and acted upon the tacit expectations of the board and the community" (Nestor –Baker & Hoy, 2001).

The data obtained through this study suggest that certain alignments of community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership style do have a relationship to the tenure of the superintendent. When all three variables (community, school board and superintendent leadership) align the average years of service is just over 5 years. On the opposite end of the spectrum when none of the variables align the tenure is only about 3.01 years.

Also important is the demographic variables which go hand and hand with the prior relationships. The data on age and tenure of the superintendent indicate that most superintendents are between the ages of 45-59. Smith (1998) found the age range for most superintendents in North Carolina to be 43-63. They also indicated that the older the superintendent the longer the tenure. The same is true in this study. This is not conclusive because the younger superintendents in the survey may stay longer in their current positions and either “even out” the length of tenure among age brackets, or they may contribute to the trend that with age longevity will follow. Copeland (1993), in examining long term superintendents in Oklahoma, found that the three superintendents in his study started as superintendents in their districts at a relatively young age. The Copeland study is narrow in scope and involved only three superintendents, so it may not present an accurate picture of the relationship between age and length of tenure of superintendents.

The research indicates that the age of the board president seems to have little relationship to the longevity of the superintendent, other than a slight trend that board presidents in the ages (40-54) seem to serve in districts with longer superintendent tenure. This data and trend are inconclusive because the majority of the board presidents are in

this age bracket, so there is little opportunity to compare to very many board presidents outside of that age group.

The education level of the superintendent seems to have some relationship to the tenure of the superintendent. The research shows that of the 32 superintendents with a doctorate, 21 of those have served more than 5 years in their district. Likewise almost 80% of those superintendents with a master's degree as the highest level of education have served less than 7 years. This is not conclusive due to the small number of superintendents with a doctorate (11%). I believe this could be related to the large number of superintendents with master's degrees vs. a doctorate degree. The fact that job vacancies in smaller districts are filled by those with a master's would account for greater numbers of superintendents with less tenure. Typically only the larger districts of 3,000 or more students have superintendents with a doctorate. The very large districts with student populations of greater than 5,000 usually have as a prerequisite that the superintendent have a doctorate. The fact that this is a small number of districts the turnover is less and the superintendent remains in the district for at least five years. Another factor could be that with the large number of districts (541) the number of openings due to retirement, movement to another state, lack of compatibility or leaving the profession are greater thus creating an impact on tenure.

The income level of the community also appears to have some relationship to the tenure of the superintendent. Superintendents in school districts with income levels of less than \$35,000 tend to have more years of service than those who serve in communities of over \$35,000. While the data points out that most superintendents have less than 7 years in their current district, it also indicates a trend towards more years of

service in lower income communities. It must be noted however that over 75% of the responding superintendents are serving in districts with a community income of less than \$35,000. It should also be noted that the median income for the state is \$35,684.

A prediction that could be made is that superintendents enjoy more years of service in communities with lower income levels. This is in contrast to both Hess (1994) and Smith (1998) who found that, in Wisconsin and North Carolina, respectively, the lower the community income level the more likely the superintendent would consider leaving for another position. However, these data would support the Copeland (1993) study, which found that the long term superintendents in the study served low income communities. This can be contributed to less conflict and non factional communities which creates a calmer atmosphere. The degree of expectation is usually not as great in smaller districts as compared to larger districts. Various community factions place greater demands on superintendents in larger districts.

Similar to the income level of a community, the education level of a community indicates some association to the tenure of the superintendent. The data support the inference that superintendents in communities with lower levels of education tend to experience more years of service than those in better –educated communities. These data are supported by the data from Smith (1998) who found that higher levels of community education are negatively correlated to superintendent longevity. This data may not be conclusive due to the fact that almost 75% of the responding superintendents were in communities with an education level of high school or less.

Research Question #8: Do school board presidents and their superintendents perceive leadership styles, school board types and community power structures differently?

The data indicate that superintendents and school boards perceive community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles similarly. All of the correlations are positive, with high correlations for dominant (.449), and pluralistic (.442) significant at the .01 level. The inert community had a correlation of .212 and was significant at the .05 level. This is in contrast with Smith (1998) where she stated “The data indicates that there is little agreement between the two groups in their perceptions of behaviors within their own systems” (p. 96)

The correlations in the responses regarding school board types by both superintendents and school board presidents were also very strong for status congruent (.289) and sanctioning (.548) significant at the .01 level. The factional board type was very positive but not significant. However a much weaker joint response was given for dominant (.082), even though it was also positive.

