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**WOMEN AND THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP:  
METROPOLITAN DETROIT PRINCIPALS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS REGARDING BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS  
FOR JOB ATTAINMENT**

by

**HEIDI SCHNABEL KATTULA**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

2011

**MAJOR: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP  
AND POLICY STUDIES**

Approved by:

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Advisor

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Date

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Public schools are supposed to be equal opportunity employers. Because of this fact, they should contain a diverse group of individuals who were hired based on their level of qualifications—not their gender, race, age, or disability. However, upon entering a public school it becomes apparent that diversity among the employees still does not exist. This disparity is particularly the case with respect to gender. For decades, each gender has held distinct and separate roles within education (Bell & Chase, 1993). “The message women teach and men manage still remains,” (McGovern-Robinett & Ovando, 2002, p. 2).

Throughout the last century, the role of females in elementary and secondary education has undergone many changes. In the twentieth century, teaching was and continues to be primarily a female profession (Shakeshaft, 1999). Female presence has dominated the educational field; however, male presence has continued to dominate the administrative positions within education. In recent decades, more females have begun to appear in these roles, but they are still seen only in small numbers (Shakeshaft, 1999).

One element that is essential for nurturing and fostering student learning, aspirations, and goals is the presence of effective role models. Educators tell students that they can become anything they want as long as they have the necessary will, determination and perseverance. However, tomorrow’s future leaders (a.k.a. today’s youth) continue to develop in an environment that reinforces and perpetuates gender stratification. After all, “what happens in schools influences what happens in society and vice versa” (Blount, 1998, p. 165).

The gender stratification that once existed in public schools still exists today. Blount (1998) contended that “the present configuration of school administration is inextricably woven with traditional gender definitions that are premised on males controlling females” (p. 161). Women are viewed as capable and competent when fulfilling the role as a classroom teacher; however, when it comes to the administrative level, women are not viewed in the same capacity. Over time, men have made great strides in increasing their representation within the teaching ranks. Currently, 43% of public secondary teachers are male and 57% are female (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). However, when examining gender representation among secondary administrators, the composition does not reflect the same parity (NCES, 1996).

In 1985, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) undertook a critical review of schools and school personnel. As a result of this review, NCES redesigned the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to solicit information regarding teacher demand and shortage, teacher and administrator characteristics, teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions regarding school climate and decision-making practices, as well as general conditions in schools. In April of 1997, NCES published “Public and Private School Principals in the United States: A Statistical Profile 1987-88 to 1993-94.” The data for this report came from SASS data from 1987-88 to 1993-94. This report provided an extensive analysis regarding educational administration. One of the findings included the fact that while females have made progress at acquiring elementary principalships, from 30% in 1987-88 to 41% in 1993-94, unfortunately, they still have made little progress in acquiring secondary principalships, 9% in 1987-88 to 14% in 1993-94 (NCES, 1997, p.7).

Locating current gender research within educational administration is not a simple task. There is no reliable nationwide database that tracks gender in school administration (Shakeshaft, 1999). The 2007-08 SASS report indicated that there are 21,550 principals at the secondary level; however, it did not disaggregate the data by gender. The only disaggregated data currently available through SASS regarding secondary principals include: distribution by race/ethnicity, highest degree earned, experience levels, average salaries and average hours per week worked. Since there is no other database, or survey, which contains disaggregated principal gender, in order to acquire elementary or secondary principals' gender distribution, state or intermediate school district directories must be examined in order to count the number of males and females by hand. The SASS data provide a great deal of insightful information regarding principals; however, with the omission of gender disaggregation by level, the SASS report clearly illustrates a concerning limitation in educational research. It is important for studies to examine gender representation by level because although women have made inroads at the elementary principalship, they continue to struggle for equity among secondary administrators, specifically at the high school level.

Since there are no national data available which illustrate women's employment in school administration, there is a need to study current high school administrators and examine the gender representation that exists. In six years' time, the increase for the nation at the secondary level was only five percentage points. It would be most helpful to compare the 1993-94 data to 2010-11 data; however, currently there are no national data regarding principal gender by level. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine state or county data.

The Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) maintains a School Code Master (SCM), which is a database of all school building-related information

for districts and public school academies in the state of Michigan. The SCM includes general directory information as well as the official district and school identification codes of all K-12 public facilities. The SCM is available on CEPI's website and can be downloaded and converted to an Excel spreadsheet. After examining the spreadsheet, the percent of male and female high school principals in the state of Michigan can be computed.

During the 2006-07 school year, there were 870 public high schools in Michigan. Of these, 108 were public school academies (PSA) (a.k.a. charter schools) and 762 were Local Education Agency (LEA) schools. As a whole, n=630 (72%) of public high schools had a male principal while only n=240 (28%) of the schools had a female principal. Within the LEA group the discrepancy was consistent, n=572 (75%) of the principals were male while only n=190 (25%) were female; however, within the PSA group, there was only a slight discrepancy, n=57 (53%) of the principals were male while n=51 (47%) were female. Comparing the disaggregated data leads to further questions pertaining to gender within educational administration with respect to LEAs and PSAs.

During the 2008-09 school year, within Michigan's Oakland County there were 80 public high schools. Of these, five were PSAs and 75 are LEAs. As a whole, n=53 (66%) of public high schools had a male principal and n=27 (34%) of the schools had a female principal. With respect to the PSA group, four were male and one was female. With respect to the LEA group, the discrepancy was consistent with the state of Michigan data from 2006-07: n=49 (65%) of the principals were male while only n=26 (35%) were female. However, within the LEAs, there were 25 alternative high schools whose principal gender did not reflect the same discrepancy. In fact, for the alternative schools, n=10 (40%) had a male

principal while n=15 (60%) had a female principal. Within the non-alternative LEAs, n=39 (78%) of the principals were male and only n=11 (22%) were female.

An alternative high school offers high school courses in an untraditional setting. Students who attend alternative schools typically do so because they were not able to find success in a traditional high school or because they are in need of high school credit recovery. Alternative high schools offer students a more individualized approach to their learning with a smaller student to teacher ratio. The hours of operation at an alternative high school are more flexible to meet the students' needs. Teachers at alternative high schools must meet highly qualified requirements; however, they often are certified to teach more than one subject area. Administrators at alternative high schools are more likely to be women because these high schools are not viewed as rigorous or demanding as traditional high schools. They also tend to require a leader who is more empathetic, nurturing and understanding of the different needs of the students, characteristics more often associated with women than men.

Oakland County's data are extremely telling when examining each subgroup. While there were 108 PSAs in the state of Michigan in 2006-07, there were only five PSAs in Oakland County during the 2008-09 school year. This is likely to be a function of charter schools' tendency to be established in urban areas versus suburban or rural areas. There is more demand/need for public educational choices in urban areas where schools tend to have lower standardized test scores than in suburban areas (i.e. Oakland County) where test scores are higher. However, what is a bit surprising is the gender representation that exists within the Oakland County PSAs (four were male and one was female) when compared to the state of Michigan's 2006-07 data regarding PSAs (n =57 (53%) of the principals were male while

n=51 (47%) were female). Also surprising is the Oakland County alternative LEAs gender representation: (n=10 (40%) had a male principal while n=15 (60%) had a female principal), which could imply that it is easier to become an Oakland County female high school principal within alternative schools.

When examining the combined group of PSAs and LEAs in terms of high school principal gender within Oakland County over the past 11 years, Table 1 illustrates that principal gender ranges from 84%--16% (male--female) in 1999-00 to 61%--39% (male—female) in 2004-05 (see Table 1 below). The range within the LEA subgroup is 86%--14% (male—female) in 1999-00 to 63%--37% (male—female) in 2004-05. The range within the PSA subgroup is 80%--20% (male—female) in 2008-09 to 20%--80% (male—female) in 2002-03. In summary, female representation has increased over time within the LEA subgroup; however, it has significantly decreased within the small PSA subgroup.

Table 1

Oakland County Superintendent & High School Principal Gender 1998-2009									
	Principals					Superintendents			
	LEAs		PSAs		$\chi^2$ (1)	Total Principals		M	F
	M	F	M	F		M	F		
1998-99	80%	20%	75%	25%	0.72	80%	20%	79%	21%
1999-00	86%	14%	50%	50%	29.78**	84%	16%	79%	21%
2000-01	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA
2001-02	77%	23%	60%	40%	6.70**	76%	24%	86%	14%
2002-03	80%	20%	20%	80%	72.00**	70%	30%	86%	14%
2003-04	65%	35%	25%	75%	32.32**	63%	37%	82%	18%
2004-05	63%	37%	33%	67%	18.03**	61%	39%	79%	21%
2005-06	67%	33%	50%	50%	5.95**	65%	35%	64%	36%
2006-07	64%	36%	40%	60%	11.54**	62%	38%	61%	39%
2007-08	67%	33%	80%	20%	4.34*	66%	34%	57%	43%
2008-09	65%	35%	80%	20%	5.64**	66%	34%	57%	43%
2008-09	n=75		n=5			n=80		n=28	

Source: Oakland Intermediate School District Directory (1998-99 through 2008-09)

NA=Data Not Available

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

The process that districts use when hiring a high school principal can vary. There are occasions when districts will use a committee process, which often includes a site visit. Committees can consist of students, parents, teachers, building level administrators within the district, central office personnel and board members. Another common process involves districts' central office personnel conducting the interviews and being the sole decision makers. The central office personnel in this example consist of: the assistant superintendent of instruction (who is typically the high school principal's direct supervisor), the assistant superintendent of personnel or human relations and the superintendent. The superintendent's management and leadership style will determine if all three central office personnel have equal decision-making power or if the decision rests solely with the superintendent. More often than not, the superintendent has the final decision. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the superintendent gender within Oakland County. During the last 11 years, the superintendent gender ranged from 86%--14% (24 male — 4 female) in 2002-03 to 57%--

43% (17 male — 11 female) in 2008-09 (see Table 1). Again, female representation within this group also increased over time. The data may provide some insight regarding whether or not superintendent gender positively or negatively affects the high school principal gender.

The difference between the national data in 1993-94 (females represented 14% of secondary principals) and the Michigan data in 2006-07 (females represent 28% of secondary principals) equates to 14 percentage points over a 13 year time period. While this comparison represents a part versus a whole, what is important to recognize is the lack of progress that has been made in achieving gender equity among educational administrators, specifically at the secondary level. Ideally, researchers should examine longitudinal data for public school administrators in Michigan and the United States; however, there are no national data available to examine.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals and superintendents regarding barriers and facilitators for women who aspire to gain a position as a public high school principal in Michigan. For the purposes of this study, gender and other variables that may influence perceptions of high schools principals within Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County public high schools were examined.

#### *Significance of the Study*

After more than two decades of research, many questions still remain unanswered regarding the underrepresentation of women in school administration. The literature on this topic provides some evidence of the underrepresentation, as well as common barriers for women who aspire to become principals. However, it is limited in



providing insight and recommendations regarding how current principals may overcome these barriers. Research needs to provide information regarding principals who have overcome barriers and also strategies, solutions and facilitators that will help to ameliorate the gender discrepancy that currently exists. The survey data that was collected and analyzed in this study will contribute to this much needed understanding.

Until the late eighteenth century, all formal school teaching in the United States was done by men. Once women entered into the field of teaching (1820's), they still had difficulty entering into the administrative ranks. Between 1820 and 1900, only a handful of women held administrative positions (Shakeshaft, 1999). However, between 1900 and 1930, women began to receive positions in school administration. This rise in representation was not long lived. After the 1930s, women's representation within administration began to decline. Large contributors to the decline include both the movement for equal pay and the economic depression of the late 1930s (Shakeshaft, 1999). Blount (1998) analyzed the number of women in the superintendency from 1910 to 1990 and found that overall the representation of women in the 1930s had not yet since been equaled.

The rise and fall of women in the superintendency has been well documented (Blount, 1998). However, little research exists regarding gender within the high school principalship. The high school principalship is seen as one of the steps on the ladder that must be climbed in order to achieve a superintendent position; however, there is not much research regarding gender at this level of educational administration. In fact, current national or state data regarding principal gender by level are unavailable in any form (i.e. aggregate or disaggregate).

The continual absence of principal gender research along with the ongoing disparity with respect to gender confirms the fact that additional research needs to be conducted to discover why women continue to struggle to earn equal representation at the high school administrative level. Purposeful and relevant research regarding education's glass ceiling and the barriers that preclude women from entering the leadership ranks along with possible solutions may result in positive action being taken within both the profession and society. This information is critical in assisting central office personnel, educational policy makers and institutional leaders in their efforts to prepare and hire effective and diverse principals.

#### *Definition of Key Terms*

*Administrator:* Any person employed as a principal in a Michigan public high school.

*Alternative High School:*

“Alternative Education is a K-12 program that varies in its delivery from the traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade setting. These pupils may attend on a part-time basis for several hours per day for specified subjects or a pupil may attend a one-on-one teacher/pupil session several times a week. The classes must be of subjects that are acceptable for a pupil to earn credit toward a high school diploma or grade level progression.” (Michigan Department of Education, Pupil Accounting Manual, August, 2008).

*Barriers:* Behaviors, structures, practices, activities, etc. that prevent or limit equity or equal opportunity from occurring.

*Equity:* A fairness or impartiality in action and treatment of others.

*Gender:* Membership in the same sex group (i.e. male or female).

*Glass Ceiling:* Artificial barriers within organizations that are based on attitudinal or organizational bias, which preclude qualified individuals from advancing upward into leadership positions.

*Mentor:* An individual who provides guidance, advice, support, etc. to a less experienced person.

*Perception:* “An attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought” (Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999).

*Public School Academy:*

“Also referred to as a “charter school,” is a state-supported public school without geographical boundaries. A public school academy may include any grade up to grade 12, including kindergarten and early childhood education, or any configuration of those grades as specified in its contract” (Michigan School Code Master, 2008).

*Secondary principal:* Any person employed as a public high school principal.

*Limitations of the Study*

Since the 2008-09 Oakland County LEA’s high school principal gender composition (68% male and 32% female) mirrors the 2006-07 state of Michigan’s principal gender composition (72% male and 28% female), this subgroup along with two other counties’ (Macomb and Wayne) subgroups within state of Michigan will be used for this study. The sample size consisted of 257 public high schools and 83 superintendents within Michigan’s Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties during the 2010-2011 school year; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to high school principals in other states or counties. Further, since the study is limited to principals at the high school level, the results may not be generalizable to middle or elementary schools. The study will examine principals’ and superintendents’ perceptions of the barriers and facilitators for women acquiring a high school principalship. It will be assumed that respondents will disclose an authentic response regarding their perception of these barriers.

*Variables in the Study*

There are two theoretical models and corresponding sets of dependent and independent variables in this study. The first model, for which data will be collected with the principal survey, consists of: (a) current age of the principal, (b) principal gender, (c) principal ethnicity, (d) number of years as a high school principal, (e) principal leadership style, and (f) principal’s highest level of educational attainment. The dependent variable in

this model is the perception of men and women high school principals regarding (a) potential barriers and (b) potential facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Michigan.

The second model, for which data will be collected with the superintendent survey, consists of: (a) current age of the superintendent, (b) superintendent gender, (c) superintendent years of experience as a high school principal, (d) years of experience as a superintendent, (e) superintendent ethnicity, and (f) highest level of educational attainment. The dependent variable in this model is the perception of men and women superintendents regarding (a) potential barriers and (b) potential facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Michigan.

#### *Research Questions and Null Hypotheses*

This study was guided by two research questions and associated hypotheses. The null hypotheses will be tested at the .05 level of significance.

*Research question 1:* Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship?

*Null Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Alternative Hypothesis 1:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Research question 2:* Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship?

*Null Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Alternative Hypothesis 2:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Research question 3:* Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship?

*Null Hypothesis 3:* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Alternative Hypothesis 3:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Research question 4:* Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship?

*Null Hypothesis 4:* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Alternative Hypothesis 4:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

## Chapter II

### Review of Related Literature

#### *Introduction*

This review of literature will focus on current research regarding females' role in educational administration. It will also present research regarding possible barriers for women acquiring a high school principalship and barriers that result in gender discrimination. Some of the main topics covered in this review include: a history of the role of women in educational administration; limited research about women principals; limited research about women principals within charter schools; barriers for women in acquiring a high school principalship; leadership styles and differences; characteristics, attributes, and career paths of female educational administrators; preparation programs for principals; mentors and sponsors for aspiring female administrators; personal and professional support for female administrators; the existing leadership crisis in educational administration; and policy implications.

#### *A history of the role of women in educational administration*

The history of the role of women in educational administration has been strongly impacted by the female's role in teaching. During the early 1900's, women were seen as appropriate candidates for teaching positions, but their qualifications for administrative positions were viewed much differently. Consequently, a majority of the administrative positions were given to men (Blount, 1998).

During the 1960's, female teachers and administrators were viewed as extensions of a mother's protective role, emasculating male students, and only utilizing teaching methods that corresponded with feminine values (Shakeshaft, 1999). In response to these views, there

was a push from the community to bring more males into the profession. The timing was perfect. If young men were interested in becoming teachers, they could do so and avoid the Vietnam draft. The result of the male surge into education also had a significant impact on the administrative structure. A number of the men that entered the profession only taught for a short period of time before they were promoted into administrative positions (Shakeshaft, 1999).

For decades, administrative leadership positions have been associated with men and masculinity, whereas teaching has been associated with females or as a feminine profession (Blount, 1998). Women were not hired into school administration due to the stereotypic attitudes toward them and the belief that they were not as competent as men. “Women were thought to be constitutionally incapable of discipline and order, primarily because of their size and supposed lack of strength” (Shakeshaft, 1999, p. 105).

Another reason why women were not hired into administrative positions is because of their leadership style. Women’s leadership styles were viewed as subordinate to men’s (Grogan, 1999). Predominately, women were viewed as being motherly, caring, compassionate, and collaborative (Grogan, 1996). Placing women in educational leadership roles could jeopardize the traditional hierarchy that existed within the school organization. With women at the helm, decisions may no longer be made at the “top” of the hierarchical chain. Rather, decisions might be made collaboratively with all major stakeholders having an opportunity to give input.

Throughout the years, women have experienced challenges and setbacks in acquiring administrative positions within education. While females are viewed as the appropriate gender to fulfill teaching responsibilities, their presence in administrative roles continues to



be scrutinized and undervalued. Unfortunately, this philosophy that women teach and men manage still remains today.

*Limited research about women principals*

Women leading schools at the secondary level in the United States is still quite a rarity. In Shakeshaft's (1999) conceptual work, she poses a question regarding equity: "Are women represented in administration in equal proportions to their representation in teaching?" (p.100). In this piece, she examines the numerical representation of female administrators and points out the fact that researchers in this area lack reliable nationwide databases to track the number of females in school administration. Even administrative professional organizations (i.e. National Association of Secondary School Principals) do not have reliable data because their numbers represent only those administrators who choose to be members, and not all administrators.

Tyack and Hansot (as cited in Shakeshaft, 1999) point out that the absence of such data is no mistake and has historical precedent:

Amid proliferation of other kinds of statistical reporting in an age enamored of numbers—reports so detailed that one could give the precise salary of staff in every community across the country and exact information on all sorts of other variables—data by sex became strangely inaccessible. A conspiracy of silence could hardly have been unintentional. (p. 99)

In order to achieve parity among educational administrators, annual comparisons by gender need to be examined. This analysis has not existed in the past and still fails to exist.

Due to this lack of reliable data, Shakeshaft (1999) utilized school staff data that were collected for 1993-94 U.S. Department of Education. Her findings showed that although women constitute 51% of the population and 51% of school children, 65% of all the teachers

were female while only 43% of the principals (52% of elementary and 26% of secondary) and 7% of the superintendents were female (p. 100). These data illustrate that women are overrepresented in teaching and the elementary principalship (65% teachers and 52% of elementary principals versus 51% of the population) and underrepresented in the secondary principalship and superintendency (26% of secondary principals and 7% of superintendents versus 51% of the population). She also found that females and female members of minority groups are receiving their administrative certification in much greater proportions than they are being chosen for administrative positions. These discrepancies further support her finding that females are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration.

*Limited research about women principals within charter schools*

In order to fully examine gender within public high schools, one needs to also examine the charter school subgroup. Currently, the research that does exist regarding female secondary principals is based on their representation within traditional public schools. Even less research has been done regarding female secondary principals within charter schools. In order to determine if the same gender disparity among charter school administrators exists, one has to manually calculate the data.

Research regarding charter schools is primarily focused on the effect charter schools have as a reform effort, particularly on students achievement. Charter school research typically illustrates the history, challenges, strengths and weaknesses of today's charter school systems. For the purposes of this study, the research provided below references the state of Michigan and their charter school system.

The first charter school legislation was passed in Minnesota in 1991. Charter schools were conceived as yet another educational reform effort. As a public school, a charter school

is open to all students, is paid for with tax dollars, and is accountable for its results to an authoritative public body as well as to those who enroll and teach in it (Manno, Finn & Vanourek, 2000).

While they have a number of similarities to traditional public schools, they also share some important luxuries of private schools. Similar to private schools, charter schools can be created by almost anyone. Depending on the state in which they are housed, they may be exempt from most state and local regulations and fundamentally autonomous in their operations. Charter schools that receive Title I funds must comply with *No Child Left Behind* requirements. Also, since charter schools are public schools, they also must provide special education services. The students who attend and staff who are employed within charter schools do so by choice. While traditional public schools are accountable for state and federal regulations, charter schools are overseen and responsible to the governing authority which authorizes them. The governing body can vary depending on individual state laws. The governing body that establishes a charter school is also responsible for establishing results that the charter school must satisfactorily attain in order to keep their authorization. These criteria do not have to align with state and federal criteria, but instead they can be whichever criteria the governing body thinks is best. Therefore, charter schools are self-governing institutions with wide-ranging control over their own curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, internal organization and much more (Manno, Finn & Vanourek, 2000).

Michigan passed charter legislation in 1993 and its charter laws are among the most detailed in the states. “According to the Center for Education Reform (CER), Michigan scores approximately 45 on a 50 point scale of strength of charter laws” (Toma, Zimmer & Jones, 2006, p. 8). Strength of charter laws reflects the most critical components of a good

charter school law (multiple authorizers, number of schools allowed, operational autonomy, and fiscal equity). In 2009, Michigan ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and for 2010, Michigan ranked 6th strongest of the nation's 40 charter laws.

Charter schools in Michigan may not charge tuition. Instead, they receive their funding largely through the same process that other public schools receive theirs, through per pupil foundation allowances from the state of Michigan. Most of their operating revenue comes from the state; they receive no local tax revenue. They are eligible for federal funds for programs such as special education and Title I assistance for low-income children. Charter schools' 2009-2010 average per pupil revenue from the State of Michigan is \$9,021. They are required to: follow *No Child Left Behind*, the Michigan School Code, fulfill special education requirements, hire certified teachers, and their students are required to participate in state assessments (MEAP, MME, ELPA, etc.).

#### *Barriers for women in acquiring a high school principalship*

Earlier research consisted of barriers to female's advancement and overall comparisons between male and female administrators (Grogan, 1999). While much of what confronts a principal is gender neutral, the process in place to become a principal is often gender biased. Tallerico and Tingley (2001) contend that if specific actions are taken to remove the barriers that inhibit women's ability to become administrators, then more women will fill administrative jobs.

Barriers for women in acquiring a high school principalship include: negative attitudes toward women; public perception that women are not as capable/competent as their male counterparts; the belief that women are constitutionally incapable of discipline and order, primarily because of their size and supposed lack of strength; the belief that women

lead with too much emotion---they would not be emotionally able to handle the stress that accompanies the job; the demands of family and work---difficult balancing act for women who are traditionally held responsible for maintaining the home on top of their work commitments; educational administrative preparation programs that are unrealistically based (i.e. theory rather than practice); age and experience level (women tend to be hired at an older age than their male counterparts); absence of a mentor; lack of membership in professional organizations; urban/suburban/rural settings (urban areas can range from all female to all male shops depending on the city; suburban areas tend to contain “boys’ clubs” within administration; rural areas have fewer people who have the qualifications and desire to go into administration, which often results in more males at the high school level); educational attainment level (typically men are hired for a principalship with only a masters degree while women more often must have their specialists or doctorate degree); bias in the principal search process; male-dominated professional networks; number of required nights and weekends; and the frequent clash between their roles at home and at work (Bell & Chase, 1993; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Shakeshaft, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1999; Tallerico & Tingley, 2001; Young & McLeod, 2001).

### *Leadership styles and differences*

Leadership has been the central focus of research in the field of educational administration (McGovern-Robinett & Ovando, 2002). Throughout the years, little consideration and research has been done in the area of gender, even though there is a disproportionate underutilization of women nationwide in educational administration (Bell & Chase, 1993; Grogan, 1999). Loughheed’s (2000) qualitative study assesses the attitudes of women and men toward women leaders and compares the leadership styles of women and

men. Data were collected from a stratified sample of educators and non-educators through structured interviews with 17 major questions and six listening portions. The total sample size was 3649 with 1846 women (50.6%) and 1803 men (49.4%). Data were separated by gender and then analyzed. The results indicated that women and men in the sample believe the following: (a) women can be successful leaders; (b) women are discriminated against as leaders; (c) women's behavior in the workplace is different, but is being viewed more positively; (d) and a higher percentage of both women and men would choose to work for a woman leader if they were afforded the chance. When the results were separated and analyzed by gender and occupation, the findings from the female respondents were the following: (a) all women strongly agreed that women can be successful leaders and that all women leaders are discriminated against, (b) all agreed that women and men have similar professional goals, (c) and a majority of the women agreed that they would select a woman as a leader if given the choice. There was a significant difference in the findings among the male respondents. Men in business, teaching, educational administration, and higher education had little agreement on choosing a woman leader when given a choice. Men in medicine, law, and central office administration (within education) indicated that they would not choose a woman leader.

Eagly and Carli (2007) examine executive leadership and the shortage of women in top executive (i.e. chief executive officer (CEO), chief operating officer, chairman and president) positions across the United States. With respect to this group, currently only 6% are women (2% of CEOs and 15% of the seats on the boards of directors). While this percent is extremely small, it is larger than in years past. During the 1980s-era, the barriers for a woman to obtain a top leadership position were absolute. Comments made by President

Richard Nixon echo the beliefs of that time period, “I don’t think a woman should be in any government job whatsoever...mainly because they are erratic. And emotional. Men are erratic and emotional, too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 64).

Women who aspire to top leadership positions in business often refer to the barriers they encounter as a “glass ceiling.” This metaphor illustrates the frustration of a goal within sight but somehow unattainable. However, women not only experience barriers at the upper end of their career, but also at many points along the way. Eagly and Carli (2007) argue a better metaphor for what confronts women in their professional endeavors is the labyrinth. The image “conveys the idea of a complex journey toward a goal worth striving for. Passage through a labyrinth is not simple or direct, but requires persistence, awareness of one’s progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead” (p. 64). The metaphor they use recognizes obstacles along the way; however, because there is a viable route, the ultimate goals are attainable.