The agreement between superintendents and school boards is also weaker in the area of leadership style. They had positive relationships but at a weaker level. All areas were positive with Professional advisor (.212) significant at the .05 level. There were very little differences in any of the four variables.

This research would indicate that the superintendent and school board president are able to look at their communities more objectively and make similar judgments about the political makeup of their communities than they do about themselves. There is not a major difference but enough to assume some education about their board type and superintendent leadership style could be of assistance.

Research Question #9: Do compatible relationships between school boards and superintendents have a positive impact on educational reform?

This is one of the central questions of this study and a vital part of the research. The data examined several factors of the paired surveys (surveys from the superintendent and school board president in the same district), including the alignment of the relationships discussed throughout the study as well as demographic statistics and API (academic performance index) scores.

The data revealed that in those districts with increasing API scores over a three year period a trend existed with regard to the matched relationship variables as proposed by McCarty and Ramsey. Of the 83 districts showing increased scores, 51.7% had an alignment with all three variables (community power structure, school board type and superintendent leadership style) and 36.9% had an alignment with the school board type and superintendent leadership style or the superintendent and community. The data also indicated that nearly 75% of the districts have initiated five or more innovative programs over the same three year period. In 80% of the districts the superintendent and school board president revealed they had proficient knowledge of the district's goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development.

The data indicated that in this group of 83 districts the superintendents ranged in ages of 41-55 (48) and had three or more years of service in the district. The data also revealed an important statistic regarding gender. From the total 92 paired surveys there were 10 female superintendents and 24 female board presidents and all were in the districts with increased API scores. Sixty percent of the districts had community income levels below \$35,000, but it is important to note that of the total 92 pairs 23 had income levels above \$35,000 and 22 of these are in the districts with increased scores.

The data also shows that within the 92 pairs 13 superintendents have a doctorate degree and all 13 are in the districts with increased scores. Also, 40% of the districts showing increased scores have enrollments greater than 1,000 students. This is very important due to the fact that the majority of school districts are small rural districts of less than 500 students. From this data it appears that districts with enrollments greater than 1000 students have a greater percentage of increased API scores.

This research suggests that the districts with increased API scores enjoy an alignment of relationship variables as proposed by McCarty and Ramsey. This supports and follows prior research indicating a positive correlation exist between aligned district leadership and student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Another conclusion that can be made is that the superintendents are typically ages 41-55 and have more than three years of tenure in their districts. One can also infer that districts with female superintendents and board presidents appear to experience a greater percentage of increased student achievement scores. I believe this can be attributed to two possible factors. The first is that female leaders are seen as more proactive in school improvement, and may feel they must make a dramatic impact in order to breakdown a gender stereotype in education; the second being that they appear to have greater expectations and demands of all stakeholders including a greater number of innovative programs.

As for the nine paired districts that had decreasing scores, the data reveal that the majority had indications of no alignment of the relationship variables (6), while two had an alignment of the community power structure and superintendent leadership style. Only one district had a match between the school board and superintendent. Of these

districts eight had initiated three or less innovative programs over the past three years. A surprising detail was that only one district (both the superintendent and school board president) stated they did not have a proficient knowledge of the district's goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development.

The data for this group of nine paired surveys revealed that the superintendents ranged in ages 41-55 and had less than four years experience in the district. All of the superintendents were male. The school board presidents were male and over the age of 55. All but one of the districts had community incomes of less than \$35,000. None of the 9 districts had superintendents with a doctorate degree and all had student enrollments of less than 500 students.

The data suggest that districts with decreasing API scores tend to have male superintendents with shorter tenure in the district and experience some issues with compatible relationships between the school board president, superintendent and community. Another prediction that could be made is that the district is typically a small rural district of less than 500 located in lower income communities.

Implications and Recommendations

This study is not intended to suggest that compatible relationships among superintendents, school boards and communities alone will create higher student achievement, only that it is possibly one of the key pieces in the overall achievement puzzle. Nor is the study designed to indicate that demographics alone create a difference in the learning environment. If compatible relationships among superintendents, school boards and community power structures are desired conditions for extended

superintendent tenure and implementation of educational reform, the findings of this study present some practical implications for superintendents, school boards and educational administrative preparation programs. Research by Waters & Marzano, 2006 indicates that there is a significant relationship (a positive correlation of .24) between district leadership and student achievement. Their research also concluded that superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement. One should also examine the information obtained from this study with regards to demographics and the interplay it has on achievement.