According to Eagly and Carli (2007), barriers that women encounter in executive leadership include: vestiges of prejudice---men as a group still have the benefit of higher wages and faster promotions; resistance to women’s leadership---conscious and unconscious mental associations about women, men and leaders; issues of leadership style---the need to create a leadership style males are comfortable with; demands of family life---even in 2007, women continue to be the ones who sacrifice their careers for the benefit of their families and because of this fact, “decision makers often assume that mothers have domestic responsibilities that make it inappropriate to promote them to demanding positions” (p. 68); and underinvestment in social capital---because of the work/family balancing act, women are

often unable to accrue the social capital from such “nonessential” parts of work (i.e. from socializing, networking, politicking, and interacting with outsiders) which may turn out to be quite essential indeed.

Eagly and Carli (2007) share a study which found that social capital was “even more necessary to managers’ advancement than skillful performance of traditional managerial tasks” (p. 69). Yet, even if women find/make the time, becoming engaged in social networking can be difficult when they are of a small minority. “In such a setting, the influential networks are composed entirely or almost entirely of men. Breaking into those male networks can be hard, especially when men center their networks on masculine activities” (p. 69). To support their claim, the authors refer to the recent gender discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart:

For instance, an executive retreat took the form of a quail-hunting expedition at Sam Walton’s ranch in Texas. Middle managers’ meetings included visits to strip clubs and Hooters restaurants, and a sales conference attended by thousands of store managers featured a football theme. One executive received feedback that she probably would not advance in the company because she didn’t hunt or fish. (p. 69)

Eagly and Carli (2007) refer to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study to illustrate vestiges of prejudice. In this study, the GAO studied survey data from 1983 to 2000 from a representative sample of Americans. The researchers tested whether individuals’ total wages could be predicted by sex and other characteristics. Without controls for variables that might effect earnings (i.e. education level and work experience), the data showed that women earned about 44% less than men. The GAO researchers found most variables affected the wages of men and women similarly; however, there were some exceptions. Marriage and parenthood were associated with higher wages for men but not for women. Years of education had a more positive effect on women’s wages than on men’s.



The findings of the study correlate with numerous other studies regarding gender which also show that women's wages still remain lower than men's.

According to Eagly and Carli (2007), men typically receive promotions faster than women with equivalent qualifications. "Even in culturally feminine settings such as nursing, librarianship, elementary education, and social work, men ascend to supervisory and administrative positions more quickly than women" (p. 65). One reason men are given leadership positions over women is because of the ongoing resistance to women's leadership. Women typically tend to be associated with communal qualities, which convey a concern for the compassionate treatment of others. Some examples include: being especially affectionate, helpful, friendly, kind, sympathetic and interpersonally sensitive, gentle and soft-spoken. Men, on the other hand, are associated with qualities which convey assertion and control. These include: being especially aggressive, ambitious, dominant, self-confident, forceful, self-reliant and individualistic. Most people believe these qualities are more often associated with effective leadership.

Young and McLeod's (2001) qualitative study focused on the "how" and "why" women enter the field of educational administration. In their study, they examined women's accounts of their own experiences through qualitative interviews of 20 female administrators and educational administration students in the state of Iowa. In addition to the interviews, the researchers also reviewed the records of all students who were enrolled at the time of the research study in an educational administration program in one educational administration department in the state of Iowa. The results of the study indicated that there were three main factors that influenced a female's decision to enter administration: (a) administrative role

models, (b) exposure to transformative leadership styles, and (c) endorsements and/or opportunities to garner support for entering administration.

Interestingly, none of the female interviewees reported entering the field of education with the intention of pursuing administration. Even when these individuals were enrolled in their educational administrative programs, many indicated that they were not certain whether they would pursue an administrative position. Some of the reasons they gave for entering educational administrative programs included: fulfilling a personal goal, continuing individual personal growth, to learn more about leadership, to enable them as teachers to work more effectively with administrators, and to keep abreast of new strategies that would ultimately help all children.

The actual administrative positions the female administrators and administration candidates aspired to reflect the gender segregation that has existed in school administration for years (Shakeshaft, 1999). All of the interviewees saw themselves eventually becoming elementary principals, secondary assistant principals, or curriculum directors as these positions tended to be more common for females. None of the females interviewed had aspirations to become secondary principals or superintendents. The females in the study indicated that they had no interest in becoming secondary principals or superintendents because they did not see themselves (or their gender) in these positions. In fact, those who currently occupied such positions indicated that they had never intended to move into these positions. Rather they described their career progression as “it just sort of evolved” (Young & McLeod, 2001, p. 473).

McGovern-Robinett and Ovando (2002) examined the nature of the leadership experiences of female high school principals. The two questions they sought to answer were:

“how do female high school principals interpret and interact with societal constructions of leadership and the high school principalship in relation to gender role expectations; and, what are the perspectives on leadership provided by these female principals and how do they contribute to new understandings or theories of educational leadership” (p. 6). The researchers used qualitative methods and a multiple case study approach to examine the experiences of three current Texas female high school principals. The three principals were chosen through three purposeful sampling techniques: intensity---pursue information rich cases with the potential of manifesting phenomena or experiences intensely; homogeneity---draw from a similar group of subjects, useful in facilitating group interaction; and convenience---utilize the proximity of subject in selection. Interviews were the primary source of data collection in the analysis. Two in-depth individual interviews and one collaborative group interview were conducted with each of the participants.

McGovern-Robinett and Ovando (2002) found that female principals feel that they are working in the shadow of a male image. All three participants spoke of the male-dominated and defined construction of the high school principal. They also believed that they constantly had to prove themselves in their actions. They sensed that they had to demonstrate over and over again their competence and leadership skills when stereotypes and questioning of their abilities as female administrators arose. They also spoke about the struggles they encountered when trying to become included in the internal networks among high school principals (“the boys’ club”) and in the collegial networks within their own districts (“the brethren”). The participants felt that the lack of sponsorship and mentorship for aspiring female leaders was a significant limitation. They also expressed their need to suppress the

encounters they had experienced regarding gender issues as female leaders in order to survive in their present capacity.

Many women in education aspire to and approach leadership positions much differently than men. Their reasons for entering and leaving administration differ as well as the leadership styles they model when they are in these positions. Women deal with a number of challenges when fulfilling leadership positions. Not only do they struggle with internal challenges, but also external challenges such as societal norms. These norms are reinforced through the proliferation of stereotypes and expectations that exist in our society (Shakeshaft, 1999). Unfortunately, our societal norms have not yet embraced the notion that women are just as capable as men of becoming successful administrators. Nonetheless, women must confront and work past these challenges in order to succeed as administrators.

*Characteristics, attributes, and career paths of female public administrators*

Studies on gender and administration have documented differences in career paths between male and female administrators. Women were first sought for teaching because men were unavailable (Shakeshaft, 1999). However, as career options have expanded for women, there has been a movement to discourage some academically able women from entering the educational field (Shakeshaft, 1999). This movement supports the notion that teaching and administration are not appropriate careers for the majority of high-achieving females. Interestingly, this pattern follows the historical advice that was most frequently given to males.

Skrobarcek and Stark's (2002) quantitative study identified useful information regarding career paths for women who aspire to be educational administrators. All of the

female superintendents (including associate, assistant, and deputy positions) in Texas were surveyed. The data indicated that very few superintendents had emerged from exactly the same career paths. More superintendents reported experience as an elementary principal rather than as a secondary principal with 4.73 as the mean number of “career stops” in attaining the position of superintendent. The educational level of the respondents varied by geographic location. “Female superintendents from urban/suburban school districts held more Doctorate degrees than Masters; whereas, female superintendents from town/rural school districts held more Masters degrees than Doctorates” (p. 15). These data reinforce that women need to plan career moves with respect to location and educational levels.

Salleh-Barone’s (2002) qualitative study identified how Asian American women are able to secure administrative positions and how they perceive themselves as leaders with respect to their race, culture and gender. The study consisted of semi-structured interviews with 12 Asian American female administrators from Illinois and Washington. The results of this study supported Young and McLeod’s (2001) findings in that 10 out of the 12 participants had not planned to become administrators, but did so at the encouragement of others. The participants also reported that they prefer establishing and maintaining relationships, collaboration, sharing of power, and empowering others as their styles of leadership, which supports exposure to transformative leadership as in the Young and McLeod (2001) study. On a separate note, the participants expressed that other minority groups (i.e. African American, Latino, etc.) questioned their commitment and level of understanding in dealing with racism in their schools or their institutions. Other minority groups felt that because the population of Asian Americans accounted for so little of the

population within their schools, they really did not have a basis for understanding the true minority issues (i.e. racism) that existed for larger minority groups.

Ruhl-Smith, Shen and Cooley (1999) conducted a quantitative study to investigate whether men and women decide to enter and possibly leave educational administration for different reasons. Their survey data were collected from 457 students in 29 educational administration programs across the United States. A demographic breakdown of their diverse sample included: 37.6% men and 62.4% women; 75.3% White and 24.7% minority groups. The respondents were asked to indicate on a seven-point Likert-type scale the importance of each factor in their decision to seek administrative positions and reasons that would motivate them to leave administration. The researchers conducted two discriminant function analyses between items. The results of the study indicated that in comparison with men: women decided to enter administration more because of collegiality and intrinsic reward of the job; women were less likely to leave administration because of administration-related problems and student-related problems, but instead were more likely to leave administration for an opportunity to do something more rewarding.

The results of the Ruhl-Smith, Shen and Cooley (1999) study are aligned with other current research. Women enter education with clear goals and value systems that stress service, caring and relationships (Shakeshaft, 1989). Women come into the educational field with a strong instructional background and focus on curriculum and student achievement (Grogan, 1999). They tend to be problem solvers, task oriented, and have high expectations of self and others (Grady & O'Connell, 1993). A repeated theme in most literature supports the fact that women are relational and transformative leaders who strive to get to know students, teachers and other members of the school community (Grogan, 1999).

In further research on characteristics and attributes, Holtkamp (2002) performed a study to identify and gain a greater understanding of the characteristics, attributes, and attitudes of female public school principals and to demonstrate that personal characteristics are similar across cultural and ethnic boundaries. Her qualitative design method consisted of semi-structured interviews with nine purposefully selected female principals. The composition of the nine principals consisted of: two Costa Rican, two Mexican American, two African American, two White, and one Australian. The research questions were designed to collect information for comparative analysis on common themes. The research findings indicated that there were five personal characteristics that the participants shared. These characteristics consisted of: (a) drive to achieve, (b) spirituality, (c) involvement in professional organizations, (d) valuing personal relationships, and (e) community leadership. In conclusion, the author stressed the significance of her findings with regard to the consistency in similar beliefs and values across different ethnic groups and cultures.

Women's involvement in professional organizations further supports their belief and pursuit of collegiality. Women seem to find great value and reward in maintaining relationships, empowering others, and helping students to succeed. Through their transformative leadership traits, women create and sustain their intrinsic rewards that support their passion to be educational administrators.

#### *Preparation programs for principals*

An effective principal preparation program is a necessary component for creating a successful career as an educational administrator. The knowledge and experiences prospective administrators should gain in these programs can be invaluable in preparing them to meet the tasks and responsibilities of an administrative position.

Efforts to prepare school leaders require advocates who understand that school leadership is a multi-faceted issue that includes political, managerial, instructional and educational components (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The general belief is that principal preparation programs are ineffective because of their emphasis on theory and lack of information and experiences related to the daily demands educational administrators' experience. In McGovern-Robinett and Ovando's (2002) study, their female respondents indicated principal preparation programs lack "congruency between what they are taught and what they encounter in the field as female leaders" (p. 13). In order to meet the leadership needs of today, principal preparation programs need to reconsider the conceptual framework upon which they are based and also the content of courses that create their existence.

Educational attainment supports women's ability to become successful administrators. In order for them to promote student success, they need to be strong in their content knowledge as well as have the ability and knowledge that is necessary to lead others. While the lessons that are taught in principal preparation programs are essential, experience in the field is invaluable. Similar to teacher preparations programs, administrative programs need to include a number of field experiences. Reading about leading and actually leading are two separate entities. The authentic knowledge one gains from actually "running" a staff meeting as opposed to writing an agenda for a staff meeting is exponentially different. Students in administrative programs need to seek out and include real-life experiences to better prepare them for a principal's role.

In the United States, each state has autonomy in determining certification and re-certification requirements, overseeing licensure, and in most cases, approving college/university programs that prepare school leaders. Job duties of principals have



changed dramatically. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 required holding principals to new standards. Today, principals not only have to manage the daily operation of their school, but they also must ensure they are meeting every student's academic needs. NCLB requires that all students are 100% proficient by the year 2014, regardless of their cognitive ability, family environment, and socio-economic status. Since 2001, all students, as well as all subgroups (i.e. students with disabilities, African American, Latino, Asian, etc.), must show yearly improvement in the areas of English and mathematics. If they do not, then the school runs the risk of not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and becoming a "failing" school.

If a school does not make AYP for two years in a row, federal sanctions will occur during the third year. These sanctions can include a loss of funding, offering students the chance to transfer to higher-performing local schools, busing students to another school of their choice, and dismissal of the principal. Curriculum has to be articulated and aligned K-12 in order to ensure students do not receive gaps in their education. In addition to overseeing the entire curriculum, principals also must ensure that their school is making efforts to close achievement gaps that may exist between different subgroups. To help close these gaps, principals must be strong instructional leaders. They need to facilitate curriculum discussions and planning among their faculty. They also have to provide faculty with student assessment data and be able to educate them regarding how to read and interpret the data to ensure that strides can be made in closing the gaps that exist.

Principal preparation programs do not prepare today's principals for the demands and accountability they will face in today's schools. In order to successfully prepare candidates for the principalship, institutional leaders (i.e. deans) need to reflect and incorporate concepts

that will support the increased demands principals face. Otherwise, principal preparation programs will continue to add to the list of barriers for prospective principals. In addition to institutional leaders, state policy makers are also key players in determining changes that will improve principal preparation programs. Together, both groups have the ability and power to make the necessary changes occur.

*Mentors and sponsors for aspiring female administrators*

Effective principal preparation programs and successful mentoring experiences are both critical elements in preparing to become an administrator. Mentors serve as advisors, sharing their knowledge and experiences with the intent of enriching and improving the skills of someone else (Barth, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2000). Although the literature on women in education has documented the potential importance of mentors and sponsors in assisting women's entry into and progress within administration, few discussions of women's entry into the field of administration note the relevance of administrative role models in women's decisions to pursue a career in administration (Young & McLeod, 2001).

Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey's (1995) empirical work is an illustration of a research study that focuses on the importance of mentors and sponsors. In this empirical work, the researchers conducted a study with 38 African American women who were either enrolled in administrative certification or doctoral programs in educational administration, or working in or applying for an administrative position in that field. The data were collected from 38 questionnaires and eight in-depth interviews from a convenience sample of aspiring African American women administrators in western New York State. The purpose of the study was to learn more about African American women's professional aspirations, obstacles they confront as they pursue their goals, and roles of mentors and sponsors in advancing their

careers. The researchers used expectancy theory as a conceptual framework for understanding the limited representation of African American women in school leadership, the barriers they confront, and the roles and importance of mentors and sponsors in their professional lives. Expectancy theory consists of the notion that:

...that the more attractive a reward is to an individual the more effort he or she will expend to obtain it. However, this increase in effort will occur only if the individual can see an instrumental link between his or her action(s) and the likelihood of obtaining the desired reward. (p. 410)

The respondents' most common reasons for entering educational administration consisted of: (a) desire to serve as a role model, (b) need for professional growth and challenge, and (c) belief that they would be better administrators than their current bosses. When asked whether race or gender was a greater barrier to their success, 28 ranked race first, two rated the two forces equally, and seven indicated that neither was a barrier. None of the respondents rated gender as first. In regard to mentors and sponsors, 21 respondents indicated the existence of a mentor in their professional lives who provided counsel and moral support, while 19 acknowledged the presence of a sponsor who helped them to consider and make decisions regarding employment opportunities. Regarding affirmative action, 28 of the respondents felt that it assisted them personally.

Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) also found that these African American women perceived sponsors as essential components in being able to attain top-level administrative positions. However, the majority of the respondents indicated that sponsoring was not taking place for them or for many African American women in their field. The respondents indicated that White males, in particular, were not willing to sponsor African American women. The women in this study believed that credentials and academic achievement, rather

than sponsors, were more effective in leveling the playing field in terms of their career advancement.

Acquiring mentors and sponsors in educational administration is not an easy task; however, it can prove quite beneficial. Mentoring practices help mentees to accomplish higher career goals, particularly women (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Whether the practices are formal or informal, mentees are able to learn and develop both interpersonal/social relationships that may help further develop their career goals. In addition to the relationship and networking piece, mentors also provide an inexperienced administrator with a wealth of knowledge. Rather than having to learn from their own mistakes, with a supportive mentor, administrators have an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others. A large portion of learning is through sharing. Mentors support their mentees by guiding them through their careers. Walking down a rocky path alone can be worrisome and time consuming. Walking down the same path with a guide, who has walked the path before, is much more reassuring and comforting than walking the path alone.

#### *Personal and professional support for female administrators*

Research regarding female's aspirations to become educational administrators has shown the importance and impact of personal and professional support (Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1999). In Young and McLeod's (2001) study, friends who were involved in the field of education were particularly influential in supporting the interviewees in their pursuit to become administrators. Supportive individuals who have a connection to education can better relate to the struggles that administrators experience.

Although rhetoric exists regarding administrators being family oriented, there is still a tension for those who try to meet the demands of family and administration equally well (Grogan, 1999). Spousal support can have a crucial affect on career aspirations. For instance, female administrators with families cannot always rely on their spouses to share household and childcare responsibilities. Societal norms still expect females to be responsible for maintaining and managing the family environment regardless of their employment opportunities. Research has shown that women's personal balance between family and career is a central component to success, and that women are less likely than men to give up one or the other (Shakeshaft, 1999). However, women do not always have the option of moving their families to pursue a career interest.

While it may not be fair to assume that women are responsible for maintaining the family environment, it is still a common belief that exists in our society. However, just as women are equally capable of maintaining successful educational leadership positions, men are just as capable of providing the necessary support within the family environment. As it currently stands, the notion of men fulfilling the role of cooking and cleaning within the home is not a societal norm. Perhaps with time, the societal view of men's role within the family environment will evolve into a more supportive and collaborative effort.

#### *The existing leadership crisis in educational administration*

Administrative positions entail high stress, increased responsibilities, endless days, and thankless duties. Across the nation, state legislators and administrator organizations have predicted a future shortage of educational administrators (Young & McLeod, 2001). Not as many people are interested in being on the "firing line" and dealing with the additional stresses that exist. As Shakeshaft (1999) points out, there are women who are certified for

administration, but are not current administrators. Did they plan on attaining certification and then not utilizing it? In an effort to understand the low number of females in educational administration, it is helpful to know what factors influence females' decision to become school administrators.

There are a number of reasons for the lack of interest in administrative positions. McAdams (1998) believes some of deterrents include: "the impact of two-income households; changing demands of work and family; the effect of higher teacher salaries; the loss of job security and the financial impact associated with moving to a new area for an administrative position" (p. 37). Also, principals are now held directly accountable for student performance on standardized tests. The increased pressure by the state and federal government along with parental pressure put principals of today in higher-stress and more conflict-oriented roles.

Along with the stress load increasing over time, the workload for principals has also continued to climb each year. Principals 30 years ago would typically work a 45- to 50-hour week. Today, modern principals often must devote 55- to 60-hours in order to keep up with the ever-increasing demands (McAdams, 1998). This type of workload may have been sustainable in the days of the male breadwinner and the stay-at-home mom, but today two-income couples are considered the norm. Because of these reasons, teachers are less inclined to give up their comparable salaries so that they may work longer, harder and with more stress and responsibility.

*Policy implications*

The number of individuals with administrative credentials has not declined; however, the number of applicants for administrative positions continues to decline. “The stressful working conditions, inadequate job incentives, ineffective hiring practices, and increasingly formidable expectations for success are deterring prospective candidates from entering the field” (Mittgang, 2003, p. 8).

Tallerico and Tingley (2001) recommend five policy and practice changes that will help improve equity among educational administrators: (a) examine the discriminatory consequences of recent state policy directions for administrative certification; (b) initiate policies that facilitate teachers’ entry into administrative leadership; (c) increase incentives for experienced teachers to move into educational administration; (d) mentor strategically so men, women and educators of color are all encouraged to pursue school leadership positions; and (e) provide equity training for school boards, administrators, selection committees and others who influence administrative hiring. Along with these recommendations, they also offer several strategies which can be used as additional support.

Policies and practices need to include efforts to ensure equitable representation exists within administrative positions. Research regarding the gender discrepancy that exists within educational administration will provide policy makers, educational institutional leaders and school central office administrators with pertinent and relevant information to assist them in their efforts to create an equitable environment in today’s schools. If the traditional structures that exist within today’s school system are not deconstructed, society risks perpetuating the same power inequities that currently exist (Blount, 1998).

*Summary*

Blount's (1998) work on women in the superintendent's position provides an excellent account of the impact of women's leadership on education over time. Women will continue to struggle in attaining leadership positions in the field of education unless efforts are made to understand and support women's decisions to enter educational administration. Young and McLeod (2001) identify five implications for facilitating this support: (a) developing educational administration programs that are more relevant for women, (b) actively recruiting women with leadership abilities into educational administration programs, (c) affording women opportunities to experience alternative leadership styles early in their educational careers, (d) reaching women in the field, and (e) working to change commonplace ideas about women and leadership.

Attitudes are formed at an early age and are reinforced by society's expectations and traditions. Unfortunately, societal views have assisted the proliferation of gender biases within educational administration. In an effort to address the gender discrepancies that exist within educational roles, those that hire (principals, personnel directors and superintendents) need to be cognizant of each individual's strengths—regardless of their gender. Individuals should be given positions based on ability and merit, not gender.

The number of women in educational administrative positions has grown in recent years (Shakeshaft, 1999). In order for these numbers to continue growing, women need to be encouraged, supported, and empowered to achieve leadership positions. Barriers that affect women's decisions to enter educational administration also need to be eliminated. Societal norms need to be reconstructed to reflect a welcoming and supportive view of female administrators. A number of the studies in this literature review were designed on the belief



that awareness is the first step to changing a situation. Awareness levels need to continue to be raised in an effort to influence societal norms and to provide each gender with an equal opportunity in educational administration.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### *Introduction*

The methods that were used to collect and analyze data needed to answer the research questions of this study are discussed in this chapter. The topics included include: research questions, research design, variables in the study, setting for the study, participants, data collection, instruments, reliability, and data analysis.

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals and superintendents regarding barriers for women who aspire to gain a position as a public high school principal in Michigan. For the purposes of this study, gender and other variables that may influence perception of high schools principals within Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County public high schools were examined.

The other variables that were examined include: (a) age of the respondent, (b) ethnicity of the respondent, (c) number of years as a high school principal, (d) highest level of educational attainment, and (e) respondent's leadership style. Although gender based differences regarding perceptions of barriers was principal interest in this study, gender was correlated with the aforementioned variables to determine their possible influence on perception. The other variables were chosen because of their probable influence over the individuals' perception regarding gender within the high school principalship.

Age, gender and ethnicity may have the most effect on individual responses (Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1999; Lougheed, 2000; Shakeshaft, 1999). For instance, a 50-60 year old white male high school principal or superintendent may have a completely different

perception regarding possible barriers than a 30-40 year old black female in the same role. A 50-60 year old white male principal or superintendent probably went into administration when it was a true boys' club. Today, educational administration is often referred to as a boys' club even though there are more female administrators now than there were 30 years ago. A careful comparison of the differences in perception between the two groups will provide valuable insight for women who aspire to become high school principals.

Length of time as a high school principal and leadership style may influence an individual's responses as well. Men and women who have recently become a high school principal may have a different perception of barriers than men and women who have been principals for a decade or more. Also, individuals' educational attainment may influence their perception of barriers. Research has shown that educational attainment does have an influence on administrative job acquisition (Skrobarcek & Stark, 2002). Therefore, it could also be assumed that it has an influence on the real and perceived barriers individuals experience while trying to obtain an administrative position.

#### *Research Questions*

The following four research questions were addressed: (1) Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit; (2) Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit; (3) Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit; and (4) Is there a significant

difference between perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit.

The responses to the first question were analyzed with respect to: (a) current age of the principal, (b) principal gender, (c) principal ethnicity, (d) number of years as a high school principal, (e) principal leadership style, and (f) principal's highest level of educational attainment.

The responses to the second question were analyzed with respect to: (a) current age of the superintendent, (b) superintendent gender, (c) superintendent years of experience as a high school principal, (d) years of experience as a superintendent, (e) superintendent ethnicity, and (f) highest level of educational attainment.

### *Research Design*

A survey design was used to examine gender within the high school principalship. This type of research design is appropriate because there is no intervention or treatment provided to the participants.

Separate surveys for principals (see Appendix A) and superintendents (see Appendix B) were designed to elicit feedback from current public high school principals and superintendents regarding perceived barriers for women acquiring a high school principalship. The surveys were approved by Wayne State University's Human Investigation Committee and field tested to ensure reliability.

The principal survey was converted to electronic form and sent to all public high school principals in Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties. Respondents had two weeks to respond to the survey. A reminder email was sent to principals approximately one week after the surveys were due. The superintendent survey was converted to electronic

form and sent to all superintendents in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County. As with the principals, a reminder email was sent to superintendents approximately one week after the surveys were due. Additionally, hard copies of the superintendent survey were sent to the Oakland and Wayne Intermediate School District (ISD) superintendents for them to administer at their monthly county superintendent meetings. Superintendents had a choice of completing a hard copy of the survey (at the meeting) or an electronic copy. In total, 55 superintendent surveys and 114 principal surveys were completed and entered into a data file.

#### *Variables in the Study*

There are two sets of independent variables in this study. The first set in the principals' survey consisted of: (a) current age of the principal, (b) principal gender, (c) principal ethnicity, (d) number of years as a high school principal, (e) principal leadership style, and (f) principal's highest level of educational attainment. The dependent variable for this set is the perception of men and women high school principals regarding (a) potential barriers and (b) potential facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit.

The second set of independent variables in the superintendents' survey consisted of: (a) current age of the superintendent, (b) superintendent gender, (c) superintendent years of experience as a high school principal, (d) years of experience as a superintendent, (e) superintendent ethnicity, and (f) highest level of educational attainment. The dependent variable for this set is the perception of men and women superintendents regarding (a) potential barriers and (b) potential facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit.