This study has revealed that these relationships have some impact on the improvement of student achievement. This supports and follows prior research that has shown compatible relations between superintendents and school boards have a substantial impact on student achievement (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2005). The opposite is also true in regards to a lack of student achievement being attributed to non compatible relationships. This supports the research that indicates disharmony, or contentious issues between any of the three school governing triad, can easily result in an ineffective school system (Hess, 1994; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1995; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Smith, 1998; Lere, 2004). This impact begins by understanding the importance of compatible relationships between the community, school board and superintendent. One can infer that without the foundation of this relationship alignment conflict will occur.

Even though the data suggest that a higher percentage of small rural schools experience difficulties in improving API scores, it can't be conclusive due to the small number of paired data and even fewer numbers of districts with decreasing API scores. It should also be pointed out that many small rural districts scored quite well and in fact the

one district in the survey reporting a perfect score of 1500 in a given year was a small rural school. However the data shows that the prediction can be made that a greater percentage of districts with decreasing scores will come from small rural districts with less than 500 students and communities with a median income of less than \$35,000. These districts can be predicted to have male superintendents and school board presidents. It can also be predicted that these lower scoring districts will have some conflict with regards to compatible relationships between superintendents, school boards and communities. The assumption can be made that in the smaller districts less innovative programs are initiated and a lack of knowledge concerning the importance of compatible relationships exist. The research suggests that there is a need for staff development programs for school boards and superintendent to explain the need to have matched relationships between the superintendent and school board.

Superintendents

If superintendents are to reduce conflict, gain support for initiatives and extend their tenure, it is critical that they understand the type of community they serve and the type of school board that they work with. Superintendents cannot assume that the community and school board will accept, without question, the implementation of new programs and reforms introduced by educational professionals, just because they are professionals. Superintendents must understand what is important for these groups and how they think and work in order to be able to successfully implement new programs and reforms thus achieving greater student achievement.

Administrators seeking the position of superintendent should use all available resources, such as community newspapers, board meeting minutes and visiting the community, to assess and understand the dominant power structure and the type of school board operating in any school district they may be considering for employment. The educated administrator then may be able to make an informed decision regarding the potential for compatibility in a specific school district.

Incumbent superintendents may use the data available to discern trends and shifts in their community and school board. Using this information the sitting superintendent can then determine if there is the possibility or flexibility to adapt to the new environment or if the potential for conflict is so great that leaving the system is a better option and for the students, school board and the superintendent.

The descriptive demographic information can be useful for any individual seeking the superintendency in the state of Oklahoma. Specific trends in community income levels, community educational levels and school district size, when combined with the data regarding community power structures and school board types can be useful in determining the potential for success.

School Boards

The data in this study indicate that school boards have some differences in the perceptions of relationships between school board types and superintendent leadership styles. Despite this difference, there is sufficient data to encourage school boards to become aware of their own operational behaviors.

With this information school boards, who are charged with the important task of hiring, employing and evaluating the educational leader of the school system, may be able to better find an individual with the leadership qualities to meet the needs of the district and develop a positive working relationship with the school board. School boards should use professional organizations, such as state school board associations, state and national professional administrative associations and implement staff development and staff training and to analyze and improve their own structure and behaviors. They can also utilize these organizations to evaluate their power structure, school board type and develop superintendent selection procedures that will allow them to choose a candidate with a compatible leadership style.

The school board is ultimately responsible for the governance of the school district and as such should use all of the available resources to select a leader with whom they are willing to work and whose leadership style is compatible with the school board. It is imperative that the school board and superintendent have a healthy, positive working relationship if the school district is to consistently make the needed changes for improvement. This is supported by research from the Iowa State School Boards Association in their Lighthouse studies (2000). The studies indicate boards in high-achieving districts are very different from boards in low achieving districts and the evidence is clear that the key is boards mastering their role as strong leaders for school improvement.

Educational Preparation Programs

Since the purpose of university educational administrative preparation programs is to adequately prepare educational administrators to be successful in their chosen positions such programs should consider the data presented in preparing future administrators. Assisting future administrators in discovering and understanding their own primary leadership style would be an important initial step.