### *Setting for the Study*

The population consisted of all current public high school principals and superintendents within Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties. For this study, a high school is defined as any public school that enrolls students in grades 9 through 12. This definition would include, therefore, schools with any grade configuration that includes 9-12.

### *Participants*

The target population, or universe, consisted of all traditional local school districts (LEAs) and public school academies (PSAs) within Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties during the 2010-11 school year. The population for the principal survey consisted of 257 public high schools principals. The population for the superintendent survey consisted of 83 public superintendents.

### *Data Collection*

Data collection began after successful completion of the dissertation proposal defense. Data was aggregated and analyzed to ensure that no individual principal or superintendent was identifiable from the research. Data was represented in both tabular and graphical form.

Both surveys were converted into electronic form. The surveys consist of a Likert-type scale to record participant responses that rate the extent to which each item on the questionnaire is perceived to be a barrier for women accessing the position of public high school principal. A link to the respective electronic survey was emailed to every practicing public high school principal and superintendent in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County. (i.e. Survey Gizmo)

The email to principals and superintendents included a cover letter outlining the purpose of the study and a disclaimer indicating that each participant's identity and school are not linked to his/her survey responses and that participation in the study is completely voluntary. A reminder email was sent to all participants one week after the initial email reminding them of the request to participate in the study. The data collected were placed into a spreadsheet removing all school and personally identifiable information. Each survey consisted of a variety of questions, designed and presented to elicit the barriers and the perceptions of barriers to women gaining access to the high school principalship.

#### *Instruments*

Both survey instruments were designed to collect quantitative data. The first section of both surveys, titled Barriers, gathered information pertaining to the degree to which each participant feels that individuals may encounter particular barriers to employment as a principal. These items are based on a Likert-type scale from one to five with a five being strongly agree and one being strongly disagree. This section contained 15 questions on both the principal survey and superintendent survey, which pertain to the perceived role of women within administrative positions. The second section, titled Facilitators, contained 15 questions on both the principal and superintendent survey, which pertain to specific job related skills that individuals should possibly possess in order to acquire or succeed in the position of high school principal. The third section of each survey, titled Demographics, gathers information such as respondent's age, ethnicity, gender, leadership style, years of experience and educational attainment. This section contained six questions on the principal survey and six questions on the superintendent survey.

The questions on both survey instruments were designed after conducting a thorough literature review, which included closely examining various doctoral studies and surveys regarding principal and superintendent gender. The Demographics section includes items which previous studies have shown to have potential influence regarding barriers for women in acquiring a high school principalship. Respondents are asked to provide their: (a) age, (b) gender, (c) ethnicity, (d) year's experience as a high school principal, (e) leadership style, and (f) highest level of educational attainment.

The Barriers and Facilitators sections were constructed based on findings from various studies. The questions in the Barriers section consist of common barriers women experience, including: (a) demands of family and work, (b) perception that women are not as capable/competent as their male counterparts, (c) belief that women lead with too much emotion, (d) ineffective educational administrative preparation programs, (e) lack of mentor opportunities, (f) bias in the principal search process, and (g) lack of professional networks. The questions in the Facilitators section consist of common areas that are essential in acquiring an administrative position, including knowledge of: (a) mentoring, (b) curriculum, (b) school improvement, (c) assessment, (d) staff development, (e) staff evaluation and (f) student discipline. The questions used in this study are designed to elicit the best response from the individuals being interviewed. Both surveys were field tested and revised accordingly to ensure reliability and validity.

#### *Power Analysis*

For the dependent variable Barriers, a sample size of 50 achieves 99% power to detect an R-Squared of 0.24 attributed to one independent variable using an F-Test with a



significance level (alpha) of 0.05. The variables tested are adjusted for an additional 5 independent variables with an R-Squared of 0.16. (see Table 2)

Table 2

Multiple Regression Power Analysis for the dependent variable Barriers  
Numeric Results

Power	N	Alpha	Beta	Ind. Variables Tested		Ind. Variables Controlled	
				Cnt	R2	Cnt	R2
0.99203	50	0.05000	0.00797	1	0.24000	5	0.16000

Based on the R-squared change by the control variables (.16) and test variable (.24).

Dependent Variable: Barriers.Average

Control Variables: Current Age, HS Principal Years, Education (Dummy), Time Spent (Dummy), Ethnicity (Dummy)

Test Variable: Female (Dummy)

For the dependent variable Facilitators, a sample size of 200 achieves 78% power to detect an R-Squared of 0.03 attributed to one independent variable using an F-Test with a significance level (alpha) of 0.05. The variables tested are adjusted for an additional 5 independent variables with an R-Squared of 0.18. (see Table 3)

Table 3

Multiple Regression Power Analysis for the dependent variable Facilitators  
Numeric Results

Power	N	Alpha	Beta	Ind. Variables Tested		Ind. Variables Controlled	
				Cnt	R2	Cnt	R2
0.78295	200	0.05000	0.21705	1	0.03000	5	0.18000

Based on the R-squared change by the control variables (.18) and test variable (.03).

Dependent Variable: Facilitators.Average

Control Variables: Current Age, HS Principal Years, Education (Dummy), Time Spent (Dummy), Ethnicity (Dummy)

Test Variable: Female (Dummy)

*Exploratory Factor Analysis*

When exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the first step, the EFA yielded seven factors. On the second step when the number of factor solutions was restricted to two factors, then the EFA yielded the correct grouping to two factors (Barriers and Facilitators), which supports the model that was used in this study utilizing distinct questions geared at examining superintendents' and principals' perception of Barriers and Facilitators. Table 4 and 5 outline the shared variance and rotated component matrix.

Table 4

EFA Total Variance Explained			
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings			
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Facilitators	9.534	31.781	31.781
Barriers	6.627	22.091	53.872

Table 5: Rotated component matrix for item factor loadings

	Component	
	Facilitators	Barriers
q28	.928	
q20	.918	
q25	.894	
q23	.892	
q24	.882	
q21	.882	
q30	.826	
q22	.809	
q26	.798	
q17	.780	
q18	.754	
q29	.751	
q19	.590	
q27	.436	
q5	.323	
q16	.314	
q10		.805
q9		.800
q11		.782
q13		.774
q15		.751
q8		.740
q14		.691
q7		.679
q12		.607
q6		.554
q1		-.439
q2		-.431
q3		-.314
q4		-.228

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

### *Non-respondent Bias*

Although it cannot be eliminated, this study had no serious non-respondent bias. Those who chose to participate or not participate are a homogenous group. The responses that were received in the pilot sample concur with current research findings in the area of gender differences within educational administration. (Shakeshaft, 1999)

### *Reliability*

The instruments were field tested with a small sample (n=24) of high school principals. The principals were asked to take the survey and respond to the following questions: (a) do you have any questions regarding the instructions of the survey? (b) are there any questions in the survey that are unclear? and (c) are there any additional questions that should be included in the survey? Based on the field test data analysis and qualitative feedback, it was recommended the survey instruments not be revised. A reliability analysis of internal consistency was conducted using Cronbach's alpha within SPSS. The reliability coefficients for the Barriers were 0.81 and 0.95 for the Facilitators, which are considered satisfactory.

### *Data Analysis*

Data collected from the surveys was entered into a computer file for analysis using SPSS- Windows, version 19.0. The research questions were answered by estimating the following regression models:

(1) Principals' perceptions =

$$\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Gender} + \beta_3 \text{Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{PYears} + \beta_5 \text{HighestDegree} + \beta_6 \text{LeadStyle}$$

(ratio)    (dummy)    (set of dummies)    (ratio)    (set of dummies)    (dummy)

(2) Superintendents' perceptions =

$$\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Gender} + \beta_3 \text{Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{PYears} + \beta_5 \text{SYears} + \beta_6 \text{HighestDegree}$$

(ratio)   (dummy)   (set of dummies)   (ratio)   (ratio)   (set of dummies)

Table 6  
Statistical Analysis

Research Questions	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<p>1. Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Michigan</p> <p>2. Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Michigan</p>	<p>Independent Variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current age of the principal (ratio)</li> <li>• principal gender (nominal)</li> <li>• principal ethnicity (nominal)</li> <li>• principal leadership style (nominal)</li> <li>• number of years as a high school principal (ratio)</li> <li>• principal's highest level of educational attainment. (nominal)</li> </ul> <p>Dependent variable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding potential barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit. (interval)</li> <li>• the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding potential facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit. (interval)</li> </ul>	<p>Regression analysis with dummy variable coding</p>

<p>3. Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Michigan</p> <p>4. Is there a significant difference between perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Michigan</p>	<p>Independent Variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current age of the superintendent (ratio)</li> <li>• superintendent gender (nominal)</li> <li>• superintendent ethnicity (nominal)</li> <li>• superintendent years of experience as a high school principal (ratio)</li> <li>• years of experience as a superintendent (ratio)</li> <li>• superintendent's highest level of educational attainment. (nominal)</li> </ul> <p>Dependent variable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding potential barriers for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit. (interval)</li> <li>• the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding potential facilitators for women who want to acquire a high school principalship in Metropolitan Detroit. (interval)</li> </ul>	<p>Regression analysis with dummy variable coding</p>
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*Summary*

Currently, 43% of public secondary teachers in the United States are male and 57% are female (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). However, when examining gender representation among secondary administrators, the composition does not reflect the same parity (NCES, 1996). Examining gender representation within educational administrators can be a laborious task since there is no reliable nationwide or state database that tracks gender in school administration (Shakeshaft, 1999). In order to acquire elementary or secondary principals' gender distribution, state or intermediate school district directories must be examined in order to count the number of males and females by hand. The fact these data are neither readily available nor tracked clearly illustrates a concerning limitation in educational research. Not only is this a limitation, but to some, an inconvenient truth that society does not want to recognize or ameliorate.

The literature on this topic provides some evidence of the under representation, as well as common barriers for women who aspire to become principals. However, it is limited in providing information and recommendations regarding how current principals may overcome these barriers. Research needs to include information regarding principals who have overcome barriers and also strategies, solutions and facilitators that will help to ameliorate the gender discrepancy that currently exists.

Upon examining a tri-county area within the state of Michigan, it is apparent that a gender disparity still exists within secondary administrators. Over the past decade within these counties, men have continued to out number women in secondary administrative positions. Unfortunately, women are still viewed as capable and competent when fulfilling



the role as a classroom teacher; however, when it comes to the administrative level, women are not viewed in the same capacity.

This study determined if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals and superintendents regarding barriers for women who aspire to gain a position as a public high school principal in Metropolitan Detroit. Other variables that may influence perception of high school principals were also examined as well as correlated with gender to study their overall effect. This study utilized two surveys to elicit opinions of practicing high school principals and superintendents concerning the barriers and facilitators of women attempting to enter the ranks of high school principal. The survey questions were designed after examining various doctoral and research studies regarding gender within educational administration. The survey data obtained in this study contributes to the much-needed educational research regarding gender within educational administration. Hopefully, with the findings from this study, women will gain insight on how to overcome the barriers that exist so that parity will be reached not only within the teaching ranks but also at the administrative level.

## Chapter IV

### Results

The results of the data analyses that were used to describe the sample and address the four research questions are presented in this chapter. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section uses frequency distributions to provide a profile of the participants (superintendents and principals) in this study. The research questions are addressed in the second section of this chapter.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals and superintendents regarding barriers and facilitators for women who aspire to gain a position as a public high school principal in Michigan.

The target population consisted of all traditional local school districts (LEAs) and public school academies (PSAs) within Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties in the State of Michigan during the 2010-11 school year. The accessible population for the principal survey consisted of 257 public high schools principals. The accessible population for the superintendent survey consisted of 83 public superintendents. Of the 257 principals, 110 completed the survey for a response rate of 42.8%. Of the 83 superintendents, 51 completed the survey for a response rate of 61%. Combining the two categories yields a response rate of 161 from 340. Assuming no missing values, 100% valid responses, and an a priori 50% response distribution, this approximately yields a symmetric 95% confidence interval with a  $\pm 5.5\%$  precision level for the survey. Note that this confidence interval does not apply to breakdown (i.e. subgroup) analyses.

*Description of the Sample*

The principals and superintendents were asked to provide demographic information. Their responses were summarized using frequency distributions in Table 7.

Table 7  
Demographics Frequency Distributions

Demographic (n = 169)*	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	103	61.3
Female	65	38.7
Profession		
Principal	114	67.5
Superintendent	55	32.5
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	139	82.7
African American	19	11.3
Hispanic/Latino	5	3.0
Middle Eastern	3	1.8
Native American/Alaska Native	2	1.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	
Total		
Education		
BA/BS	1	.6
MA/MS	57	33.9
Ed. Specialist	69	41.1
Ed.D./Ph.D.	41	24.4
Administrator Leadership Style		
Managerial	95	83.3
Instructional	19	16.7

\*169 total responses, figures under each column represent responses received.

The majority of participants (n = 103, 61.3%) were male. One hundred and thirty nine participants (82.7%) were Caucasian. The two most common degrees were Education

Specialist (41.1%) and Masters (33.9%). A majority of the participants (n = 95, 83.3%) reported having a managerial leadership style versus an instructional leadership style.

Additional demographic information disaggregated by principals and superintendents is summarized in Table 8.

Table 8  
Principals' & Superintendents' Frequency Distributions

	Principals (n=114)		Superintendents (n=54)	
	Men (n=73)	Women (n=41)	Men (n=30)	Women (n=24)
Average age	49	50	55	51
Minmum age	32	36	42	47
Average years' experience as a high school principal	9	5	4*	3**
Average years' experience as a superintendent			8	5
Degree most frequently held	Masters	Ed. Specialist	Ed.D./Ph.D.	Ed.D./Ph.D.

\*Only 40% (12/30) men superintendents were ever a high school principal

\*\*Only 21% (5/24) women superintendents were ever a high school principal

The principals' demographic data support research which indicates female principals tend to have higher degrees (Ed. Specialist) than their male counterparts (Masters) and they often enter the field of administration at an older age (36) than males (32) (Skrobarcek & Stark, 2002; Shakeshaft, 1999). The superintendents' demographic data did not have the same consistency. While the youngest female superintendent (47) is still five years older than the youngest male superintendent (42), the average age of female superintendents was (51) four years younger than the average age of male superintendents (55). Research also states most female superintendents follow a career path where they skip the high school

principalship and instead jump directly from a classroom teaching position or elementary principalship to a central office position before becoming a superintendent (Natale, 1992). These results support this research with only 21% of women superintendents having ever been a high school principal.

The participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement that the following were barriers to women acquiring a high school principalship. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics - Barriers

		Gender					
		1 Male		2 Female		Total	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Women married to men whose careers require travel	1 Principal	2.86*	1.12	2.68	1.11	2.80	1.11
	2 Superintendent	2.27	1.17	3.00	1.38	2.59	1.31
2. Family/Career conflict	1 Principal	3.51*	1.06	3.37	1.11	3.46	1.07
	2 Superintendent	2.67	1.15	3.54	1.18	3.06	1.23
3. Women who plan on having a family	1 Principal	3.15	1.10	3.46	1.07	3.26	1.10
	2 Superintendent	2.90	.99	3.17	1.20	3.02	1.09
4. Childcare Stress	1 Principal	3.21	1.13	3.61	1.07	3.35	1.12
	2 Superintendent	2.67	1.09	3.42	1.32	3.00	1.24
5. The responsibility and stress of evening and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women	1 Principal	3.41*	1.20	3.59	1.26	3.47	1.22
	2 Superintendent	2.60	1.38	3.29	1.52	2.91	1.47
6. Limited/Absence of mentoring	1 Principal	2.77	1.10	3.15	1.22	2.90	1.15
	2 Superintendent	2.43	1.01	2.67	1.09	2.54	1.04
7. Lack of professional networks	1 Principal	2.29	.99	3.10	1.20	2.58	1.14
	2 Superintendent	2.50	1.25	2.58	1.18	2.54	1.21
8. Lack of opportunities to gain administrative experience	1 Principal	2.10	.87	2.88	1.23	2.38	1.08
	2 Superintendent	2.30	1.18	2.52	1.24	2.40	1.20
9. There is a "glass ceiling" limiting women's career opportunities	1 Principal	1.89	.83	2.71	1.25	2.18	1.07
	2 Superintendent	2.07	1.28	2.75	1.39	2.37	1.36
10. The perception that women are emotional decision makers	1 Principal	2.25	1.00	2.78	1.21	2.44	1.11
	2 Superintendent	1.97	1.10	2.71	1.30	2.30	1.24
11. There is a "good old boys" club that limits women's opportunities	1 Principal	2.21	1.04	3.73	1.16	2.75	1.31
	2 Superintendent	2.73	1.23	3.67	1.05	3.15	1.23
12. Staff members are reluctant to work for a female boss	1 Principal	2.03	.83	2.12	.81	2.06	.82
	2 Superintendent	2.23	1.07	2.46	1.18	2.33	1.12
13. The perception that women are not politically savvy	1 Principal	1.79	.73	2.32	.99	1.98	.87
	2 Superintendent	1.63	.76	2.38	1.24	1.96	1.06
14. The perception that women are not strong instructional leaders	1 Principal	1.59	.74	2.05	1.00	1.75	.87
	2 Superintendent	1.33	.55	1.58	.72	1.44	.63
15. Women are perceived as having curricular skills that limit their leadership ability	1 Principal	1.78	.79	2.17	1.02	1.92	.89
	2 Superintendent	1.60	.72	2.26	1.25	1.89	1.03

\*p&lt;.017 (Bonferroni corrected nominal Alpha level)

The Likert scale for both surveys ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Principals reported a higher mean on 79% (11/14) of the questions which shows that principals viewed and rated these items as being greater barriers than the superintendents. The highest mean for principals was 3.47 for question five (The responsibility and stress of evening and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women). This finding supports current research in the area of why fewer candidates apply for the high school principalship (Grogan, 1999). People are not interested in applying for a position that includes a great deal more stress with minimal increase in salary (Mittgang, 2003). Also, the largest difference (0.56) in means between principals and superintendents was for question five, which indicates that principals and superintendents do not see this barrier in the same light. Perhaps that is part of the problem with the high school principalship. The work load within the position is not going to change until superintendents and boards of education recognize the onerous responsibilities that the job entails. Creating better conditions for leaders and providing the right incentives may make the position more favorable (Mittgang, 2003).

The highest mean for superintendents (and second highest mean for principals (3.46)) was 3.07 for question two (Family/Career conflict). With superintendents rating this as their highest barrier, it confirms the research that shows family/career conflict as one of the leading barriers for women (Shakeshaft, 1999). Also, with superintendents viewing it as their greatest barrier shows that they may operate under the belief that it is a barrier for women and therefore perhaps less likely to hire a woman even when it may not be a true barrier.

Both groups had the lowest mean of (Principals= 1.75, Superintendents=1.45) with question 14 (The perception that women are not strong instructional leaders). This finding

supports current research indicating women tend to have a strong instructional background and focus on curriculum and student achievement (Grogan, 1999).

Male principals had the highest mean (3.51) for question two (Family/Career conflict). Male superintendents had the highest mean (2.90) for question three (Women who plan on having a family). Male principals' mean were statistically significantly larger than male superintendents' mean on question one (Women married to men whose careers require travel), two (Family/Career conflict) and five (The responsibility and stress of evening and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women). The fact that male principals rated these barriers significantly larger than superintendents indicates that they operate under the belief that these are barriers for women and may share this belief with others (i.e. mentees, other principals who may become superintendents, etc.) during their day-to-day encounters. Two Barriers that males principals had a higher mean (2.86, 3.51) than female principals were question one (Women married to men whose careers require travel) and two (Family/Career conflict). While the results for male principals on question two and five support current research, the results on question one contradict current research (Bell & Chase, 1993). Women tend to indicate question one is a barrier; however, men often do not view it in the same light. These findings did not support current research with female principals' mean (2.68) being 0.18 lower than male principals' mean (2.86).

Overall, male principals' mean was lower than female principals' mean 85% (13/15) of the time. Similarly, male superintendents had a lower mean than female superintendents on all of the Barriers questions. While men recognized the same barriers as women, they did not recognize them to the same degree.



The differences between male and female principals mean scores ranged from .09 to 1.52. The largest difference in means for principals (1.52) occurred on question 11 (There is a "good old boys" club that limits women's opportunities). Similarly, the largest difference in means for male and female superintendents (.94) was also for question 11. This finding supports current research that the old boys' club tends to be a predominant barrier for women in many organizations; however, men continue not to recognize that the club exists or that it works against women's advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Grogan, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1999). Further supporting this area, female principals and superintendents had the highest mean (3.73, 3.67) for question 11. This finding supports research which indicates that female superintendents may be more sympathetic to women who aspire to become a high school principal because they recognize the barriers they must overcome to obtain such a male dominated role (Shakeshaft, 1999).

Although a great deal of research recommends women having a mentor or being a part of a professional network, these barriers (question 6: Limited/Absence of mentoring and question 7: Lack of professional networks) fell toward the bottom in both principal and superintendent ratings (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Barth, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Grogan, 1996; Ragins, & Cotton, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2000; Shakeshaft, 1989; Sobehart & Giron, 2002). The overall means (aggregate) for both principals and superintendents were 2.90 and 2.54 for question six and 2.58 and 2.54 for question seven. While research highly recommends these two areas to help ameliorate barriers that exist, the feedback from principals and superintendents in this study do not support that claim.

Next, the participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement that the following items (Facilitators) may help advance career opportunities for women aspiring to become a high school principal. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics - Facilitators

	Groups	Gender					
		Male		Female		Total	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
16. Female mentoring	1 Principal	3.63	.91	3.80	.95	3.69	.93
	2 Superintendent	3.73	.74	4.29	.69	3.98	.76
17. Membership within a professional network	1 Principal	3.73	1.07	3.80	1.01	3.75	1.04
	2 Superintendent	3.67	.92	4.13	.80	3.87	.89
18. Proven success as an instructional leader	1 Principal	4.16	.96	4.27	.74	4.20	.88
	2 Superintendent	4.03	.96	4.63	.49	4.30	.84
19. Experience coaching athletic programs	1 Principal	3.15*	.98	3.02	1.25	3.11	1.08
	2 Superintendent	2.53	1.11	2.88	1.19	2.69	1.15
20. Experience working on curriculum development	1 Principal	3.88	1.21	4.00	.92	3.92	1.11
	2 Superintendent	3.87	1.04	4.33	.76	4.07	.95
21. Proven success implementing school improvement efforts	1 Principal	4.08	1.08	4.12	.95	4.10	1.03
	2 Superintendent	4.23	1.01	4.42	.65	4.31	.86
22. Proven success minimizing achievement gaps	1 Principal	4.07	1.10	4.05	.97	4.06	1.05
	2 Superintendent	4.13	1.07	4.42	.72	4.26	.94
23. Experience writing standards based assessments	1 Principal	3.45	1.11	3.68	1.01	3.54	1.07
	2 Superintendent	3.33	1.12	3.63	1.06	3.46	1.09
24. Experience facilitating staff professional development	1 Principal	3.92	1.10	4.00	1.00	3.95	1.06
	2 Superintendent	3.80	1.19	4.13	.95	3.94	1.09
25. Experience evaluating certified and non-certified staff	1 Principal	3.73	1.06	3.80	1.01	3.75	1.04
	2 Superintendent	3.97	1.00	4.21	.98	4.07	.99
26. Experience overseeing student discipline	1 Principal	3.86	.92	4.05	.84	3.93	.89
	2 Superintendent	3.73	.98	4.08	.78	3.89	.90
27. Experience negotiating union contracts	1 Principal	3.12	1.17	3.32	1.08	3.19	1.14
	2 Superintendent	3.37	1.13	3.46	1.25	3.41	1.17
28. Established rapport amongst parent groups	1 Principal	3.82	1.10	3.78	.88	3.81	1.03
	2 Superintendent	4.20	1.03	4.42*	.78	4.30*	.92
29. A progression of leadership positions	1 Principal	3.96	1.16	4.20	.90	4.04	1.08
	2 Superintendent	4.10	1.16	4.38	.88	4.22	1.04
30. Advanced degrees beyond the Master's level	1 Principal	3.21	1.21	3.59	1.12	3.34	1.19
	2 Superintendent	3.07	1.14	3.96	1.00	3.46	1.16

\* $p < .017$  (Bonferroni corrected nominal Alpha level)

Overall, superintendents reported a higher mean than principals on 73% (11/15) of the questions. The highest mean for superintendents (and second highest mean for principals (4.10)) was 4.31 for question 21 (Proven success implementing school improvement efforts). The highest mean for principals was 4.20 for question 18 (Proven success as an instructional leader). These two findings support the current requirements and demands of today's high school principal. In a time of *No Child Left Behind*, Adequate Yearly Progress, state report cards, achievement gaps and needing to meet 100% student achievement/proficiency by the year 2014, principals' primary responsibility is now focused on instruction and school improvement. While research has shown that women tend to have strong instructional backgrounds, research does not show what women can do to better advance their opportunities for the high school principalship (Grogan, 1999). The findings from this study suggest women should continue to build upon their experiences as instructional leaders (i.e. curriculum chairs, assessment coordinators, etc.) and school improvement facilitators (i.e. chair school improvement goal(s) or team(s); work closely with principals in collecting, reporting and utilizing school improvement data; chair achievement gap subcommittees, etc.) in order to better position themselves for the high school principalship.

Superintendents' mean 4.30 for question 28 (Established rapport amongst parent groups) was statistically significantly larger than principals' mean (3.81) with the largest difference of 0.49. Additionally, female superintendents' mean (4.42) was statistically significantly larger than female principals' mean (3.78) with a difference of 0.64. This finding supports the current role of superintendents as the primary public relations official within a school district. Superintendents tend to staff administrative teams with individuals

who have good parent and community relationships since public relations and politics is a major role of public administration (Blount, 1998).

Both principals and superintendents lowest mean (Principals= 3.11, Superintendents=2.69) was with question 19 (Experience coaching athletic programs), which contradicts research which indicates a large number of high school principals (especially male) have former coaching experience (Grady & O'Connell, 1993; Shakeshaft, 19892). While female principals' (3.02) viewed it not as favorably as male principals (3.15), female superintendents (2.88) did view it more helpful than male superintendents (2.53).

In analyzing the responses by gender within the two groups (principals and superintendents), male principals had a higher mean 80% (12/15) of the time. The three Facilitators that males had a higher mean (3.15, 4.07, 3.82) on were question 19 (Experience coaching athletic programs), question 22 (Proven success minimizing achievement gaps) and question 28 (Established rapport amongst parent groups). Male superintendents had a lower mean than female superintendents on all of the Facilitators questions. Female principals and superintendents had the highest mean (4.27, 4.63) for question 18 (Proven success as an instructional leader). Male principals also had the highest mean (4.16) for question 18. While male superintendents had the highest mean (4.23) for question 21 (Proven success implementing school improvement efforts). Male principals' mean was statistically significantly larger than male superintendents' mean on question 19 (Experience coaching athletic programs).