In addition, educational preparation programs should also discuss the types of community power structures and school board types that exist in the state with future administrators. Programs could include how to recognize various board types and community power structures and methods of assessing the shifts and trends in the power base. With such information, administrators may be able to make well informed employment decisions, or at least be aware of the challenges ahead for them when considering taking a position in a specific school district.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in this field could include an expanded study in the area of student achievement. The study could focus on the impact staff development programs, which are designed to educate the school board and superintendent about compatible relationships, have on improving the learning environment.

I believe this study has provided sufficient data to suggest that compatible relationships between communities, school boards and superintendents are important in establishing a successful school district with high student achievement. It has also provided information on the impact of certain demographics as it relates to district

performance. A word of caution must be given in regards to using this data as conclusive evidence. Due to the small amount of matched data my conclusions concerning the impact of the variables on student achievement are predictions based upon the limited descriptive evidence. However future expanded studies in both areas could be very beneficial for public school administrators and board members.

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Appendix A

Surveys

Survey Instrument One: The Superintendent

This survey has statements which describe your school board, your community and you as the superintendent. Reflect on each and think of what is customary and usual and not what is occasional or unique.

Please respond to the following statements. Rank order the possible responses by assigning “1” to the situation that best fit or is most common in your community, school board or your own leadership style. Assign a “2” to the second most common, a “3” to the next most common, and a “4” to the response that is least like your community, school board or your own leadership style. The following is an example:

- A. When there is a school budget crisis or problem, the most public and vocal groups are the following:
- 2 Parents and professional staff
 - 3 Business and farm leaders
 - 4 Interest groups or political parties
 - 1 No public or vocal concern; the problem is left to the school Board

Community Behaviors:

1. When critical issues develop in my school community, they are
 - discussed and decided openly.
 - subjected to controversy by competing community groups.
 - resolved by one person or group of people.
 - not discussed.
2. My community can best be described as socioeconomically
 - homogeneous.
 - heterogeneous.
 - changing.
3. Power and influence in my community tends to be
 - divided relatively equally.
 - divided between two or more factions.
 - concentrated unequally in one or two individuals or small groups.
 - difficult or impossible to identify.

4. Which of the following best describes public concern for issues in my community
- the same individuals and group(s) tend to get involved in all issues.
 - there tends not to be much interest or involvement in all issues.
 - groups of individuals involved with educational issues generally are not involved in other community issues.
 - groups mobilize or disappear based on specific issues.
5. Leadership in my community tends to be
- centered on one or two individuals.
 - divided among the leaders of different groups.
 - shared by a number of individuals.
 - delegated to administrators.
6. People who use power or influence in my community could be described as
- persons with financial resources.
 - persons linked by long-standing friendships and social relationships.
 - persons who hold elected office or appointed position.
 - there is little evidence of people using power or influence.
7. The following behaviors tend to best describe my community when general elections are conducted
- candidates surface from a single community-wide leadership group.
 - candidates surface from competing groups.
 - it is difficult to find candidates.
 - candidates tend to represent specific issues across the community.
8. When general elections are conducted in my community, the results tend to be
- predictable.
 - unpredictable.
9. Elections in my community tend to be
- uncontested with organized support for the candidate.
 - contested with no apparent organized support or opposition for the candidate.
 - contested with organized support and opposition for the candidate.
 - uncontested with no apparent organized support for the candidate.

School Board Behaviors:

10. School board members in my school district tend to represent
- a specific group and its interests.
 - broad community interests.
11. Board membership tends to be
- unstable over time with unpredictable change of members.
 - stable over time with predictable changes of members.
12. Power and influence on my school board tends to be
- divided equally among all board members.
 - divided equally between two or more factions.
 - concentrated unequally in one to two board members.
 - difficult or impossible to identify.
13. Votes on significant or critical issues tend to be (adjust for different size boards)
- 3-2 with the same people tending to vote in the minority.
 - 4-1 with the same people tending to vote in the minority.
 - 4-1 with different people tending to vote in the minority.
 - 4-1 or 3-2 but different members will be voting in the minority.
14. When significant issues face my school board, members tend to rely on
- information and data.
 - the opinion of influential school board or community member(s).
 - the superintendent's recommendation.
 - the opinion of the community groups they represent.
15. The resolution of conflict over issues by the school board can best be described as the school board
- going along with the "conventional wisdom" of community decision-makers.
 - acting as a "corporate board of directors."
 - exposing the conflict to a "marketplace of competing interests and ideas."
 - relying on the "superintendent as a decision-maker."

16. The following best describes my school board at election time
- it is difficult to find candidates.
 - candidates are supported by two or more general interest groups.
 - candidates are supported by educational interest groups.
 - candidates surface from the general community.
17. My school board's relationship with the community can best be described as
- adversarial with the community interests.
 - supportive of the community interests.
 - indifferent to the community interests.
 - compliant with community interests.
18. The school board uses research-based information and data about schools to
- sort rationally through alternative proposals.
 - support only the prevailing policies.
 - fuel the differences between competing factions.
 - support only the superintendent's recommendations.

Superintendent Behaviors:

19. When the school board is making a decision on a critical issue, I tend to
- provide information and recommendations.
 - make the decisions.
 - analyze board factions to shape recommendations.
 - meet with the board leader(s) for advice.
20. When the school board is making a decision on a critical issue, I tend to
- use citizen committees to resolve conflict.
 - encourage discussion among the board.
 - make a recommendation for action.
 - consult with the board leader(s).
21. When school board agendas are developed, I tend to
- seek advice from the school board leaders.
 - develop the school board agenda alone.
 - balance the interest of different board factions.
 - use professional staff and school board suggestions.

22. When a decision on a significant issue has to be made without a meeting of the school board, I tend to

- make the decision and inform the board.
- consult with informal board leader(s).
- consult with all factions on the school board.
- seek expert advice before making the decision.

23. Prior to board elections when people may be nominated or think about running for school board, I tend to

- let community leader(s) solicit nominees.
- encourage all qualified people to run.
- keep out of school board politics.
- recruit specific individuals to run for the board.

24. My feeling and experience about working with the school board can best be described as a

- leadership experience.
- social experience.
- political experience.
- management experience.

25. If my school board had one expectation of me as a superintendent, it would be that I had

- conflict resolution and community relations skills.
- effective interpersonal and social skills.
- professional and leadership skills.
- administrative and operational skills.

26. If I lose my job as superintendent, it would probably be because

- the board has lost confidence in me as a professional educator.
- a few board or community leaders decided to terminate my contract.
- a new faction became the majority on the board.
- I ran afoul of some unforeseen community norms, beliefs, or values.

27. When I have job-related stress as a superintendent the stress was probably caused by

- my differences between board and community leaders.
- conflict between two or more board factions.
- school board rejection of my recommendations.
- little board and community interest in education.

Demographic and Other Information

28. Have you considered leaving your current job as superintendent of schools as a result of economic, social, and political changes that have taken place in the last three years? (circle one, then elaborate in the space provided.)

(1) Yes

(2) No

29. What is your age? Write in a number _____

30. What is your gender? (Circle one)

(1) Male

(2) Female

31. What is your highest degree? (Circle one)

(1) Bachelors

(2) Masters

(3) Specialist

(4) Doctorate

32. The median income in my community is (circle one)

Above \$35,000

Below \$35,000

33. The majority of households in my community tend to have at least one member with a (Circle one)
- (1) College degree
 - (2) Post high school/two-year technical college degree
 - (3) High school degree or less.
34. Which of the following best describes my district? (Circle one)
- (1) Large urban
 - (2) Suburban
 - (3) Small urban
 - (4) Rural
35. The average enrollment in my school district is (Circle one)
- (1) 0 - 499
 - (2) 500 - 999
 - (3) 1,000 – 2,999
 - (4) 3,000 – 5,999
 - (5) 6,000 – 8,999
 - (6) 9,000 +
36. What is the average number of years of tenure for school board members in your district? _____ (Write in the number)
37. How many years have you served as superintendent of school in your current school district? _____ (Write in number, if less than one year, record "1.")
38. How many years have you served as superintendent of schools including your current school district? (Write in number, if less than one year, record "1.")

39. How many innovative programs have been initiated in your school district in the last five years? _____ (Write in number)
40. What is your school district's overall District API Score for Regular Education Students? 2003-2004? _____ 2004-2005? _____ 2005-2006? _____ (Write in score)
41. Do you believe that your district is experiencing improved student achievement? (yes or no, and a brief explanation)
42. Do you believe that you have a proficient knowledge about your district's improvement goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development? (yes or no, and a brief explanation)

Please add additional comments, information, or insights about superintendent-Board, board-community, or community-superintendent relationships that the questionnaire did not allow you to express.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed addressed, stamped envelope and mail. After you have returned the questionnaire, please mail the enclosed postcard indicating that your survey has been returned.

Thank you again. If you have any questions or additional information to share, you may call me at (918) 381-9517 during the day or (918) 396-9658 in the evenings.

Appendix B Surveys

Survey Instrument Two: The School Board President

This survey has statements which describe your school board, your community and your superintendent. Reflect on each and think of what is customary and usual and not what is occasional or unique.

Please respond to the following statements. Rank order the possible responses by assigning "1" to the situation that best fit or is most common in your community, school board or your superintendent's leadership style. Assign a "2" to the next most common, a "3" to the next most common, and a "4" to the response that is least like your community, school board or your superintendent's leadership style. The following is an example:

- B. When there is a school budget crisis or problem, the most public and vocal groups are the following:
- 2 Parents and professional staff
 - 3 Business and farm leaders
 - 4 Interest groups or political parties
 - 1 No public or vocal concern; the problem is left to the school Board

Community Behaviors:

2. When critical issues develop in my school community, they are
- discussed and decided openly.
 - subjected to controversy by competing community groups.
 - resolved by one person or group of people.
 - not discussed.
2. My community can best be described as socioeconomically
- homogeneous.
 - heterogeneous.
 - changing.
3. Power and influence in my community tends to be
- divided relatively equally.
 - divided between two or more factions.
 - concentrated unequally in one or two individuals or small groups.
 - difficult or impossible to identify.

4. The following behaviors tend to best describe my community when general elections are conducted
- candidates surface from a single community-wide leadership group.
 - candidates surface from competing groups.
 - it is difficult to find candidates.
 - candidates tend to represent specific issues across the community.
5. When general elections are conducted in my community, the results tend to be
- predictable.
 - unpredictable.
6. Which of the following best describes public concern for issues in my community
- the same individuals and group(s) tend to get involved in all issues.
 - there tends not to be much interest or involvement in all issues.
 - groups of individuals involved with educational issues generally are not involved in other community issues.
 - groups mobilize or disappear based on specific issues.
7. Leadership in my community tends to be
- centered on one or two individuals.
 - divided among the leaders of different groups.
 - shared by a number of individuals.
 - delegated to administrators.
8. People who use power or influence in my community could be described as
- persons with financial resources.
 - persons linked by long-standing friendships and social relationships.
 - persons who hold elected office or appointed position.
 - there is little evidence of people using power or influence.
9. Elections in my community tend to be
- uncontested with organized support for the candidate.
 - contested with no apparent organized support or opposition for the candidate.
 - contested with organized support and opposition for the candidate.
 - uncontested with no apparent organized support for the candidate.

School Board Behaviors:

10. School board members in my school district tend to represent
- a specific group and its interests.
 - broad community interests.
11. Board membership tends to be
- unstable over time with unpredictable change of members.
 - stable over time with predictable changes of members.
12. Power and influence on my school board tends to be
- divided equally among all board members.
 - divided equally between two or more factions.
 - concentrated unequally in one to two board members.
 - difficult or impossible to identify.
13. Votes on significant or critical issues tend to be (adjust for different size boards)
- 3-2 with the same people tending to vote in the minority.
 - 4-1 with the same people tending to vote in the minority.
 - 4-1 with different people tending to vote in the minority.
 - 4-1 or 3-2 but different members will be voting in the minority.
14. When significant issues face my school board, members tend to rely on
- information and data.
 - the opinion of influential school board or community member(s).
 - the superintendent's recommendation.
 - the opinion of the community groups they represent.
15. The following best describes my school board at election time
- it is difficult to find candidates.
 - candidates are supported by two or more general interest groups.
 - candidates are supported by educational interest groups.
 - candidates surface from the general community.

16. My school board's relationship with the community can best be described as
- adversarial with the community interests.
 - supportive of the community interests.
 - indifferent to the community interests.
 - compliant with community interests.
17. The school board uses research-based information and data about schools to
- sort rationally through alternative proposals.
 - support only the prevailing policies.
 - fuel the differences between competing factions.
 - support only the superintendent's recommendations.
18. The resolution of conflict over issues by the school board can best be described as the school board
- going along with the "conventional wisdom" of community decision-makers.
 - acting as a "corporate board of directors."
 - exposing the conflict to a "marketplace of competing interests and ideas."
 - relying on the "superintendent as a decision-maker."

Superintendent Behaviors:

19. When the school board is making a decision on a critical issue, the superintendent tends to
- provide information and recommendations.
 - make the decisions.
 - analyze board factions to shape recommendations.
 - meet with the board leader(s) for advice.
20. When the school board is making a decision on a critical issue, the superintendent tends to
- use citizen committees to resolve conflict.
 - encourage discussion among the board.
 - make a recommendation for action.
 - consult with the board leader(s).

21. When school board agendas are developed, the superintendent tends to
- seek advice from the school board leaders.
 - develop the school board agenda alone.
 - balance the interest of different board factions.
 - use professional staff and school board suggestions.
22. When a decision on a significant issue has to be made without a meeting of the school board, the superintendent tends to
- make the decision and inform the board.
 - consult with informal board leader(s).
 - consult with all factions on the school board.
 - seek expert advice before making the decision.
23. Prior to board elections when people may be nominated or think about running for school board, the superintendent tends to
- let community leader(s) solicit nominees.
 - encourage all qualified people to run.
 - keep out of school board politics.
 - recruit specific individuals to run for the board.
24. From my observations and experience with the superintendent working with our school board, his/her actions can best be described as exhibiting
- leadership behavior.
 - social behavior.
 - political behavior.
 - management behavior.
25. If our current superintendent loses his/her job, it would probably be because
- the board has lost confidence in him/her as a professional educator.
 - a few board or community leaders decide to terminate the contract.
 - a new faction became the majority on the board.
 - he/she runs afoul of some unforeseen community norms, beliefs, or values.

26. If our school board has one expectation of a superintendent, it would be that he/she has

- conflict resolution and community relations skills.
- effective interpersonal and social skills.
- professional and leadership skills.
- administrative and operational skills.

27. Job-related stress for the superintendent in our district would probably be caused by

- superintendent differences between board and community leaders.
- conflict between two or more board members.
- school board rejection of superintendent recommendations.
- little board and community interest in education.

Demographic and Other Information

28. To your knowledge, has your current superintendent considered leaving as a result of economic, social, and political changes that have taken place in the last three years? (circle one, then elaborate in the space provided.)

(1) Yes

(2) No

29. What is your age? Write in a number _____

30. What is your gender? (Circle one)

(1) Male

(2) Female

31. What is your superintendent's highest degree? (Circle one)

(1) Bachelors

(2) Masters

(3) Specialist

(4) Doctorate

32. The median income in my community is (circle one)

Above \$35,000

Below \$35,000

33. The majority of households in my community tend to have at least one member with a (Circle one)

(1) College degree

(2) Post high school/two-year technical college degree

(3) High school degree or less.

34. Which of the following best describes my district? (Circle one)

(1) Large urban

(2) Suburban

(3) Small urban

(4) Rural

35. The average enrollment in my school district is (Circle one)

(1) 0 - 499

(2) 500 - 999

(3) 1,000 – 2,999

(4) 3,000 – 5,999

(5) 6,000 – 8,999

(6) 9,000 +

36. What is the average number of years of tenure for school board members in your district? _____ (Write in the number)
37. How many years has your current superintendent served in your district?
_____ (Write in number, if less than one year, record "1.")
38. How many years have you served as a school board member? _____
As Board Chair? _____ (Write in number, if less than one year, record "1.")
39. How many innovative programs have been initiated in your school district in the last five years? _____ (Write in number)
40. What is your school district's overall District API Score for Regular Education Students? 2003-2004? _____ 2004-2005? _____
2005-2006? _____ (Write in score)
41. Do you believe that your district is experiencing improved student achievement? (yes or no, and a brief explanation)
42. Do you feel you have a proficient knowledge about your district's improvement goals, curriculum, instruction assessment and staff development? (yes or no, and a brief explanation)

Please add additional comments, information, or insights about superintendent-Board, board-community, or community-superintendent relationships that the questionnaire did not allow you to express.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed addressed, stamped envelope and mail. After you have returned the questionnaire, please mail the enclosed postcard indicating that your survey has been returned.

Thank you again. If you have any questions or additional information to share, you may call me at (918) 381-9517 during the day or (918) 396-9658 in the evenings.

Appendix C

Survey Cover Letter

Dear Colleague,

I am the superintendent at Skiatook Schools, Skiatook, Oklahoma. I am also a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma. I am asking for your help in conducting a survey as part of my dissertation study.

As a current superintendent and past president of the Oklahoma Association of School Administrators, I am always interested in information concerning superintendent/school board relations and the impact their relationship has on students. The purpose of my study is to examine the relationships between community power structures, school board types and superintendent leadership styles, with an emphasis on the impact these relationships have on student achievement. The enclosed survey will provide data that will assist in the analysis of these relationships. Through this study I hope to provide superintendents and school board members with information that will allow them to proactively analyze their leadership styles and develop compatible relationships thus avoiding or reducing adversarial patterns.

This survey is being sent to all superintendents and school board presidents in Oklahoma public schools. Though the surveys are numbered, the numbers will only be used to pair responses (superintendent and school board president from the same school district). There is no other method of identifying the individual or school district. All responses are anonymous.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and if you choose not to participate there is no penalty. Your decision will be respected.

I know how busy you are each day and this survey should only take a few minutes to complete. Please return the survey in the enclosed stamped envelope as soon as possible. All responses will be held in confidence. I truly appreciate your help with this research.

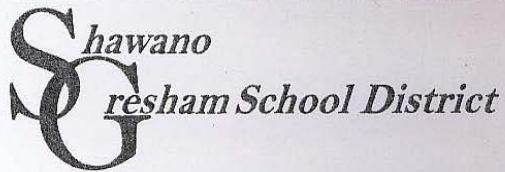
If you have any questions regarding the survey or the study, you may contact me at (918) 381-9517 or (918) 396-1792. You may also reach me by e-mail at garyjohnson@skiatook.k12.ok.us. You may also contact my doctoral chair, Dr. Greg Garn at (405) 325-6832 or by e-mail at garn@ou.edu.

Sincerely,

Gary Johnson
Superintendent
Skiatook Schools

Appendix D

Letter of Permission from Dr. Richard Hess



Richard G. Hess, Ph.D.
Superintendent

William G. Prijic
Assistant Superintendent

May 9, 2006

Gary Johnson
355 S Osage
Skiatook OK 74070

Dear Gary:

You have my permission to utilize parts of my survey for my dissertation. Please send me a summary of your results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Richard Hess'.

Richard Hess, Ph.D.
District Administrator

Appendix E

Letter of Permission from Dr. Marty Smith

VANCE COUNTY SCHOOLS

April 21, 2006

Gary Johnson
P. O. Box 1877
Skiatook, Oklahoma 74070

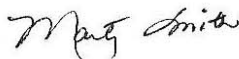
Dear Gary:

I wish you much success in the completion of your doctoral program. I enjoyed talking with you regarding your dissertation. Your proposal sounds very interesting and from my own experiences with the topic in North Carolina, I know you will find the area enlightening and useful for superintendents and school boards in Oklahoma.

You have a much larger population to survey than we have in North Carolina which should provide more flexibility in statistical analysis as well as the use of statistical significance statements in more of your findings. Though the topic can be complex, and sometimes controversial, I feel you should expect to extend and verify the past research.

Your request to use my school board chair and superintendent questionnaires as a part of your proposal is both acceptable to me and complimentary to my previous work. I wish you well as you complete your proposal. If you have additional questions or wish to discuss your work further, please call. I look forward to reading your findings.

Sincerely,



Beverly J. (Marty) Smith, Ed.D

Appendix F

Letter of Permission from Dr. Dan Lere

Gary Johnson

From: "Dan Lere" <dlere@district70.org>
To: <garyjohnson@skiatook.k12.ok.us>
Sent: Monday, April 02, 2007 6:35 PM
Subject: Dissertation Permission

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I appreciate you calling me and asking for permission to utilize the data from my study of Superintendent and School Board Relationships. Please feel free to use the data or any other information in my dissertation for your study. If you have any questions during your research do not hesitate to call.

Dan Lere
Superintendent
Pueblo School District No. 70

(719) 295-6548

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This message has been scanned for viruses and dangerous content by [MailScanner](#), and is believed to be clean.