Surprisingly, mentoring and professional networking again did not receive the feedback that current research supports (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Barth, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Grogan, 1996; Ragins,& Cotton, 1999 Sergiovanni, 2000; Shakeshaft,

1989; Sobehart & Giron, 2002). Both male and female principals and superintendents rated these areas somewhat in the middle; not nearly as strong of a facilitator as instructional leader (question 18) and school improvement efforts (question 21), but also not as weak of a facilitator as coaching (question 19).

### Data Analysis

Participants' responses were analyzed through multiple (SPSS) and multivariate (STATA Version 10.0) regression. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

### Multiple & Multivariate Analysis

Predictors	Outcome: Barriers			Outcome: Facilitators			Multivariate Follow-up Tests F(2,100)
	B	S.E.B.	BETA	B	S.E.B.	BETA	
<b>Principals</b>	$R^2 = .205$			$R^2 = .018$			
Age	-.139	.124	-.128	-.119	.170	-.089	0.97
Female	6.877	1.887	.346	1.647	2.578	.067	7.64**
African.American	4.714	2.469	.176	-.026	3.372	-.001	1.51
ME.NativeAm.Alaskan	-7.137	4.711	-.141	5.875	6.435	.095	1.68
Curriculum.Instruction	-3.302	2.313	-.129	1.029	3.160	.033	1.3
Years.Principal	.149	.153	.113	.073	.208	.045	0.55
<b>Superintendents</b>	$R^2 = .230$			$R^2 = .231$			F(2,42)
Age	.439	.258	.277	.480	.208	.375	2.65
Female	7.536	3.729	.312	6.532	3.004	.335	3.26*
African.American	2.655	5.929	.066	-6.267	4.777	-.194	.85
ME.NativeAm.Alaskan	6.006	11.583	.070	14.518	9.333	.210	1.17
Curriculum.Instruction	1.660	.813	.306	.705	.655	.161	1.93
Years.Principal	-.467	.318	-.253	-.362	.256	-.244	1.66

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Follow-up hypothesis testing for each predictor was conducted to determine if each of the predictors had an effect in all regression equations simultaneously. Those tests are based on F statistics with a degrees of freedom of (p-1, n-k), where p is the number of dependent variables and k is the number of parameters (in a simultaneous equation setting, regression coefficients, correlations or covariances are the parameters). All of the variables included in this testing procedure i.e., predictors and outcome variables, in a simultaneous equations

model setting, only that each predictor's impact on all of the dependent variables was tested holding the impact of the other predictors constant. The multivariate regressions were done using "mvreg" procedure and then a follow-up hypothesis test for each predictor was conducted using "test" procedure under "mvreg" main procedure, using STATA software (Version 10.0).

Female principals and superintendents had a higher mean Barrier and Facilitator. The difference in Barrier means for male and female principals is  $(\bar{X}_F - \bar{X}_M)$  6.877. The difference in Facilitator means for male and female principals is  $(\bar{X}_F - \bar{X}_M)$  1.647. The difference in Barrier means for male and female superintendents is  $(\bar{X}_F - \bar{X}_M)$  7.536. The difference in Facilitator means for male and female superintendents is  $(\bar{X}_F - \bar{X}_M)$  6.532. The dummy variable representing the “female” group was the only statistically significant predictor of the Barriers and the Facilitators simultaneously for the principals [ $F(2,100)=7.64, p < .01$ ] as well as the superintendents [ $F(2,42)=3.26, p < .05$ ]. None of the other predictors were statistically significant predictors of the Barriers and Facilitators simultaneously for both groups (principals and superintendents).

An inverse relationship exists for the principals’ group within the Barriers and Facilitators group. Within the Barriers group, the inverse relationship exists between the predictors Age, ethnicity (ME.NativeAm.Alaskan), and leadership style (instructional) and the dependent variable (Beta = -.128, -.141, -.129). Within the Facilitators group, a smaller inverse relationship exists between the predictors Age and ethnicity (African.American) and the dependent variable (Beta = -.089, -.001).

Within the superintendents’ group, an inverse relationship also exists within the Barriers and Facilitators group. Within the Barriers group, the inverse relationship exists

between the predictor Years.Principal and the dependent variable (Beta = -.253). Within the Facilitators group, an inverse relationship exists between the predictors ethnicity (African.American) and Years.Principal and the dependent variable (Beta = -.194, -.244).

Three of the four shared variances ( $R^2$ ) are similar, ranging from 20.5% to 23.1%. The lowest shared variance occurred in the principal group for Facilitators. Based on the regression analysis, the following general linear models were estimated.

(1) Principals' perceptions (Barriers)=

42.606 - .139(Age) + 6.877(Gender) + 4.714 (African.American) -  
7.137(ME.NativeAm.Alaskan) - 3.302(Curriculum.Instruction) + .149(Years.Principal) +  
residuals

(2) Principals' perceptions (Facilitators)=

60.381 - .119(Age) + 1.647(Gender) - .026(African.American) +  
5.875(ME.NativeAm.Alaskan) + 1.029(Curriculum.Instruction) + .073(Years.Principal) +  
residuals

(3) Superintendents' perceptions (Barriers)=

10.426 + .439(Age) + 7.536(Gender) + 2.655(African.American) +  
6.006(ME.NativeAm.Alaskan) + 1.660(Curriculum.Instruction) - .467(Years.Principal) +  
residuals

(4) Superintendents' perceptions (Facilitators)=

30.57 + .208(Age) + 3.004(Gender) + 4.777(African.American) +  
9.333(ME.NativeAm.Alaskan) + .655(Curriculum.Instruction) + .256(Years.Principal) +  
residuals

## Chapter V

### Discussion

#### *Overview*

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals and superintendents regarding barriers and facilitators for women who aspire to gain a position as a public high school principal in Michigan. For the purposes of this study, gender and other variables that may influence perceptions of high schools principals within Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County public high schools were examined.

After more than two decades of research, women continue to struggle in gaining equal representation among high principals. Data does not currently exist to show the percentage of female and male administrators at the high school level. This study examined gender differences within high school principals and superintendents in an effort to contribute to the body of research to gain equity. Although the current literature on this topic provides some evidence of the underrepresentation, as well as common barriers for women who aspire to become principals, it is limited in providing insight and recommendations regarding how current principals may overcome these barriers. This research provides information from current high school principals and superintendents regarding perceived barriers and facilitators for principals in acquiring a high school principalship. The survey data that were collected and analyzed in this study will contribute to this much needed understanding.



### *Findings*

This study was guided by four research questions and associated hypotheses which were tested at the nominal alpha level of 0.05.

*Research Hypothesis 1:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Research Hypothesis 2:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Research Hypothesis 3:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the barriers for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

*Research Hypothesis 4:* There is significant difference between the perceptions of men and women superintendents regarding the facilitators for women who want to acquire a public high school principalship.

The gender difference in both research questions was supported by the multivariate regression results (the “comparison of female and male” group was the only statistically significant predictor of the Barriers and the Facilitators simultaneously). The multiple regression results showed as principal respondents’ age increased their perceived Barriers and Facilitators score decreased. In other words, the more veteran principals did not see Barrier items as much of a Barrier as the younger-less experienced principals, similarly for Facilitators. However, as superintendents’ age increased their perceived Barrier and Facilitator score also increased. Thus, the more veteran superintendents recognized that

Barriers exist and that certain Facilitators that may help improve women's opportunity to become a high school principal.

Additional findings that are insightful for women who aspire to become high school principals are the examination of difference in means for both the Barriers and Facilitators (Table 9 & 10) as a whole and by gender group. The fact that principals had an overall (10/14 questions) higher Barrier mean than superintendents shows that principals see job attainment as a more difficult accomplishment than superintendents do. This is insightful information for superintendents when hiring high school principals. Knowing that the candidate pool or potential candidate pool is seeing the position as a more difficult one to obtain could prompt superintendents to look at ways in which the position, and its obtainment, can be viewed more favorably. For instance, superintendents could create administrative mentoring programs within a district to encourage and support women who have exhibited leadership ability and who may also aspire to become a high school principal.

"Family/Career conflict" along with "Responsibility and stress of night and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women" continue to be the strongest barriers for aggregated groups which support current research (Mittgang, 2003; Shakeshaft, 1999). Male principals and superintendents perceived "Family/Career conflict" and "Women who plan on having a family" as the largest barriers. These findings support current research on gender issues within educational administration (Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1996; Ruhl-Smith, Shen, & Cooley, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1999; Skrobarcek & Stark, 2002; Young & McLeod, 2001).

With superintendents' highest Barrier mean being "Family/Career conflict" this can provide structural implications and recommendations for superintendents and the current organizational structure within educational administration. If the position of high school

principal could be redesigned so that what is expected of them is more feasible for women who have families or plan to have a family then more women may want to take on the position (Mittgang, 2003). Additionally, with principals' highest Barrier mean "Responsibility and stress of night and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women" it supports the research that the demands of the position the way it is currently configured makes it a difficult position for women with a family or one potentially on the horizon. Not only has does our currently educational administrative organizational structure continue to perpetuate the high demands within the position, but the school community has also grown accustomed to expecting the high school principal be at everything (i.e. sporting events, concerts, plays, etc.) which makes it a 70 to 80 hour a week job (NCES, 1997). Currently, when administrators are not at events it is sometimes viewed as being unsupportive of the students. Even if the principal's job description changed to include fewer evening and night commitments, it will take time before school communities and board of education members embrace the idea that high school principals do not have to be at every event.

By gender within the two groups, male principals had a lower Barrier mean 85% (13/15) of the time and higher Facilitator mean 80% (12/15) of the time, indicating a majority of the time, male principals' perception of Barriers was lower than females, while their perception of Facilitators was higher than females. Since male principals see the job as not having the same degree of barriers, this can have implications for males that mentor females who aspire to become a high school principal. If male mentors are able to see the barriers that exist through a female's viewpoint, they may be able to provide more pertinent mentoring. It may be helpful for male and female mentors to see the data presented in Table 9 and 10 so

that they have a better understanding of what Barriers and Facilitators exist and the viewpoints from each group (i.e. male, female, principal, and superintendent).

Male superintendents had a lower mean score than female superintendents on all of the Barriers and Facilitators questions. Therefore, they indicated less of a Barrier exists and from the Facilitators that were presented, they viewed them as not as helpful in job obtainment. In examining the survey responses, only a small percentage of superintendents (21% of women superintendents and 40% of men superintendents) were actually high school principals which may have influenced the smaller Barrier and Facilitator mean. Out of 54 superintendent responses only 17 (31%) of them were ever a high school principal and the average time in this position (for those 17) was four years. Knowing that 69% of the superintendents that participated in the survey had never been a high school principal helps keep their responses to Barriers and Facilitators in perspective. A majority of them do not have first-hand knowledge, only supervisory knowledge of what the position entails.

Female principals and female superintendents both perceived “There is a good old boys’ club that limits women’s opportunities” as the largest barrier. The largest difference in mean scores for principals (1.52) and superintendents (0.94) also occurred for this barrier. This finding supports current research that the old boys’ club tends to be a leading barrier for women in many organizations; however, men continue not to recognize that the club exists or that it works against women’s advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Grogan, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1999). As much as organizations try not to have a good old boys’ club, the perception is that they do exist and they continue to be a barrier for women in obtaining leadership positions.

Research has been limited in providing recommendations for women who aspire to become high school principals (Grogan, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1999). The findings from this study showed that superintendents and principals perceived “Proven success as an instructional leader” and “Proven success implementing school improvement efforts” were the two most beneficial Facilitators in acquiring a job as a high school principal. Therefore, women should continue to build upon their experiences as instructional leaders and pursue additional opportunities to work closely with their building principals on school improvement efforts (i.e. chair school improvement goal(s) or team(s); work closely with principals in collecting, reporting and utilizing school improvement data; chair achievement gap subcommittees, etc.) in order to better position themselves for the high school principalship. Since school improvement efforts continue to be expanded and required in a day of *No Child Left Behind*, standards based assessments, state report cards and Common Core State Standards (national curriculum) there should be an abundance of opportunities.

While current research recommends mentoring and professional networking for women who aspire to become a high school principal, the responses obtained in this study do not reflect recommendations (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Barth, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Grogan, 1996; Ragins, & Cotton, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2000; Shakeshaft, 1989; Sobehart & Giron, 2002). Both principals and superintendents did not view mentoring (question 6 & 16) or professional networks (question 7 & 17) as a strong Barrier or Facilitator. In fact, these two areas consistently fell toward the middle to bottom in both principal and superintendent ratings. Instead of women focusing on finding a mentor or joining professional networks, the research from this study suggests their time would be

better spent and more fruitful if they focus their efforts on school improvement and instructional leadership.

#### *Limitations*

The sample consisted of 257 public high schools and 83 superintendents within Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties during the 2010-2011 school year. Because the sample did not include participants from other states or counties, the findings may not be generalizable to high school principals in other states or counties. Further, since the study is limited to principals at the high school level, the results may not be generalizable to middle or elementary schools. The study examined principals' and superintendents' perceptions of the barriers for women acquiring a high school principalship. It is assumed that respondents disclosed an authentic response regarding their perception of these barriers.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Research on gender differences within secondary educational administration needs to continue in order to provide equity among the ranks. The results of this study provide insight into the current barriers and facilitators that exist for females who want to acquire a high school principalship and implications for future research, mentoring programs, professional organizations/networks, administrative preparation programs, organizational structure within administrative ranks, and societal expectations regarding the high school principalship.

It would be beneficial for graduate professors and public educators to have disaggregated descriptive statistical information regarding high school principals on a national and state level. By not examining the demographic data a large discussion of what currently exists within educational administration is missing. In a time where we are surrounded with data to the degree that we can find the precise salary of staff in every

community across the country, yet data by gender is not obtainable is hardly unintentional (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Women who aspire to become a high school principal need to be made aware of the gender inequity that exists and provided strategies to overcome the existing barriers. The NCES currently collects gender information in the SASS; however, it does not report these data. It would be insightful to know what percentage of high school principals are women and disaggregate these data by state. Perhaps some states have greater gender equity and have implemented strategies to maintain and support females within the high school principalship. If so, others (i.e. board of education members, policy makers, and professors within administrative preparation programs) can learn from these states what strategies worked and then incorporate them into their programs and practices in an effort to support administrative gender equity nationally.

Researchers, professional organizations and principal preparation programs need to bring transparency to the gender inequities that exist within educational administration. This conspiracy of silence has ramifications for inclusion and society (Shakeshaft, 1999). Principal preparation programs need to include facts, strategies and scenarios in an effort to better inform and prepare future administrators. Administrative internships and graduate classes could easily be structured to include gender equity issues so that more awareness is focused on the issue. Also, if professors could include disaggregated data that include the percent of male and female high school principals within various states into their educational administrative preparatory courses and ask students to come up with theories as to why it has not been ameliorated or possible strategies that may assist in creating more equity, than perhaps more equity could be accomplished rather than it continuing to be being an inconvenient truth that is rarely discussed.

Additionally, the perceived or actual “good old boys” club is often an elephant that exists within school organizations and should be discussed within administrative preparation programs and mentoring sessions. Whether men believe it exists or not, it is a real barrier for women both at the principal and superintendent level.

Since this study was based on a tri-county area in Michigan, it would be beneficial to replicate this study on a national level to examine perceived and actual gender differences within the high school principalship. It would also be valuable to disaggregate the findings by state in order to examine if the gender differences are not as disparate. Findings may show some states or individual districts that utilize and support specific strategies for encouraging females to become high school principals (i.e. mentoring programs, professional organizations, what works, does not work, etc.). These possible findings could then be included in principal preparation programs or published in journal that highlight best practice.

While this study did recognize mentor programs as a strong Facilitator in becoming a high school principal, mentor programs should be restructured to include a gender equity piece. Perhaps with this element they may be viewed more beneficially. Additionally, mentor-mentee pairings could be structured to include a two year relationship where for one year the mentor is a female and the following year the mentor is a male. This would provide teachers (male or female) the opportunity to be mentored by both genders. The mentor program could also include ongoing conversation regarding gender equity within the teaching and administrative ranks to add transparency to what currently exists within various institutions. Raising the issue and looking at the data would be a step towards creating a more gender inclusive environment.



Professional organizations could solicit best practices from superintendents and principals that support gender equity among their ranks and publish their findings in scholarly journals or within seminars (professional development). These organizations often ask members for input regarding the latest initiatives they face (i.e. teacher tenure, achievement gap, response to intervention, etc.); however, ameliorating the gender discrepancy within high school administration is not typically addressed.

Additionally, with both superintendents and principals supporting “Proven success as an instructional leader” and “Proven success implementing school improvement efforts” as the two most beneficial Facilitators in acquiring a job as a high school principal, making these two areas transparent and developed within administrative preparation programs and mentor programs could be beneficial for women in assisting their job attainment. Women could also be encouraged to volunteer through accreditation programs (i.e. North Central Accreditation, Advanced Ed, etc.) to learn more about the process and serve on visiting teams. This strategy would also provide them an opportunity to network and perhaps meet additional administrators who could serve in a mentor capacity.

## APPENDIX A

### WOMEN AND THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP: METROPOLITAN DETROIT PRINCIPALS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR JOB ATTAINMENT

#### PRINCIPAL SURVEY

##### Part I: Barriers

Previous research has focused on barriers to women acquiring a high school principalship. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement that these items are barriers to women acquiring a high school principalship. Please choose one number per item.

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
1. Women married to men whose careers require travel							1 2 3 4 5
2. Family/Career conflict							1 2 3 4 5
3. Women who plan on having a family							1 2 3 4 5
4. Childcare Stress							1 2 3 4 5
5. The responsibility and stress of evening and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women							1 2 3 4 5
6. Limited/Absence of mentoring							1 2 3 4 5
7. Lack of professional networks							1 2 3 4 5
8. Lack of opportunities to gain administrative experience							1 2 3 4 5
9. There is a "glass ceiling" limiting women's career opportunities							1 2 3 4 5
10. The perception that women are emotional decision makers							1 2 3 4 5
11. There is a "good old boys" club that limits women's opportunities							1 2 3 4 5
12. Staff members are reluctant to work for a female boss							1 2 3 4 5
13. The perception that women are not politically savvy							1 2 3 4 5

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 14. The perception that women are not strong instructional leaders                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. Women are perceived as having curricular skills that limit their leadership ability | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Part II: Facilitators

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement that the following items may help advance career opportunities for women aspiring to become a high school principal.

- | Strongly Disagree   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| 16. Female mentoring  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 17. Membership within a professional network                |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 18. Proven success as an instructional leader               |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 19. Experience coaching athletic programs                   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 20. Experience working on curriculum development            |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 21. Proven success implementing school improvement efforts  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 22. Proven success minimizing achievement gaps              |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 23. Experience writing standards based assessments          |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 24. Experience facilitating staff professional development  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 25. Experience evaluating certified and non-certified staff |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 26. Experience overseeing student discipline                |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 27. Experience negotiating union contracts                  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 28. Established rapport amongst parent groups               |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 29. A progression of leadership positions                   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 30. Advanced degrees beyond the Master's level              |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |

Part III: Demographics

31. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female
32. What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ African American \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino  
\_\_\_\_\_ Middle Eastern \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Native American/Alaska Native  
\_\_\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
33. What is your current age?
34. How many years have you been a high school principal?
35. What is your highest level of educational attainment? \_\_\_\_\_ BA/BS \_\_\_\_\_ MA/MS  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ed. Specialist \_\_\_\_\_ Ed.D./Ph.D.
36. Which area occupies the majority of your time during a given week?  
\_\_\_\_\_ administrative/managerial issues (i.e. parent concerns, student discipline,  
meetings, etc.) OR \_\_\_\_\_ curriculum/instruction

Thank you very much for your time and input.

**APPENDIX B**

**WOMEN AND THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP:  
METROPOLITAN DETROIT PRINCIPALS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS REGARDING BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS  
FOR JOB ATTAINMENT**

**SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY**

Part I: Barriers

Previous research has focused on barriers to women acquiring a high school principalship. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement that these items are barriers to women acquiring a high school principalship. Please choose one number per item.

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
1. Women married to men whose careers require travel							1 2 3 4 5
2. Family/Career conflict							1 2 3 4 5
3. Women who plan on having a family							1 2 3 4 5
4. Childcare Stress							1 2 3 4 5
5. The responsibility and stress of evening and weekend work make it an unattractive career to women							1 2 3 4 5
6. Limited/Absence of mentoring							1 2 3 4 5
7. Lack of professional networks							1 2 3 4 5
8. Lack of opportunities to gain administrative experience							1 2 3 4 5
9. There is a "glass ceiling" limiting women's career opportunities							1 2 3 4 5
10. The perception that women are emotional decision makers							1 2 3 4 5
11. There is a "good old boys" club that limits women's opportunities							1 2 3 4 5
12. Staff members are reluctant to work for a female boss							1 2 3 4 5
13. The perception that women are not politically savvy							1 2 3 4 5

14. The perception that women are not strong instructional leaders 1 2 3 4 5
15. Women are perceived as having curricular skills that limit their leadership ability 1 2 3 4 5

Part II: Facilitators

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement that the following items may help advance career opportunities for women aspiring to become a high school principal.

- | Strongly Disagree   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| 16. Female mentoring  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 17. Membership within a professional network                |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 18. Proven success as an instructional leader               |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 19. Experience coaching athletic programs                   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 20. Experience working on curriculum development            |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 21. Proven success implementing school improvement efforts  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 22. Proven success minimizing achievement gaps              |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 23. Experience writing standards based assessments          |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 24. Experience facilitating staff professional development  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 25. Experience evaluating certified and non-certified staff |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 26. Experience overseeing student discipline                |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 27. Experience negotiating union contracts                  |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 28. Established rapport amongst parent groups               |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 29. A progression of leadership positions                   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |
| 30. Advanced degrees beyond the Master's level              |   |   |   |   |   | 1 2 3 4 5      |

Part III: Demographics

31. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

32. What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ African American \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino  
\_\_\_\_\_ Middle Eastern \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Native American/Alaska Native  
\_\_\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

33. What is your current age?

34. How many years were you a high school principal?

35. How many years have you been a superintendent?

36. What is your highest level of educational attainment? \_\_\_\_\_ BA/BS \_\_\_\_\_ MA/MS  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ed. Specialist \_\_\_\_\_ Ed.D./Ph.D.

Thank you very much for your time and input.

## APPENDIX C: Human Investigation Committee Approval

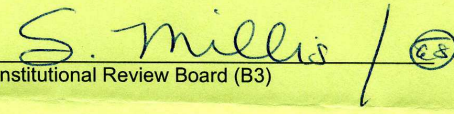
**WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

HUMAN INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE  
87 East Canfield, Second Floor  
Detroit, Michigan 48201  
Phone: (313) 577-1628  
FAX: (313) 993-7122  
<http://hic.wayne.edu>



### NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

**To:** Heidi Kattula  
College of Education

**From:** Dr. Scott Millis *S. Millis* /   
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

**Date:** November 23, 2010

**RE:** HIC #: 113710B3E

Protocol Title: Perceptions of Male and Female Principals and Superintendents Regarding the Barriers for Women in Acquiring a High School Principalship in Michigan

Funding Source:

Protocol #: 1011009029

**Expiration Date:** November 22, 2011

**Risk Level / Category:** Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Expedited Review* Category (#7)\* by the Chairperson/designee for the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 11/23/2010 through 11/22/2011. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Internet Information Sheet (dated 10/20/10)

- Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You *may* receive a "Continuation Renewal Reminder" approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval **before** the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can **never** be reported or published as research data.
- All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the HIC **BEFORE** implementation.
- Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the HIC Policy (<http://www.hic.wayne.edu/hicpol.html>).

**NOTE:**

1. Upon notification of an impending regulatory site visit, hold notification, and/or external audit the HIC office must be contacted immediately.
2. Forms should be downloaded from the HIC website at **each** use.

\*Based on the Expedited Review List, revised November 1998



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**ABSTRACT****WOMEN AND THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP:  
METROPOLITAN DETROIT PRINCIPALS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS REGARDING BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS  
FOR JOB ATTAINMENT**

by

**HEIDI SCHNABEL KATTULA****December 2011****Advisor:** Dr. Michael Addonizio**Major:** Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**Degree:** Doctor of Education

Through multivariate analysis, this study determined if there was a significant difference between the perceptions of men and women high school principals and superintendents in Metropolitan Detroit regarding barriers and facilitators for women who aspire to gain a position as a public high school principal in Michigan. Gender and other variables that may influence perceptions of high schools principals within Michigan's Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County public high schools were examined by administering an electronic survey to each group. Participants' responses were analyzed through multiple and multivariate regression. Follow-up hypothesis testing for each predictor was conducted to determine if each of the predictors had an effect in all regression equations simultaneously. The dummy variable representing the "female" group was the only statistically significant predictor of the Barriers and Facilitators simultaneously for the principals and superintendents.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

HEIDI SCHNABEL KATTULA

### EDUCATION

2002 Ed. Specialist General Administration, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI  
 1998 MA Educational Administration and Supervision, Northern Michigan University,  
 Marquette, MI  
 1992 BS Mathematics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2008-Present Principal: West Hills Middle School, West Bloomfield, MI  
 2009-Present District Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
 2003-2008 Principal: Andover High School, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
 2000-2003 Assistant Principal: Wayne Memorial High School, Wayne, MI  
 1999-2000 Adjunct Mathematics Instructor: Gogebic Community College, Ironwood, MI  
 1999-2000 Physical Education Instruct: Upward Bound, Finlandia College, Hancock, MI  
 1999-2000 Residence Hall Coordinator: Youth Programs, Michigan Technological  
 University, Houghton, MI  
 1996-2000 Mathematics Teacher/Department Chair: Hancock High School, Hancock, MI  
 1993-1996 Honors Mathematics Teacher/Department Chair: Bloom Carroll High School,  
 Carroll, OH  
 1992-1993 Long-Term Substitute Mathematics Teacher: Columbus Public Schools,  
 Columbus, OH

### LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATIONS

State of Michigan Administrator Certificate, K-12, 2009  
 State of Michigan Professional Teaching Certificate, 6-12 grade, 2001  
 Mathematics (EX), Computer Science (NR)  
 State of Michigan Provisional Teaching Certificate, 6-12 grade, 1992  
 Mathematics (EX), Computer Science (NR)  
 State of Ohio Provisional Teaching Certificate, 7-12, 1993  
 Mathematics

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development  
 Association for Middle Level Education  
 Michigan Association of Secondary Principals  
 National Association of Secondary Principals  
 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics  
 National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics