



Texas Council of Women School Executives

Journal of Texas Women School Executives

Journal
of
Texas Women School Executives

JTWSE provides a forum to promote the development of women school executives through scholarly research and practice.

JTWSE recognizes the diversity of talents and skills of women school executives.

Research



Professional Perspective



Creative Work

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Journal of Texas Women School Executives (JTWSE)

Journal of Texas Women School Executives (JTWSE) is an official publication of the Texas Council of Women School Executives (TCWSE). The purpose of JTWSE is to provide a forum to promote the development of women school executives through scholarly research and practice, as well as recognize the professional knowledge and wisdom of practicing and aspiring women school executives. Since leadership is both art and science, JTWSE also solicits creative works that promote the journal purpose. The journal solicits original submissions in three categories to recognize the diversity of talents and skills of women school executives (see Categories of Articles).

Because of a commitment to leadership development and scholarship among school women executives, Texas Council of School Women Executives previously published an annual monograph until 2008. In January 2011, President Lu Anna Stephens and the Executive Board commissioned Dr. Genie Linn and Ms. Karen Saunders to serve as co-editors to design and launch a new professional publication for TCWSE to be published in an electronic format with the first publication to be unveiled at the Annual Conference in January 2012.

JTWSE is an electronic journal open to members and others, both as writers and readers. The journal has been conceived as an "on-line" journal that is available on the WorldWide Web. For membership information see <http://tcwse.org/membership.html> At present, all editorial, Board, and reviewer services are provided without cost to JTWSE or its members by volunteer scholars and practitioners.





From the President:

Success has no limits. We are capable of doing magnificent achievements. This Journal is one of those great achievements for our organization. We have resurrected the monograph and turned it into an educational Journal worthy of sharing not only state wide, but with national and international coverage. Our co-editors have done a yeomen's job of climbing this mountain for you and our women to present their talent, skills and achievements in a shining light for all to see. Strength of the human spirit causes dreams to come true, and this dream of your past presidents and

board members has come true with this first premier edition of the TCWSE online Journal. The main key for success is to never quit. As you work through your professional life, let that be your guiding light. Your beacon is to never give up. We appreciate your participation in this effort, and we hope you will use this vehicle to complete some of your dreams. You are special women, and this portion of our organization is very special.

As Mr. Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." We came to a fork in the road, and we took it at-risk. We either had to stop publishing this monograph or take it to the next level and re-do it and keep going. The monograph had "puttered out" for several reasons. Now, it is alive and well again; we owe that success to many people in this organization. Thank you, Ann, Genie, and Karen for believing in this dream. Thank you to the committee of past presidents and members that met to discuss the future of this effort two years ago. Those efforts reflect a dedication and commitment to our membership and what we stand for as we work to support our members, increase the numbers of women in the group, network, and support the dreams of our women as they progress through the system to obtain more responsibility and make a difference in our world of education.

Thank you so much.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lu Anna Stephens". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lu Anna Stephens, PhD

President and TCWSE member since 1986

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From the Editors' Desk

Monograph to Journal

Every journey begins with a single step. The Journal of Women School Executives has just taken its first steps. We want to tell the story of this new beginning first by looking back and recognizing previous publications sponsored by the Texas Council of Women School Executives. The TCWSE monographs were published for 15 years. We applaud these publications for their excellence and the editors and authors for their valuable contributions.

Women as School Executives: A Powerful Paradigm (1993)

Editors: **Genevieve Brown**, Sam Houston State University
Beverly J. Irby, Sam Houston State University

Women as School Executives: Voices and Visions (1995)

Editors: **Beverly J. Irby**, Sam Houston State University
Genevieve Brown, Sam Houston State University

Women as School Executives: Realizing the Vision (1998)

Editors: **Carole Funk**, Texas Woman's University
Anita Pankake, Texas A&M University - Commerce
Marianne Reese, Southwest Texas State University

Women as School Executives: The Complete Picture (2000)

Editors: **Anita Pankake**, Texas A&M University - Commerce
Gwen Schroth, Texas A&M University - Commerce
Carole Funk, Texas Woman's University

Women as School Executives: Research and Reflections on Educational Leadership (2002)

Editors: **Stephanie A. Korcheck**, Baylor University
Marianne Reese, Southwest Texas State University

Women as School Executives: Leadership: A Bridge to Ourselves (2005)

Editors: **Sandra Harris**, Lamar University
Betty Alford, Stephen F. Austin State University
Julia Ballenger, Stephen F. Austin State University

Women as School Executives: Celebrating Diversity (2008)

Editors: **Danna M. Beaty**, Tarleton State University
Whitney H. Sherman, Old Dominion University
Ava J. Muñoz, The University of Texas-Pan American
Shirley J. Mills, The University of Texas-Pan American
Anita M. Pankake, The University of Texas-Pan American

Copies of these publications are available. Contact Ann Halstead ahalstead@tasanet.org for more information.

Looking Back...



The year was 1993 and the first publication of Women as School Executives: A Powerful Paradigm, edited by Genevieve Brown and Beverly J. Irby was ready for print. The dreams of a pioneer group of women was about to come to fruition. The role of the female administrator was no longer to be ignored in academic print and the Texas Council of Women School Executives began a “practice of taking the feminine perspective into account” (Brown and Irby, 1993), a practice that was echoed by other women in administrative and executive position across the nation.

A total of seven monographs were published, each showcasing women as researchers, practitioners, poets, artists, and experts in the arena of education, sharing and leading by example. 1992-93 TCWSE President Dawn Youdan said in the Forward of the 1993 monograph, “The Texas Council of Women School Executives exists to create, sustain, and nurture women in leadership.” I found this vision in each of the monographs and recognized the efforts of our past editors to focus writings that “...other female school leaders can benefit from...” (Funk, Pankake, Reese, 1998).

In a time where iPads, iPods, Twitter, Google, Facebook, texting and blogging are only a few of the digital platforms available at the “iTouch”, moving forward to an online journal just make good academic sense. We are propelled forward from what we learn by looking back. But, we encourage you to remember that technology does not negate the most important factor in the development of this journal...the wisdom of those we learn from, both past and present.

As we move forward in our journey, don’t forget to check your rearview mirror!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Saunders".

Karen Saunders, MEd.

Editor, member since 2005

Looking Forward...



No step forward can be made without lifting one foot from the past and firmly planting another in the present. Today I am both excited and anxious as we unveil and launch the *Journal of Texas Women School Executives*. The Journal gives voice to the diverse members of Texas Council of Women School Executives. Although membership is not required for authors in this publication, the published works reflect interests and concerns of our members.

We are leading in school districts and campuses across Texas, and we are found teaching and researching in universities. *JTWSE* mirrors these women. Academic research is necessary for our survival and progress. Disciplined and systematic research gives our voices credibility and substance. Valuing and respecting university research contributions to the profession, *JTWSE* offers our thanks to the research contributors in this edition. We are equally proud of action research coming from districts and campuses. It is exciting to see research concepts applied in school improvement activities by school practitioners.

We also proudly share professional and scholarly perspectives from both the university world and from the community of district and campus practitioners. Their messages inspire, challenge, and inform us. We gladly provide this forum for their voices to be heard.

We have body and soul represented in the research and perspectives, but it is heart that is found in creative works. Goodness, truth, and beauty find their expression in the creative works of women school executives.

Writers write to be read, and it is our sincere hope that you read, learn, and enjoy what the authors have contributed. As we have taken this first step, we stand poised to move forward, ready to adapt to challenges and needs of women school executives in the coming years.

I look forward to the journey!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Genie Linn". The script is fluid and cursive.

Genie Bingham Linn, Ed. D.

Editor. Member since 2000

In this Issue. . .

Woman of Power, a poem by Dr. Sharon Ross, introduces and sets the tone for our first edition. The members of the organization are familiar with Sharon’s lyrical leadership that inspires and encourages others to see greatness in themselves.

Research

Perceptions of Race and Gender in the Superintendency. Through narrative inquiry, researchers examined the perceptions of three women superintendents regarding the issues of race and gender in school leadership. The findings substantiate what many women have intuitively known.

One Woman after Another: Superintendent Succession for Sustaining Organizational Change. Change in leadership is inevitable; however, managing a successful transition is not always the case. This story of successful succession from one woman superintendent to another is of interest for all leaders who realize the eventual need for departure and for those who aspire to assuming any vacated leadership position.

It Goes Together! In this case study, one school district documents the effective use of stimulus funds through a collaborative effort with Southwest Educational Development Lab to improve student performance in math and science. Program evaluation is a critical and effective applied research that provides leaders with credible data to validate actions taken and support future decisions.

From The Sandbox to the X-Box: Bullying at a New Level. This article documents a campus action research project. It provides the reader with a view of the process undertaken by a campus to make an informed decision for implementing an anti-bullying program. Surprising yet encouraging research results provided the campus with an appropriate response to the issue.

Professional and Scholarly Perspectives

To Be or Not To Be: Gooley. This poem introduces **Perspectives** with Hamlet’s tortured question “to be or not to be” with a bit of humor along with a serious message about self discovery and acceptance.

Transformational Leadership and the Journey to Cultural Proficiency. In this scholarly perspective, school leaders who are moving beyond changing an organization to transforming it are challenged to embark on a journey to cultural proficiency. On this journey leaders’ actions build relationships by valuing all members of the school community.

Redefining a New Professionalism. Leaders are inspired to transform schools by seeing that mission with new eyes. The transformed leader will focus on building capacity among the people of the organization. This leader will move beyond building knowledge and skills to affecting

beliefs and commitment. The study defines and explains four dimensions of professional virtues that undergird the heart of the study.

A Tale of Two Journeys. This narrative tells the story of personal and organizational learning. The process of policy development for a district afforded a rich learning experience to a campus principal who was engaged in a superintendent internship.

RtI: Not Just a One Sided Triangle. This scholarly examination of RtI provides readers with a calm and rational perspective on meeting the diverse needs of students within the constraints of systemic policy and resources.

Creative Works

Picture This . . .

Simple Joy. This poem is a thing of beauty for both the eyes and the heart.

Move that Bus! Caught in the “busy”ness of day-to-day school operations, this administrator makes sense of her job through this creative metaphorical explanation.

So, You Say I’m Like a Computer System. Another picture of thinking comes through this creative comparison. Metaphor allows an administrator to make meaning for herself while presenting a serious message in an entertaining manner.

My Mother’s Hands. The author paints a picture that speaks to every woman. We are a mother’s daughter.

Research



Professional Perspective



Creative Work

Research

is the hallmark of educational professionalism and scholarship.

The following articles reflect the scholarship of women school executives from universities and school districts. While university professors research issues that are vital to women as leaders and support women educators, district and campus authors share applied research from their experiences in the field.

Scholarly research builds leadership capacity and strengthens our voices.

Dr. Ross calls to women school executives, encouraging them to be heard and seen.

Woman of Power – Woman of Grace

Dr. Sharon Ross

*Woman School Executive, stand upright and proud
Tell the world your story, shout it out real loud
You're a mover and a shaker, girl just look at you
People can't believe you manage all of the things you do*

*You're a natural born leader, you're an extraordinaire
Your courageous style of leadership is uncommonly rare
No matter what assignment you are given to fulfill
You've always met the challenge, that's your drive and inner will*

*So stand right here at the mountain top, this is your rightful place
The world can see you're a Woman of Power and definitely a Woman of Grace*

*For all of your accomplishments we'll jump and yes we'll shout
As you unfold the mysteries, tell us all and leave nothing out
Be honest and sincere, transparent and ever so clear
About the climb up the ladder and how you made it here*

*We honor you Woman of Power and we honor you Woman of Grace
You stand as a magnificent tower, crafted in your rightful place.*

Perceptions of Race and Gender in the Superintendency

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of three novice female superintendents, one African American, one Hispanic, and one White, regarding (a) the impact of race on their professional careers, (b) the impact of gender on their professional careers, and (c) how these career experiences compare. The researcher sought to determine if observable and perceived barriers, including race and gender, manifested for novice female superintendents and to identify strategies used to cope with barriers and adversities in their professional lives.

This qualitative research study was delimited to a purposive sample of three female superintendents in Texas: one African American, one Hispanic, and one White, who had each completed two years as a superintendent of schools. A narrative inquiry approach was utilized and, through constant comparative analysis, major themes were derived within the context of each research question. The major themes that emerged included (a) race as a non-issue for performance, (b) *no excuses* attitude, (c) collaborative leadership, (d) balance between work and family, (e) importance of spirituality, and (f) positive relationships with other superintendents.

Statement of the Problem

The underrepresentation of women in the school superintendency position of the American public school system continues in spite of the fact that an overwhelming majority of school teachers in grades K-12 are women (Shakeshaft, 1989). Glass et al. (2000) stated, "The fact that there are so few women in the superintendency means that the data gathered from a representative sample of female superintendents almost disappears when it is analyzed as part of the full sample of superintendents" (p. 77). According to Skrla (1998), "As more of such studies accumulate, researchers and practitioners should move toward a better understanding of women's work lives as superintendents" (p. 5).

This study focused on the problem that a limited number of women serve as superintendents of schools in Texas. Current superintendents may have experienced challenges and acquired skills that may benefit aspiring female superintendents. Although authors of previous research studies have focused on the roles of race and gender within the superintendency (e.g., Alston, 1996; Brunner, 1999; Daye, 2007; Galloway, 2006; Glenn, 2004; Jackson, 1999; Johnson, 2006;

Mendez-Morse, 1999; Ortiz, 1999; Revere, 1988; Vaughn, 2008), we examined how race and gender impacted the initial two-year superintendency experiences of an African American, Hispanic, and White female.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of three novice female superintendents, one African American, one Hispanic, and one White, regarding (a) the impact of race on their professional careers, (b) the impact of gender on their professional careers, and (c) how these career experiences compare. The intent was to determine if observable and perceived barriers, including race and gender, manifested for novice female superintendents. Additionally, we sought to identify strategies that novice female superintendents used to cope with barriers and adversities in their professional lives.

Significance of the Study

Researchers have primarily focused on those persons exiting the superintendency or aspiring to become superintendents (Allen, 1996; Cambell, 2001; Czaja & Harman, 1997; Gonzales, 2007; Grogan, 1996). A need exists for more research on successful female superintendents of schools in the state of Texas (Blount, 1998; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Additionally, authors have conducted few studies focusing on the experiences of female superintendents of color (Alston, 1996; Daye, 2007; Gewertz, 2006; Johnson, 2006) and fewer studies on the experiences of novice superintendents (Culotta, 2008; McNulty, 2002; Sovine, 2009). Only one study was found that focused specifically on the experience of a novice female superintendent (Bogotch, 1995).

This study added to the body of knowledge pertaining to female superintendents serving in a profession dominated by men. It provided insight and information for female school administrators aspiring to become superintendents of schools. This study also contributed to theory by extending and developing knowledge of the significance of race and gender inequities within this area of educational leadership.

College preparation programs and school districts may also benefit from this study with an increased understanding of the unique barriers novice female superintendents face and how to prepare aspiring female superintendents to address those challenges. The shared experiences of novice superintendents in Texas provided encouragement for female administrators considering the superintendency who may have to overcome the challenge of the *glass ceiling* in school leadership (Clark, Caffarella, & Ingram, 1999; Dabney-Lieras, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Whereas a theory is defined as an explanation of observed phenomena that is organized into logical interrelated terms (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2008), a theoretical framework refers to a systematic explanation of phenomena related to variables within a given theory (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). The theoretical frameworks of feminist poststructuralist theory and critical race theory guided and supported this study.

Feminist thought served as the lens for designing this study on female superintendents. According to Hooks (2000):

Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, and particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step into. (p. 28)

If gender is deemed a valid method of looking at leadership, then we must consider the voices and experiences of women (Grogan, 2000). Lather (1992) maintained, “Studying women from the perspective of their own experiences so that they/we can better understand our situations in the world is research designed *for* women instead of simply research *about* women” (p. 92). Feminist poststructuralist theory and critical race theory provided a context that validated the experiences of the female superintendents included in this study. These theories also served as frameworks for examining potential gender bias and racism that may contribute to the current underrepresentation of minorities in the school superintendency position (Dabney-Lieras, 2008).

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of three novice female superintendents regarding the impact of race on their professional careers?
2. What are the perceptions of three novice female superintendents regarding the impact of gender on their professional careers?
3. To what extent do these career experiences compare among one African American, one Hispanic, and one White female superintendent?

Researcher Bias

For this study, consideration of potential researcher bias was important. The primary researcher is an African American female currently serving as a superintendent of schools and studying female superintendents, which may be considered a limitation. Vaughn (2008) noted that for years Caucasian Americans have researched their own race and gender without having to provide any justification. Furthermore, feminist theory suggests that researcher bias is impossible to eradicate because it is embedded in all forms of research (Grogan, 1999; Lather, 1992; Weeden, 1987). According to Patton (1990), “The ideals of absolute objectivity and value-free science are impossible to attain in practice and are of questionable desirability in the first place because they ignore intrinsically social nature and human purpose of research” (p. 55).

Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated, “Many feminists claim that successful interviewing requires that there be a considerable shared culture between the interviewer and interviewee. Not only should women interview women, but women in the same position” (p. 37). The common experiences shared between the researcher and the participants served as a mechanism to promote understanding. As the researchers, we guarded against bias by triangulating the data collected and utilizing reflexivity, a validity strategy to self-reflect (Merriam, 1998).

We analyzed the experiences of the novice superintendents in this study for emergent themes regarding the impact of race and gender on their professional careers that were shared through their voices and experiences. Utilizing narrative inquiry technique in this study permitted openness and depth during the interviews, which provided insight into the impact of race and

gender on the novice superintendents' professional careers (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Merriam, 1998).

Context of Study

The context of the study is important to qualitative research, and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) maintained that qualitative researchers should go to the place where the event naturally occurs. The contexts of this qualitative, narrative inquiry research study were three public school districts in Texas, which were comparably-sized districts ranging from 1,231 to 1,784 students.

District A was located in northeast Texas and had an enrollment of 1,231 total students. The ethnic distribution of those students included 42.6% African American, 3.5% Hispanic, 52.7% White, 0.7% Native American, and 0.5% Asian/Pacific Islander (TEA, 2009). District A had 250 staff members, including 117 teachers, 13 professional support personnel, 10 campus administration staff personnel, three central administration personnel, 29 educational aides, and 78 auxiliary staff members (TEA, 2009).

District B was located in south Texas and had an enrollment of 1,784 total students. The ethnic distribution of those students included 1.1% African American, 91.3% Hispanic, 7.6% White, 0.0% Native American, and 0.0% Asian/Pacific Islander (TEA, 2009). District B had 310 staff members, including 135 teachers, 29 professional support personnel, 10 campus administration personnel, five central administration personnel, 32 educational aides, and 99 auxiliary staff members (TEA, 2009).

District C was located in southeast Texas and had an enrollment of 1,526 students. The ethnic distribution of those students included 4.5% African American, 59.9% Hispanic, 22.9% White, 0.3% Native American, and 12.4% Asian/Pacific Islander (TEA, 2009). District C had 246 staff members, including 119 teachers, 10 professional support personnel, nine campus administration personnel, four central administration personnel, 28 educational aides, and 76 auxiliary staff (TEA, 2009).

A purposive sample of three female novice superintendents who attended the Texas Association School Administrators (TASA) First-year Superintendents' Academy during the 2007-2008 school year were selected for this study. Specifically, one African American, one White, and one Hispanic female superintendent with two years of total experience serving in similar-sized school districts were selected.

Data Collection

To capture rich data, the three novice female superintendents selected to participate in this study were interviewed individually. The interviews took place in each participant's district. To maintain validity of the study, written consent was obtained from each of the three participants and the interview protocol was reviewed. The protocol included the purpose of the study, an overview of the type of questions, and the approximate time needed for the interview. Each interview lasted approximately two hours. The informants were advised that their consent to participate could be withdrawn at any time during the interviews. To preserve the ethical quality of this study, the identity of participants remained confidential.

The semi-structured interview between the researcher and the informant in which transcripts were developed and became part of the narrative record was a data collection tool used in narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). For this study, the interview questions and responses by the informants were audio taped and later transcribed. Another tool of narrative inquiry was the field notes collected through observations of informants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Extensive field notes were taken for each interview as we noted the nonverbal expressions of the informants as well as the researchers' thoughts and feelings before, during, and after the interviews. All the data collected during the interview process were stored in a secure location. The data will be destroyed one year after the conclusion of the study.

The internal validity of this study was assured with the audio taped interviews that captured direct quotes from the participants in the study (Merriam, 1998). Utilizing a constructivist/interpretive perspective, the validity of this study was established with several strategies including member checking, triangulation, peer review, reflexivity, and trustworthiness.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) described six phases to consider during the process of analyzing data including (a) organizing the data – we read and reread the transcripts so that we could become intimately familiar with the information; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns – we identified significant themes, recurring ideas, and patterns of belief to connect participants and their settings; (c) coding the data in order to analyze the information to put in categories and themes – we coded the data and created a chart to visually examine the data for themes; (d) testing emergent understandings – we questioned the information and data to gain a better understanding of whether it addressed the question and probed further into why it might not; (e) searching for alternative explanations – we looked for additional opportunities that could be utilized to explain the data; and (f) writing the report. This ongoing constant comparison analysis, which “is a method of choice when the researcher wants to answer general, or overarching questions of the data” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 576), provided direction and the opportunity to clarify information in this study.

For this study, data were gathered through individual interviews. Each narrative was shared through the lens of an African American, Hispanic, and White female superintendent respectively. An interview protocol served as the instrument for data collection and consisted of 73 open-ended questions. The interview protocol was used to guide each informant's interview and narrative about her perception of race and gender in her professional career as a novice school district superintendent.

All the interviews were audio taped and, upon completion of each informant's interview, a transcriptionist transcribed each interview verbatim. The format for each participant's narrative consisted of six categories:

1. Profile of Participant (Questions 1 – 12)
2. Obtaining First Superintendency (Questions 13 – 26)
3. Success as a Female Superintendent (Questions 27 – 33)
4. Philosophy of Leadership (Questions 34 – 41)
5. Discussion of Gender and Race (Questions 42 – 57)

Findings

Through constant comparative analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), major themes were derived within the context of each research question. The major themes that emerged included (a) race as a non-issue for performance, (b) *no excuses* attitude, (c) collaborative leadership, (d) balance between work and family, (e) importance of spirituality, and (f) positive relationships with other superintendents.

Race as a non-issue for performance appeared as one of the major themes in these studies. This theme confirmed Brunner's (1998) finding that effective female superintendents need to "remove or let go of anything that blocks their success" (p. 31). All three of the participants were proactive in promoting their own advancement and finding methods to access the school superintendent position. However, the African American and Hispanic superintendents shared experiences of what could be considered racism. Of all the topics discussed, the issue of race was probably the most difficult. All three participants appeared more uneasy when discussing race specifically. As the interviewers, we also felt more tense during this part of the questioning, and each participant appeared visibly relieved when the conversation shifted.

All three female superintendents, including the minorities, indicated that gender had impeded their success more than race, which was similar to Jackson's (1999) finding that African American female superintendents viewed gender as more of a negative factor than race. However, when specifically discussing the female superintendents' perceptions of the impact of gender on their professional careers, a *no excuses* attitude appeared as a major theme in these findings. This finding is congruent to the research conducted by Hoff and Mitchell (2008), as the women in their study believed that gender was not an issue and that their success was based on hard work.

Collaborative leadership appeared as a theme in the findings. This finding confirmed previous research on novice superintendents and female superintendents. In a study of first-time superintendents in the Commonwealth of Virginia, novice superintendents cited the importance of collaboration (Culotta, 2008). Researchers have found that women who attained positions as superintendents were more successful when they exhibited a collaborative leadership style (Brunner, 2000; Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Miller, Washington, & Fiene, 2006; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Other researchers have identified team building, delegating, and working effectively with people as leadership characteristics of outstanding female superintendents (Funk, Pankake, & Schroth, 2002). According to Miller, Washington, and Fiene (2006), the ability to bring people together to impact change is a hallmark trait of the feminine style of leadership. Furthermore, Brown and Irby (2003) noted, "Feminist organizations are characterized by practices such as participative decision making, systems of rotating leadership, promotion of community and cooperation, and power sharing" (p. 105). As noted above, a number of research studies support this study's finding that female superintendents tend to embrace collaborative leadership.

A balance between work and family was an additional theme that evolved in our findings. All participants emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between work and family but also indicated an ongoing struggle with this expectation. This finding is a common theme saturated in previous research on female administrators. In a qualitative study conducted on female secondary principals, the researchers found that "when speaking with all the women

principals about their current family situations, we repeatedly heard stories about the struggle to balance family and work” (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008, p. 459).

A study was conducted on female superintendents to determine their perceptions of career advancement barriers. The barrier receiving the highest mean score was conflicting demands of career and family (Polka, Litchka & Davis, 2008). In the same study, obtaining the support of family was identified as one of the top 10 most effective strategies for females in attaining the school superintendent position (Polka, Litchka & Davis, 2008). With the rarity of female superintendents available to share their own success stories (Lather, 1992), the female superintendents who participated in this study had few role models to ask how to best balance work and family.

Importance of spirituality also appeared as a major theme in the findings. The participants shared how belief in God or a higher power helped them on their journey as superintendents. This finding confirmed Reed and Patterson’s (2007) research that determined spiritual support was an important attribute of resilient female superintendents. In a case study of a first-year female superintendent, Bogotch (1995) found that church and faith were identified as important. Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, and Ballenger (2007) found that the female administrators in their study acknowledged the importance of spirituality for success in educational leadership. For the female superintendents in this study, spirituality was identified as instrumental in helping them to overcome barriers and make sound decisions.

One of the most significant themes that developed was positive relationships with other superintendents. All of the participants in this study spoke highly of the male and female superintendents who mentored them as they aspired to become superintendents and those who continued to mentor them once they became superintendents. Much of the existing research is in agreement that to be successful, female superintendents must “participate in mentoring and coaching relationships from others who understand their uniqueness regardless of ethnic or racial identity” (Campbell-Jones & Avelar-Lasalle, 2000, p. 17). Researchers have identified the importance of mentors for females aspiring to the superintendency and for females currently serving in the superintendency (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Garn & Brown, 2008; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Hoff & Mitchell, 2008; Marshall & Kasten, 1994; Miller, Washington, & Fiene, 2006; Reed & Patterson, 2007; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Shakeshaft et al. (2007) cited too few mentors and lack of mentors, networks, and sponsors as barriers for women aspiring to access school leadership positions.

According to Banuelos (2008), “Mentorships could be effective for women’s unique issues and could be critical for the well-being of superintendents and the districts they lead” (p. 30). In a study of mentoring the first-year superintendent in Texas public schools, novice superintendents identified the following mentor characteristics for a positive effect on job success: trustworthiness, confidentiality, empathy, encouragement, active listening, and integrity (McNulty, 2002). Women who have a mentor have a better chance of accessing and succeeding in the school superintendent position (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Shakeshaft, 1989). This study supports this notion because all three female superintendents acknowledged the positive contributions of their mentors, role models, and other support groups.

Implications for Superintendent Preparation Programs

From the results of this study, several implications emerged for (a) superintendent preparation programs, (b) aspiring female superintendents, and (c) practicing female superintendents.

Gender bias is a major barrier impacting aspiring female superintendents (Blount, 1998; Brunner, 2000; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b; Grogan, 1996; Tallerico, 1999). Superintendent preparation programs can enhance their training and include educational opportunities for aspiring male and female superintendents regarding gender bias. Hopefully, this simple task will equip aspiring female superintendents to be more prepared to overcome gender bias, and aspiring male superintendents will be more cognizant of the existence of gender bias. Moreover, requiring all aspiring superintendents to obtain both a male and a female superintendent as mentors will enable aspiring superintendents to compare and contrast the challenges presented while exposing them to the unique challenges of female superintendents.

The fact that all the participants in this study were somewhat reluctant to identify race and gender as barriers and the fact that none of the participants identified or acknowledged discrimination, per se, may be grounded in the tendency of female superintendents to be silent on those issues (Banuelos, 2008). Superintendent preparation programs can be an avenue to speak candidly about those sensitive topics.

Additionally, factors such as increased accountability mandates, tighter funding, and complicated relationships with school boards and communities are forcing rapid turnovers in the superintendency (Pascopella, 2008). According to a study published by the American Association of School Administrators (Glass & Franceschini, 2007), nearly 39% of current superintendents will exit their positions by the year 2012. It is essential that superintendent preparation programs be ready to meet this demand and take advantage of the opportunity to prime female leaders for these vacant positions.

Implications for Aspiring Female Superintendents

Aspiring female superintendents may find this information useful in understanding that race and gender can be barriers in the superintendency. However, like the participants for this study, they must adopt a *no excuses* attitude and not allow race or gender to prevent them from applying for superintendent positions. To become familiar with the challenges presented in the superintendency, aspiring female superintendents should obtain two mentors: one female and one male. Female administrators should be encouraged to obtain their superintendent's certification and pursue the superintendency. Additionally, avenues must be explored to encourage minority women, specifically African American and Hispanic females, to seek the superintendency. Although the Hispanic population has grown exponentially in Texas, the number of Hispanic superintendents has not (USDE, 2007).

Implications for Practicing Female Superintendents

Like the female superintendents who participated in this study, all practicing female superintendents must embrace a *no excuses* attitude in regard to gender and must not allow race to become an issue when considering performance. Once women are selected as school superintendents, support systems are essential to retain them in the position.

Female superintendents must explore, access, and join all available support networks. According to Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000), “As women move into educational leadership, the support of others who share similar principles or experiences can be invaluable in helping women to be supported and believe in themselves” (p. 62). Funk and Edmonson (2005) identified networking as an important method for aspiring school administrators in developing a support system. They also encouraged active participation in professional organizations for female administrators.

Almost all superintendents in Texas join the traditional professional organization, Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA). However, minority superintendents may have unique experiences that require the additional support of other minority superintendents who may have common experiences. Specifically, women superintendents may opt to join the Texas Council of Women School Executives (TCWSE), African American superintendents may opt to join the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators Executives (TABSE), and Hispanic American superintendents may opt to join the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) and/or the Council of Mexican American Administrators (CMAA).

Taking advantage of these networking opportunities will enable female superintendents to share common experiences in a variety of professional capacities and diverse groups as well as offer guidance, mentorship, and professional advice. Participating in this type of networking may also provide female superintendents with the support needed to remain in the profession. An additional advantage of networking is that “contacts through your networks will let you know when positions are coming open before they are posted” (Funk & Edmonson, 2005, p. 210).

It is important for practicing superintendents to foster positive relationships with other superintendents and to build positive relationships with aspiring female superintendents by serving as mentors. With so few women serving as superintendents, practicing female superintendents serving as mentors will hopefully encourage and support women aspiring to the school superintendent position. Meaningful relationships with mentors may encourage aspiring female superintendents to apply for the position. As practicing female superintendents build relationships with each other and with aspiring female superintendents, strategies for addressing the challenge of balancing family and work can be shared.

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One Woman After Another: Superintendent Succession for Sustaining Organizational Change

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The emphasis on change has obliterated the importance of continuity.

(Hargreaves & Fink, 2003)

Introduction

In football, there is the back-up quarterback; in basketball, you want the bench to go deep; in theatrical productions, we have understudies; and in the executive branch of our governance system we know who takes command if necessary. Having a back up or succession plan seems to be a common activity in various organizational structures. So, why is finding a school district or campus with a succession plan for leadership a rarity rather than a common occurrence? In addressing the topic of leadership succession in education, Fullan (2002) offered the following: “There is no more-neglected topic in research, policy, or practice” (p. 17).

Finding opinions and research that applaud the importance of leadership in any successful organization is easy. More challenging is locating information available on planning for leadership succession and the impact that neglecting this issue can have on the organization. Schechter and Tischler (2007) claim that, “The process of leadership succession during times of school change is one that has been neglected and under-explored, calling for further conceptualization and empirical studies” (p. 5).

This paper is intended to add to the research regarding the importance of leadership succession in influencing change. Our purpose is to detail the planned leadership succession and the roles that two superintendents played in creating, implementing and sustaining district-wide changes. The superintendents were both women; can we claim any association between the sex of the superintendents and the positive results generated in the district? Not really. On the other hand, these two leaders, both women, worked in “tag team” fashion to assure the changes initiated and the improvements accrued would not be lost in change from one leader to the next. As the paper unfolds, it will also become obvious that the Board of Education worked closely with both women in functioning superbly as an ideal “Team of 8.”

In telling this story of successful leadership succession, we first provide an overview of some of the writing and research on leadership succession and the sustainability of change. Next, we give some context for the story including some information about each of the superintendents, a brief description of the district, and a bit of information about the changes initiated to bring about improvements in student learning. Following these descriptions are some details regarding the leadership actions taken and the differing leadership styles used by the two superintendents as the improvement efforts unfolded during the tenure of each leader. We close with a discussion regarding what elements of successful succession planning were used by the district and by the individual leaders.

Overview of the Literature on Leadership Succession and Change

What is leadership succession and why is it important? The term *succession planning* would seem to be self-explanatory. A dictionary definition indicates succession as a noun, meaning “the coming of one person or thing after another in order, sequence, or in the course of events” (Webster’s Unabridged, p.1419). The title of our work would indicate our agreement with this definition. Schechter and Tischler (2007), however, expand on this definition. They identify the actual transition between the leaving of one leader and the taking over of another as succession when talking about leaders. This interpretation infers that succession occurs over time rather than at any one point in time.

According to McAdams (2007) superintendents have a responsibility, along with their boards, to think about and plan for long-term leadership issues in their districts. Unfortunately, he points out, few do. Among the reasons for viewing leadership succession as an important long-term issue for the organization is the disruption that occurs when a leadership change occurs. Numerous authors point to the disruptions caused when a leadership change occurs (Dawley, Hoffman & Smith, 2004; Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; McAdams, 2007; Schechter & Tischler, 2007; & Wasley, 1992). This disruption is especially apparent when a district has been moving in one direction and the new leader wants to steer the organization in a different one (McAdams, 2007). Quinn (2005) asserts that, “When school boards do not have succession plans in place, the consequences can also be severe: stalled reform initiatives, lack of long-term comprehensive education strategy, employee turnover, district wide inertia, loss of public support, haphazard policy, and ultimately, a decline in student achievement stemming from leaderless schools” (p. 46). However, Christy (2009) proffers that these changes do not have to be traumatic if they are planned and implemented thoughtfully.

Hargreaves and Fink (2003) write about the importance of sustaining leadership. They point out that sustainability is different than just keeping something alive; rather, it is less an event and more a matter of persistence. It focuses on keeping those improvements that are underway and in need of continuing to receive the attention, resources and editing necessary to keep them influential. They claim that, “Sustainable leadership outlives particular individuals... formalized or not, changes in leadership always pose a threat to sustainable improvement” (p. 697).

Hargreaves and Fink (2003) go on to identify three implications for developing sustainable leadership. While all three are relevant to the focus of this paper, the second and third are of particular import:

1. *The future of leadership must be embedded in the hearts and minds of the many and*

not rest on the shoulders of a heroic few. That is, “School leadership is not the sum of its individual leaders. School leadership is a system, a culture.”

2. *Education system should see leadership as a vertical system that extends over time.*

3. *The efforts of all leaders are influenced by the impact of their predecessors and have implications for their successors.* No leader is an island in time (p. 699).

Hargreaves (2005) work revealed that, “Successful succession depends on sound planning, successful employment of *outbound* and *inbound* leadership knowledge, limiting the frequency of succession events, and preserving leadership in the face of movements toward more management” (p.164). While our focus here is on leadership succession at the chief executive position, succession planning should be applied to all levels of the organization (Fullan, 2002). According to McAdams (2007), succession planning should include all senior executive positions including the principalship; this can be a part of the districts culture in that current leaders should be trained to look for potential leaders and encouraged to give these individuals opportunities to grow once they are identified.

Additionally, McAdams (2007) emphasized that, “Though superintendent succession planning can be delicate work, it should not cause stress. Boards, because they have continuing responsibility for the district, and superintendents, because they have a legacy to protect, have a common goal – a successor superintendent who will in his or her own way, continue leading the district up the same reform path” (p. 6).

Methods

The presentation brings together two studies (i.e., Ostmeier, 2003 and Abrego, 2008). Both studies were conducted in the same school district. Over a ten-year period, Western Crossing ISD engaged in improvement plans intended to increase student learning throughout the district. During this time, WISD was headed by two superintendents, both women. It was during the tenure of the first superintendent that the first of the two studies was done. The second study was completed during the tenure of the second of the two women superintendents. The second study was a follow-up of the first and replicated as many aspects as possible from the original. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered, including interviews with a school board member; the superintendent; and all central office administrators, principals, and teachers who had worked with each of the superintendents. Additionally, an online questionnaire was made available to all teachers and administrators in the district, and student achievement data for the district was retrieved from the state education agency website.

The current presentation examined the data from both studies looking for specific actions from each of the superintendents (either self or others reported) that aligned with the elements of successful succession planning. A content analysis of the interview data from both studies was completed using common themes from the literature on succession planning as the analysis template. The data were also used to produce a description of each of the women leaders, including the specific actions taken during her tenure, the tone of reactions produced in others based on her actions, and the general perception of others regarding each woman’s style in leading the district. Additionally, to some of the concepts found in the literature on succession,

Fullan's (2007) three phases of change model (initiating, implementing and institutionalization) was used to illuminate and explain some of the events and actions found.

Findings and Discussion

Western Crossing ISD: The District

WCISD has 12 campuses with a total student population of 7,182. The ethnic distribution is 78% White, 17% Hispanic, 3% African American, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American. About 36% of the student population is identified as economically disadvantaged and 34% is considered at-risk. Of the 915 staff members, 463 are teaching staff, 81 are professional support staff, 31 are campus administration (school leadership) and nine are central administration personnel. Teachers' experience ranged from five years to 31 years. Campus and central office administrators' experience within the district ranged from two years to 21 years.

The Superintendents

Dr. Ravinia, the first of the two superintendents, was a first-time superintendent when she came to WCISD. Prior to coming to WCISD, she had served as a teacher, assistant principal and principal as well as in numerous central office positions, including deputy superintendent. She was active in professional and civic organizations and had received numerous recognitions for her outstanding leadership in various educational and social endeavors.

The current superintendent, Dr. Self, has over 35 years in education with about 26 years as an administrator. Her experiences include being a teacher, high school assistant principal, director of communications, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, and superintendent. She reported knowing that the community was a place she would not mind living because her grandmother once lived in the area. During her interview, the current superintendent indicated that this was her first superintendency, and it would also be her last.

The Succession Plan

Purposeful actions by the Board of Education (BOE) in Western Crossing Independent School District helped the district avoid most of the severe consequences that generally accompany a leadership change. In large part, the district's success in creating a smooth transition from one superintendent to another was made possible by the deliberate attempt by the school board and professional community of learners to create and use a profile of job responsibilities and expectations as a template in selecting Western Crossing's second superintendent. The succession plan was implemented with the intent of bringing on board a second superintendent who could conceivably continue what the first had initiated; this decision has allowed the improvement efforts in the district to be actively and consistently pursued for more than a decade.

According to Quinn (2005), "A leadership succession plan includes policies and procedures that can help you identify and nurture key personnel for future school leadership positions" (p. 1). When the Board of Education in WCISD learned Dr. Ravinia was leaving, they made an open commitment to find a successor to continue the initiatives started during her tenure as superintendent.

Dr. Ravinia herself and the BOE member interviewed in the initial study stated that the next superintendent must be committed to the improvement process that was well underway in the district. Significant improvement in student achievement as measured by the state testing had convinced the BOE that the changes initiated were moving the district in the desired direction. As a result, the school district designed a profile of characteristics (Ostmeyer, 2003) which the staff at WCISD wanted to see in the new superintendent.

Both Dr. Ravinia and Dr. Self engaged the district in a continuous improvement process that resulted in gains in student learning, teacher effectiveness and leadership development. The leadership styles and actions of the two women were vastly different, with one being the initiator of the district's changes and the other the developer and institutionalizer of the changes initiated.

Dr. Ravinia was described repeatedly as a change agent with the inference being that she disrupted the status quo. Not all of the references to Dr. Ravinia's change agent style were intended to be complimentary. However, the following quote from Dr. Self indicates that Dr. Ravinia's style was empowering of her own style when she arrived:

I was lucky, when I got here, but I knew that when I came there had been a lot of change in the district, really focusing on professional learning communities and they had read Richard DuFour and really were very fairly sophisticated compared to other school districts in the state and that really helped cause I didn't have to come in and do a whole lot of backfilling in terms of knowledge and so I came in and I was able to do...be more of a team builder and that was my focus, I did not want to change anything the first year. I wanted to give them a chance to take a breath and realize we were on this journey together. And we were going to continue our improvement effort and that's what we did. (Self, 149-176)

The actions taken by Dr. Ravinia align with "planned discontinuity" as described by Hargreaves (2005) and were intended to "shake up" the district from its complacency in dealing with student success. According to BOE president, Joanna, the board searched intentionally for "a different superintendent". She shared her involvement over the past ten years, specifically regarding the recruitment of Dr. Ravinia.

...we felt I think as a board that we needed [to] make significant changes...lots of things were happening and we needed someone that [would] come in with new ideas and emphasis on academic excellence...the ability to make hard decisions difficult decisions...someone who would be very enthusiastic about change and I think Dr. Ravinia is really, um I hate to use such a term but it's [a] change agent. She was willing to take risk[s] and actually I don't want to brag but one of my strong points is the ability to choose people. I went to college and that was always my forte...so I hired a lot of people and cause I hired good people and trained good people...they were always stealing from me at where I worked...so um we had uh the TASB group that came in [with a list of] candidates but I think I was really the one who emphasized to the board that we really needed a change. (Joanna 1-2)

In addition, the actions which Dr. Ravinia employed, as described by herself and others (Ostmeyer, 2003), included a re-organization of administrative responsibilities and roles at central office; a consistent, articulated vision for the district's improvement; and a variety of staff

development opportunities for teachers and administrators provided by external consultants; these actions shook up the organization. Central office and building administrators and teachers reported that Dr. Ravinia was relentless in her repetition of the district's vision and mission, whenever and wherever she spoke.

Dr. Ravinia used student learning data as the basis for both her words and actions. Though the student performance in the district was "not bad," in Dr. Ravinia's view, it could be better. While she encouraged innovation, both principals and teachers indicated that whatever was adopted needed to evidence positive, measureable changes in student learning. In addition, Dr. Ravinia established an expectation that everyone in the district was to be a learner. A variety of professional development activities were provided for everyone in the district. These opportunities were often provided by external consultants and required the presence of all administrators as well as teachers.

Overall, Dr. Ravinia's actions were directive rather than collaborative. While Dr. Ravin was not totally autocratic, she did set expectations and left little to no discretion on whether or not they would be met. The former superintendent was described as being direct, intense, the consummate politician, and as "a woman like they hadn't met before" (BM, 14). Upon her arrival, Dr. Ravinia was identified as a change agent by staff and the board member interviewed by Ostmeyer (2003). At the end of her tenure at Western Crossing ISD, according to Ostmeyer's (2003) interview, Dr. Ravinia shared that one of her goals and part of her vision for the district included the importance of being on a cycle for continuous improvement --a goal that Dr. Self takes on during her tenure.

With regards to the transition of the new superintendent to WCISD, one particular central office administrator shared, "...I mean she [Dr. Ravinia] brought this district so far forward in time that...it was incredible...she had taken them where they needed to be and now it was ready for a different type of leader [reference to current superintendent] to continue moving us forward" (CNTRL4, 361-372). And so, in contrast to Dr. Ravinia's style, the board member described Dr. Self as, "quite opposite, she has the soft touch, very humble, she's very family oriented..." (Joana, 14-15). Similarly, a central office administrator referred to Dr. Self as "always learning" and stated that she led by example.

However, while their styles may have differed they were similar in many aspects of their vision and philosophy for the district. One of the central office administrators shared that decisions at WCISD were data-driven similar to Dr. Ravinia's philosophy – both focused on learning. The specifics of that description follow:

I think she had a vision of coming to a district and have the potential to really grow and it's academic excellence...without losing sight that children come with different needs and that a lot of training is required at all levels...the board, administrators, teachers and the staff. I think that was the way she looked at it really. She's a strong believer in training. And leads by example...so she's always learning. She's always participating in training. (CNTRL8, 1393-1420)

Furthermore, in an effort to support staff and principals, Dr. Self implemented a succession plan for principals and staff. According to Quinn (2002), "an effective succession

plan anticipates administrative vacancies and develops a pool of qualified candidates in advance of critical need” (p. 2).

A central office administrator commented on staff development from a district-wide perspective.

And this year, they’ll be a very focused [staff development program] one because we have four new principals. I had a retirement and I had one guy leave and two guys and two other ladies got promoted. So I have four new principals. And our staff development director has already met with the various assistant superintendents to determine what they believe are the key learnings that need to happen before school starts. And then what can be shared after school starts. And then we’re going to have a new principals’ academy that will occur for this entire year. We also set them up with mentors and then we are also you know [as I] explained the way it didn’t work for us but we are not now going to have an administrator-in-training [program]. And I don’t know what he [administrator’s name] is going to call it yet but it will be for those that we think have potential, you apply for it and you have to be accepted. And they will receive much of the training we have given our administrators because it would be great if you could put an assistant principal in place that had all the training that you already wanted. (CNTRL7, 2094-2125)

Succession, Style and Change

One perspective for analyzing the superintendents’ actions is Fullan’s (2007) stages of the change process; it is important to note that while both were directly involved in building capacity across the district, the processes and tools used to produce outcomes were different under each administration. The first superintendent, Dr. Ravinia, initiated and implemented an improvement process that focused on the development of a professional learning community. Dr. Self continued the implementation and sustainability of the improvement process by creating “a structure that supports the district to improve and change their current practices”, that is, an “implementation bridge” (Hord & Hall, 2006, p. 9). The implementation bridge in WCISD was the district-wide use of the continuous improvement model and its tools that moved and supported the sustainability of the changes initiated from implementation to institutionalization.

As successor, Dr. Self expressed in words and actions values that mirrored those held by Dr. Ravinia. However, she focused her role on being developer and institutionalizer. Through Dr. Self’s leadership, WCISD sustained its district-wide professional learning community. Dr. Ravinia appeared to have responded to McAdams’ (2007) admonishment that superintendents should act in the best interest of the district and minimize the disruption of a leadership change. She worked with the WCISD Board and educational community to develop a profile of her successor. Dr. Ravinia seems to have cared about the legacy she had begun to build and wanted her successor to continue and improve upon the work she had begun (McAdams, 2007).

Thus, Dr. Self believed Dr. Ravinia created the cognitive dissonance required to move the district forward in terms of accepting and managing change. Thus “continuous improvement” served as a strong enhancer to sustaining a Professional Learning Community (PLC) at WCISD. As a result, continuous improvement was a major process used by the district to move the organization forward as well as to sustain dimensions of a PLC.

Dr. Self's efforts to further "develop and institutionalize" the changes initiated during Dr. Ravinia's tenure emerged in a variety of tools used to operationalize continuous improvement. For example, Dr. Self's took direct action to be inclusive in her decision-making process to resolve issues of trust, and her focus on "developing people and the organization" (Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). She ensured that staff had concrete tools to problem-solve; this practice aligns with the work of Walker and Sackney (as cited in Huffman & Hipp, 2003, p. 148) indicating that, "the nature and quality of leadership behavior, the existence of a collaborative culture, and the level of trust and staff involvement were critical factors in institutionalization and school effectiveness."

In essence, Dr. Self helped her organization create and use specific concrete tools and models -- the design and use of a decision-making matrix, scorecard, and use of the Baldrige Model for Excellence [the continuous improvement model] to enhance the district. In terms of leadership actions and styles, it is beyond just differing philosophical stances; Dr. Self further developed the organization. Not only was the capacity of individuals being built but also she has built the capacity of the district. According to Hord (2004), "the PLC is not an improvement program or plan, but it provides a structure for schools to continuously improve by building staff capacity for learning and change" (p. 14). Thus, in addition to keeping the PLC components going, the superintendent addressed in part the notion of sustainability in that not only does it continue to be there but that the quality of the innovation has gotten better through the district-wide use of and focus provided by the continuous improvement model.

Thus, findings generated from the current study confirm that Western Crossing ISD had indeed sustained and built upon the efforts initiated under the first administration. Dr. Ravinia initiated and began implementing a culture of continuous improvement; however, Dr. Self is actually responsible for following through on the implementation pieces of continuous improvement. Dr. Ravinia created the desire and the demand for change and then moved the district into the implementation phase. Dr. Self has continued with the implementation phase and has institutionalized their efforts through the use of a specific vehicle -- the Baldrige Model for Excellence -- a continuous improvement model.

Based on the action descriptions, each superintendent appears to have taken the appropriate, but very different actions necessary to keep the district in continuous improvement. These findings address issues of leading and managing change at the district level and the necessity for different leadership styles to be employed at various stages of emerging change. Finally, the importance of this leadership succession in initiating and sustaining district-wide change is emphasized; though the term "leadership succession" was not specifically used, both women were cognizant of the importance of honoring the work of the other (inbound and outbound knowledge) in preserving the improvements achieved and continuing to move the district forward. Additionally, kudos should be given to the WCISD Board of Education for addressing the succession issues proactively with the long-term interest of the students as their guide to action.

Closing Comments

The findings from this study provide examples of practices for boards and district level leaders to use in planning and implementing lasting change at the district level with particular attention being paid to leadership succession. As shared earlier, McAdams (2007) stressed the common goal of both boards and superintendents -- "a successor superintendent who will continue leading

the district up the same reform path” (p. 6).

The data confirm the importance of considering leadership at the district level, as advised by Forsyth (2004), Quinn (2002, 2005) and Hargreaves (2005), in creating a context for sustainable change. The differing styles of the two women superintendents in this study provide important information regarding the need to employ actions aligned with the organization’s different phases of the change process. The importance of establishing specific and purposeful relationships in creating a new culture of continuous improvement was chronicled throughout this work. There is evidence to support the need for varying leadership actions to address staff and organizational needs over an extended period, if change is to be sustained. Given the various leadership actions executed by these women, this case is a testament to the need for leadership preparation to focus on the reality of the situation rather than some artificial categorization of female vs. male leadership styles. The lessons learned are of particular benefit to practitioners, administrator preparation programs, and school board members.

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It Goes Together!

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Abstract

Use of one-time stimulus funds to design and implement a program at the high school level to integrate mathematics and science core courses provided academic growth for struggling learners and a new enthusiasm for veteran teachers. Teachers discovered areas of confusion for students between the disciplines as they learned new skills along with their students.

Introduction

Hawkins Independent School District is a small, rural school district located just north of Tyler, Texas. The district serves approximately 730 students. Fifty percent of these students are classified as economically disadvantaged. For many years, the percentage of students who met the passing standards on the Texas statewide assessment in math and science was significantly below the number of students who passed the assessment in the areas of reading and social studies. Special education students' achievement mirrored this gap between content areas but also fell below the achievement level of their regular education peers.

When Dan H. Rose was hired as superintendent of Hawkins ISD in January 2004, he knew the district needed to align its curriculum if this trend was to be reversed, He hired a curriculum director and told her to take on the task of aligning the curriculum as well as leading the district to achieve a goal to be known as "the Math/Science district" in the state.

The opportunity to achieve this goal was boosted when the US Department of Education made additional funds available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Hawkins ISD decided to tackle the problem of math/science achievement with a new program funded through these stimulus dollars. The idea was to create integrated math and science classes, co-taught by a math and a science teacher, at the 9th -11th grade levels in a double block period. By connecting the two disciplines, students could more readily understand concepts and apply their learning to

their everyday lives. According to Furner and Kumar (Bosse , Lee, Swinson, & Faulconer, 2007), “the segregation of mathematics and science instruction allows for few connections to be recognized between the two fields and for few real-world applications to be investigated” (2010). After an initial year of trial and error, teacher training “on the fly” and a whirlwind of new discoveries about ourselves and our students, student achievement gains were evident. Those learning the most about a discipline other than their own, however, were the teachers. Teacher excitement levels at learning new concepts along with their students spilled over to ignite student curiosity and desire to learn. Use of the onetime stimulus funds to train and equip teachers to teach these courses has provided Hawkins ISD with a program that will last for many years to come.

Philosophy and Goal

Long before Hawkins knew of Bosse et al (2007) and their research, teachers had sensed that struggling students seemed to be missing connections between information and concepts taught in various courses. Hawkins High School, which serves approximately 200 students, is primarily an inclusion school for the delivery of all core courses. Students in need of services from special education are integrated into the regular instructional setting. Individual education plans (IEPs) are developed and instructional support is provided through several onsite support systems. Therefore, every teacher shares responsibility for the learning of students with special needs. For the initial year of our program, Hawkins chose to target students identified for special education services and those who had a history of struggling with mathematics. If the program could raise achievement for students most in need of assistance, we reasoned, it would be a program worth expanding to other students as well.

We decided early on that the program should take a holistic approach to instruction, creating a concept-based curriculum for deeper understanding and application. Such an endeavor was beyond the expertise of district personnel. Southwest Educational Development Laboratories (SEDL), a nonprofit corporation that conducts education research and development, was enlisted as an outside consultant to assist staff in designing a curriculum that would address the goal of helping struggling students see the connections between the concepts of math and science, thereby improving their achievement. A desired byproduct was increased student confidence and self esteem. Dr. Concepcion Molina, mathematics education expert, and Bob Anderson, science education expert, of SEDL were tapped to tackle the task.

Process

The project started the summer prior to its implementation. A decision was made to pair Algebra 1 with Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) at the ninth grade, Geometry with Biology at the 10th grade, and Mathematical Models with Applications with Conceptual Physics at the 11th grade. Teachers were paid a stipend for four days during the summer to work with their partners and the SEDL consultants in preparing their courses. Further incentive was offered to teachers in

the form of semester stipends based upon student performance on an assessment given pre-, mid-, and post-year one. A tiered system offered an initial base payment, with an increase for level one growth (5%) and another for level two growth (10%) on the assessment. Stipends were only offered for the initial year of the project.

The participants were an interesting group. Five of the six teachers were experienced teachers, four of them having taught for over 10 years. The average age of the group was mid 40s-- not the group typically thought of as ready to innovate and create new courses. They were, however, amazing. One of the teachers was new to the district, one was new to teaching, coming out of industry. Two of the teachers were also athletic coaches and one of the teachers had not been in a science classroom in several years. Initially, teachers were territorial and protective of their own subject areas. They wanted to split the time during the double block class period. One teacher would teach science, then the other math, while the teacher whose discipline was not "up" would watch and circulate around the room. The SEDL consultants encouraged them to think more in terms of integration of the two subjects.

Professional development

The professional development the summer prior to implementation started out tenuously. Upon realizing that the goal was to co-teach and integrate the two courses into an integrated block, the teachers began to feel a bit overwhelmed with the challenge. SEDL consultants worked to calm the fears and get the group on track. True, they said, there was little evidence that the type of materials they would be creating together existed elsewhere. They then asked the teachers to forget for a moment lesson plans and individual courses and to look at mathematics and science at the conceptual level.

In mathematics, the group reviewed common misconceptions students have with regard to number concepts through analysis of NAEP (IES National Center for Education Statistics) sample questions. Molina showed teachers how planning at the conceptual level to address common misconceptions that students bring to high school from their early mathematical instruction can short circuit some problems students encounter as they begin to delve deeper into the discipline. In science, Anderson provided the Project 2061 Concept Maps (AAAS 2007) as a way of tracking basic scientific concepts through the developmental understanding of children.

With the focus on the conceptual level, teachers were able to shift their thinking from the isolated steps and procedures of their disciplines to the areas where the concepts they were teaching were similar or overlapped. The remainder of the time spent with the SEDL consultants during the summer was spent developing a scope and sequence for each course.

Simultaneously, the SEDL consultants worked with the district's curriculum director to develop a benchmark test to be given as a pre-, mid-year, and post-test for each course to track the growth of the students. The test for the Integrated Physics and Chemistry/Algebra I and Mathematical Models with Applications and Conceptual Physics classes was the same. A different assessment

was devised for the Geometry/Biology block. The benchmark targeted examination of students' conceptual understanding, basic measurement, interpretation of data, as well as general science concepts. The results over the course of the year are included below.

Ongoing professional development and support was provided for teachers throughout the year. TI Navigators were purchased for use in the class and a TI trainer was brought in to simultaneously teach the students and the teachers how to manipulate these calculators. Though students are not allowed to utilize this type of calculator on state testing, they do provide visual representations of functions that helped students in conceptual understanding.

The University of Texas at Tyler T-STEM Center also sent a consultant, Kris Trampus, on multiple occasions to assist teachers in hands on activities connecting math and science. The book *Introductory Science Skills* (2nd ed.) (Gabel, 1993) was provided to each teacher. The district purchased FLIP video cameras for each class so that students and teachers could record experiments and projects for review and presentation. Several activities utilizing the videos were demonstrated by the T-STEM consultant.

SUPERNet Consortium Director, Donna Bogue, provided a day of professional development at the East Texas Nature Center in Tyler. The use of science probes to gather and analyze data was demonstrated to all the teachers. SUPERNet Consortium had received a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife to provide large coolers filled with probe kits and lesson plans for use at the Nature Center. Later in the year, each class was able to take a field trip to the Nature Center and complete the same activities their teachers had experienced earlier. Upon return to Hawkins, the team discovered that the district owned almost all of the science probes they had worked with at the Nature Center. Utilization of these tools increased immediately.

Approximately 12 weeks into the school year, the SEDL consultants returned to see how the teachers were doing and assist with any concerns that might have arisen. The teachers and the consultants together made a presentation to the Hawkins Board of Trustees. The excitement among the teachers was evident to everyone in the room. Each teacher was in learning mode as they had had to learn a new discipline that had been far removed from their realm for many years. One teacher told a story of learning to use the graphing calculators (the ones students **are** allowed to use in testing) right along with his students. "Mrs. Starr would teach the lesson and I would try to keep up with the students. I think it was fun for them to see that I was learning something new as well. Struggling students need to see their teachers struggle and succeed too. We don't know everything." Both the Board and the Superintendent expressed enthusiastic support for the teachers' endeavor. This support encouraged the teachers to continue the pursuit of creating this new approach to teaching and learning.

Results

Without a doubt, the most successful part of the first year of Math/Science Integration was the change in the teachers. This is not to say that these teachers were not great teachers prior to the

project because they were. The excitement and enthusiasm that they exuded, however, was contagious. The teachers learned so much from one another and were able to build on their strengths in ways that a single teacher, teaching a single subject, could not.

The program, without design, served as a mentorship and induction program. The teacher new to the district immediately had a partner that helped to ease her into the “ways of the district.” She had daily support from a veteran teacher. The teacher who came out of industry knew science well. His work with the veteran math teacher helped him to learn classroom management and how to talk to high school students about complex topics that they were only beginning to learn. He said he learned more in one year from his partner about teaching than any teacher education program could have ever taught him.

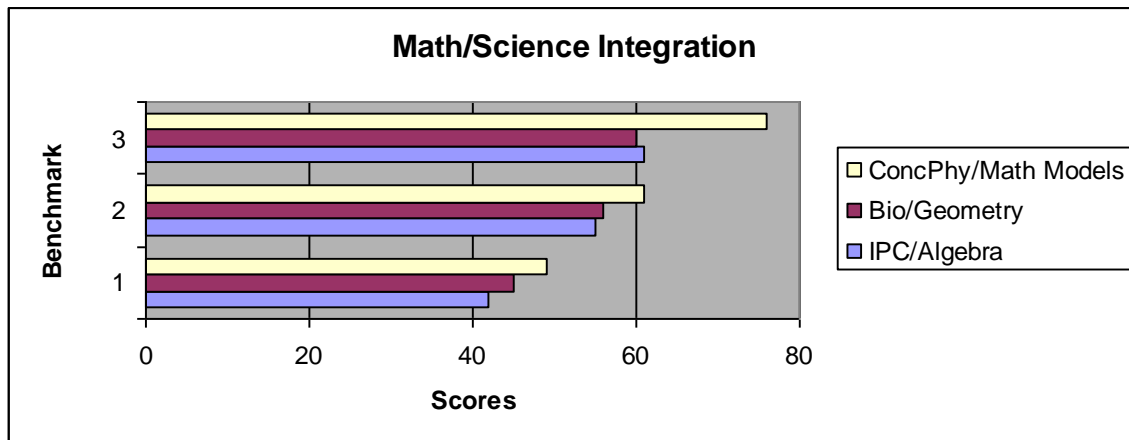
One of the most interesting “discoveries” throughout the project was the way in which vocabulary in the two disciplines interrelated. In some cases, teachers found that they would utilize the same word to mean different things. In other cases, different words were used to mean basically the same thing. For struggling learners, instructors felt that this in itself might be causing some of the problems. The use of a common vocabulary between the disciplines and grade levels was decided upon to assist students in their understanding. A few brief examples follow.

Coefficients are used in both chemistry and math but are distributed differently. For example, in the science term 3CH_2 , the 3 is the coefficient. In mathematics, 3CH_2 would mean 3 times C times H, and the subscript 2 would only denote that this H is a different location from any other H. Dependent and independent variables, however, were used in the same way. While the Algebra teacher taught students the distance, rate, and time formula, the IPC teacher used the word **speed** instead of **rate**.

While the math teacher taught direct variation, the science teacher would use the term constant function. In mathematics, one thinks of a constant function as a horizontal line. Math and science teachers agreed to use the term constant variation in order to be less confusing for the students. While the science teacher strives for closed solutions (precision), close enough being alright at times, the math teacher was looking for precision as well as accuracy. Teachers found the process of setting up and completing a lab was similar to the problem process in mathematics.

Student Results

Students were assessed three times using the same instrument that was created during the summer consultations as described above. Growth in those scores is shown below.



On the state’s high stakes testing, the measure by which schools in the state are judged, gains were seen as well. Texas tests eighth graders in all four content areas but only tests ninth graders in math and reading. Because eighth grade is a “must pass” year, students are allowed three attempts to pass both the math and reading tests. The sequence of math courses utilized for average students within the district is eighth grade math, Algebra 1, Geometry, Math Models, and Algebra 2. The transition between eighth grade math and Algebra 1 is difficult for many students.

Of the eleventh graders who did not pass the state’s Math exam as 10th graders, seven passed at the end of this project; in science six who did not pass as tenth graders passed. All tenth graders repeated their pass/fail performance this year as compared with their ninth grade year in math. Since ninth grade does not take a science test, mathematics was their only measure. Seven ninth graders who had passed math as eighth graders did not pass as ninth graders. Of those seven, five are projected to pass the test by the high stakes eleventh grade year according the Texas Projection Model (TPM). Several of the ninth graders who did not pass math in ninth grade but did in the prior year had required more than one attempt to pass as eighth graders.

Lessons learned

The first year of implementation of Hawkins ISD Math/Science Integrated courses project taught the district several lessons. First, some skills do need to be taught in isolation. Much to the disappointment of the eager curriculum director, there are times when math or the science concepts must be taught separately. That, however, did not destroy the overall intent of the program. Second, the project made a difference for teachers. Teachers’ growth, their learning, their new enthusiasm for their own subjects, and their discovery of points of confusion for students all played a vital role in making the program a success.

Communication is important. Providing time for teachers to meet both as pairs and as an entire team is important. Meeting with central office personnel and building level administrators on an ongoing basis is important. There were some conflicts with student personalities, and those

students were either moved to another class in order to separate the combination or if an individual was not a good fit for the extended period of time in one place, he or she was removed from the program all together. Removal did not happen often, but it was important to listen to teacher input on student achievement. Some students just don't function as well in an active, but longer class period.

Support from the top down is important. The building principal, Kevin White, supported his teachers from day one of the project. He was involved in their planning and assisted at every turn. The superintendent, Dan Rose, and the Board of Trustees were encouraging and asked for updates often. The updates allowed the teachers to feel supported as they navigated uncharted waters. The SEDL consultants, as well as Michael O'Dell of the UT STEM Center provided on-demand email support. This, too, gave the teachers the feeling that they were not working in isolation.

It costs money. Setting up a program like this is not free. Training, extra duty stipends, supplies, and substitutes all figure in to the up-front costs. However, once the teachers are trained, curriculum is written, and large capital items are purchased, the ongoing costs are minimal. The program was a perfect investment for the one-time stimulus funds. The impact was felt by both teachers and students and it will endure beyond the funding period.

With a full year behind them, the teachers feel that this next year will be even better as their understanding of the full scope is better now. From the perspective of the curriculum director, the joy of teaching and learning that returned to these classrooms was well worth the initial investment of creating a program that can be self-sustaining. Another lesson from the administrative end--shake things up and offer new challenges to veteran teachers periodically to rekindle the flame-- it's contagious!!

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Dr. Debi Crawford has 30 years of experience in education, including teaching experience at the elementary and secondary levels. She was a 1994 state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Secondary Science Teaching. She helped to establish, and currently remains the administrator of SUPERNet Virtual School. She has served as Assistant Superintendent of Hawkins ISD for the past eight years.

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Mr. Bob Anderson has a diverse background of experiences in medical research, higher education, K-12 education, and consulting. He has been a researcher, teacher, district science director, and assisted in establishing and opening eight community college science, math, and vocational departments in Texas. In K-12 education he was a pioneer in the use of standards based instruction, curriculum alignment, strand mapping, benchmarking, brain based instruction, and hands on science.

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From the Sandbox to the X-Box: Bullying at a New Level

Denise Daniels, Assistant Principal

Bullying on our campus is prevalent in many forms, from the old fashioned hand written note to the smart phone text and emails. We have dealt with many long term forms of bullying that started from our elementary such as simply name calling and have progressed into cyber-space at the junior high. It is a blessing and a curse to grow up with some students. These students who did not care for each other in the sand box still hold on to grudges as they grow. The small town atmosphere as portrayed on television is not always what it is cracked up to be; many students know too much about each other and each other's families, so when the trash talking, dirt flying bullying begins, more people get hurt than just the two doing the speaking. Many times we have had entire families involved who then want the school to handle it. Our small junior high has a high socio-economically diverse population and is classified a Title I school. Solving this problem is of the upmost importance. In the age of reality television, our students believe that MTV cameras are watching their every move. Thus, the voices are louder and actions more animated as seen on TV. The students need to gain a true understanding of what bullying actually is and strategies on how to present and express themselves in a respectful manner. Our overall purpose for this study project was to arm our students with facts about bullying and useful strategies that they can use not only in school but also in life. In order to accomplish this goal, we began by seeking to understand the issue of bullying on our campus from both the student and teacher perspectives. Do the students feel bullied at school, and do they feel safe? What do teachers know and believe about bullying on our campus?

Bullying Background

Bullying by definition occurs when "a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons" (Olweus, 1991). Many students and even teachers do not fully understand the difference between bullying and adolescent teasing. There is a fine line between the two but still a line. Again, it is the frequency in which the negative actions occur to a student. Bullying and teasing have been around for years, so many think it foolish to spend so much time on an age-old problem. However, what has changed is the manner in which the bullying/teasing happens. Before you only had to see these students in school and playground so the frequency was during school hours. and home was your place of solace. Now, with Facebook, My Space, smart phones, email addresses, and text, students can be bombarded 24 hours a day seven days a week; there is no time to re-group, no break. We need to recognize that plain old teasing no longer exists. A study involving students from the Midwest about incidences of bullying in their school careers showed that 80% of high school reported being bullied in school while 90% of fourth through eighth graders also reported being bullied during their school years (Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992; Hoover, Oliver, & Thompson, 1993). We can determine that bullying is actually a small problem compared to a much larger issue culture.

Culture by definition states, “Improvement of mind, tastes, and manners through careful training” and “a particular stage, form, or kind of civilization.” (Webster 1990). Training is the key component in this definition. We need to train our students to respect others and understand that it is not only what you say but the manner in which you say it that can cause a miscommunication. Our project goal is to develop a program that will be implemented in our classrooms and teach/train our students to gain a better understanding of how to handle the many facets of communication.

Research Process

The campus consists of low socio-economic students from single parent families. The demographics are approximately 60% Hispanic, 21% Black, 15% White and 4% other. According to the data, many disciplinary infractions from last school year were assaults, fights, name-calling and persistent disrespect to teachers and students. The faculty believed that these infractions were from students’ lack of training on how to handle difficult situations. Many of our students are from working families where parents are working hard all day to make ends meet. In some families this can result in children having much time alone and not always receiving full time guidance and direction in honing their decision making skills. The Bully Focus Group consists of nine teachers. Each teacher represents core classes, electives and fine arts courses on our campus. This study also included our librarian since sometime the unstructured environment of the library breeds bullying behaviors. These professionals are committed to developing preventive strategies to assist our students.

We will be conducting a small group interview with a campus-wide survey using bullying as our focus topic. We will assess the information and begin implementing interventions to help students understand that words can lead to actions and those actions can lead to disciplinary consequences. The data collected will be integrated into our Campus Improvement Plan, and processes and programs will be determined by the results of the survey and the small group interviews.

Small group interviews will consist of a teacher from each core and elective areas. The survey will include all teachers and their views of bullying on this campus. Our district has implemented the bullying process for each administrator to conduct once a bullying complaint is made on a campus in the district. These forms were developed by our student Support Services and Counseling departments in a joint effort to be more proactive regarding this issue.

The questions will be written and developed by the administrative staff on our campus to target the specific needs of our campus. These questions will touch on the bullying issue as well as questions on a broader spectrum of our campus culture. Bullying is typically only a symptom of a bigger issue that may be occurring to create the end result of what we call bullying.

Survey Results

Teacher Beliefs

Forty-five percent of teachers believed that most bullying typically takes place during school hours. Fifty-six percent of teachers responded that boys and girls use a combination of physical behaviors and bullying with words, while 44% believe boys tend to bully with physical behaviors while girls bully with words. Teachers also believe that when a bully harasses another child, the victims tend to be of various ages. Sixty-five percent of teachers responded that our bullies pick on older kids, kids their own age and younger kids. When victims are bullied, they tend to do which of the following in response to the bullying incident? Ninety percent of our teachers responded they will likely keep the incident to themselves. Sixty-two percent of our teachers responded that the age period in which children bully the most is middle school. A common misconception is that most bullying happens when there are adults present. Eighty-eight percent of our teachers responded false to this statement; they believe that most bullying happens when student are unsupervised and in unstructured times during the school day.

Another misconception is when kids tell an adult about the bullying they have experienced; adults generally take them seriously and give them the support they need. Sixty-seven percent of our teachers responded false. Most adults do not take the statements seriously or write it off to horseplay or teasing. There are often bystanders (those kids who are not bullies or victims, but who observe the interaction) of bullying incidents. We asked our teacher if they thought these bystanders would be affected by watching these interactions on campus. Forty-two percent of our teachers responded that these bystanders would also be negatively affected and steps should be taken to educate and support them as well.

In terms of social skills, we asked our teachers how they perceive children who bully, and what characteristics would these children display? Forty-eight percent of teachers responded they believed the children would have low levels of social skills and social intelligence. Children who are bullied often are reported to have many issues. We gave a list of possible symptoms, and 94% of our teachers responded anxiety, loneliness, and low self-esteem would be most prevalent in the student personality.

The results from this survey will be helpful in planning and implementing our campus action plan to provide students with strategies to prevent being bullied themselves or providing tools for students for helping others who may be in need of strategies in coping with persistent negative interaction with other students.

Student Responses

These results are from our eighth grade students on our campus were shocking to say the least. Overall the results showed that our students feel safe here at school even in the unstructured areas of campus such as the hallways, bus, and cafeteria.

Bullying in your school:	Responses
Do you feel safe at school?	78% Always
Do you feel safe on your way to and from school?	90% Always
Do you feel safe on the school bus	93% Always

The students express that they have no worries about bullying not only for this school year but also we asked them to reflect back on the last four months which would carry them back to the end of last school year and the summer. These times tend to lend themselves to increased bullying tactics by students. As you read the results below, you can see that even in their neighborhoods they feel safe and confident.

Victims of Bullying: Before you answer reflect back on the last four months...Have you been bullied by other students?		
	Not once	Once or twice
<i>Physically?</i> hit, pushed, shoved, kicked, spit at or beaten up, had property stolen	85%	15%
<i>Verbally?</i> called names, teased hurtfully, insulted, humiliated, threatened	68%	32%
<i>Socially?</i> excluded from a group, made to look dumb by someone, gossiped about; rumors spread	75%	25%
<i>Electronically?</i> threatened, embarrassed, singled out, had your feelings hurt, been gossiped about, or had secrets about you revealed through email or phone text	87%	13%
<i>Racially?</i> treated differently or badly because of your race, culture, and ethnicity	95%	5%
<i>Gender?</i> left out treated badly because you are a boy or girl; heard sexist comments	87%	13%

The final question asked, “If you witnessed another student being bullied, would you be willing to report it if you knew no one would know it was you?” Ninety percent responded they would report the incident.

In review of the results from the students the focus group was surprised to see that what we are seeing as an issue apparently is not an issue with our students. These results show without a doubt that our students feel safe and comfortable on campus. They do not see that bullying is an issue and have no trouble reporting bullying if they see it happening to others around them. These results are comforting to our faculty but we do not want to rest on our laurels and feel that the program will only enhance the students’ skills.

Action Plan

The first plan of action is to create a set of lesson plans for the advisory teachers to use during the first period advisory class which is a 30 minute block of time used for academic pull-outs and

tutorials. We are developing lessons to provide strategies to help the student act or react to a bully situation in a positive and productive manner. We are developing a script for teachers to use to guide these lessons so they are as productive as possible. We plan to use these lesson plans in a frequency pattern; at the beginning of the year, we will start with using three lessons a week, then two lessons a week, and then one lesson a week. This timeline coincides with the ebb and flow of bullying actions that seem to occur on school campuses. Students seem to posture more at the start of a school year and then it slows down during the course of the year and begins to increase towards the end of the school year.

Conclusions and Implications

The focus group believes some of the bullying issues could be a generational perspective; what we as adults find offensive, rude, and uncalled-for behaviors are more acceptable to students today. The demographics of our campus could also play a part in the culture environment. The make-up of our student population is currently 60% Hispanic, 21% Black, and 15% White and 4% other. Language used in the media, such as songs and television, is often slang or street lingo rather than proper English. So what we perceive as disrespectful language to others is more acceptable to our students because they hear these terms in all forms of media. Here again, we find the need to teach or train our students as to what behaviors are acceptable in a public forum such as school and public places. We are back to Webster, stating that the need to train the minds and manners of a civilization forms our culture. The biggest struggle we find so far is that we have parents who work two jobs and there is no one home to provide support for school work or training for everyday duties and responsibilities. The culture of the academic population believes that school is secondary to life's work, and that these students need to attain an age old enough to go get a job and help support the family. Some are verbally abused at home where foul language is an everyday occurrence; they do not understand that words hurt and can lead to physical altercations.

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Research



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It is with pride that we accept and cherish each life role as more evidence of our amazing capacity for leadership.

We are leaders.

We are learners.

We are women.

Dr. Stephens reminds us how important it is to acknowledge and respect the many facets of our lives as women school executives. Understanding who we are can be crystallized in one powerful moment.

To Be or Not To Be: Gooley

Dr. Lu Stephens

I said I would never be gooley

I am a career woman

Career women are not gooley

We are not overly emotional

We are objective, thoughtful, calm, and decisive

*One early morning I stood pressing my nose to the window
in the door leading to surgery*

*Doctors and nurses were aware that I had been standing there, alone,
for a very long time*

*The surgical doctor looked toward the door and smiled
He held her up for me to see*

*In less than a minute there were three generations of women...
my daughter, the new baby girl, and me*

*The nurse cleaned her, wrapped her, walked to the door and handed me my new
Granddaughter*

With tears in my eyes, with much emotion, with no objectivity

I was gooley

Transformational Leadership and the Journey to Cultural Proficiency

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Transformational leaders set the direction, develop people and redesign the organization (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). This understanding of transformational leadership is especially important today when our schools must become places where children of all cultures succeed. One of the many challenges of transformational leaders is to become more culturally proficient due to our changing student demographics. According to the Texas Education Agency (Scharrer & Lacoste-Caputo, 2010) in the past decade, enrollment from low-income families increased by almost 900,000 students or nearly 59% of all Texas students. Children with English-language deficiencies jumped from 555,334 to 815,998 in that same time period. Minority children now represent the vast majority of school enrollments in large and medium-sized Texas cities. For example, when Northern Hills Elementary school opened in San Antonio almost 30 years ago, it was in a White, middle-class neighborhood. Today 45% of its students are Hispanic, 10% are African American and more than 60% are economically disadvantaged. Similar demographic patterns are occurring throughout the United States and in other countries as well. We must train leaders with the knowledge and skills to transform diverse campuses and communities.

Lindsey, Roberts and CampbellJones (2005) define cultural proficiency as the “honoring of differences among cultures, viewing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully among a variety of groups” (p. 4). In order to understand the importance of culturally proficient leadership, transformational leaders must first understand the notion of culture and its impact on nearly every aspect of the school day. We live in a cultural vacuum. If we use a theater analogy, culture is the very stage on which we perform. As university professors, we frequently tell our students regarding cultural issues that they must get comfortable being uncomfortable because as school leaders, we are often confronted with uncomfortable cultural issues. Effective leaders increase our understanding of cultural issues which allows us to embrace this position of discomfort with grace and courage. We must recognize this as an opportunity for personal and communal growth, not as an obstacle to avoid. Transformational leaders who are culturally proficient share a vision for schools to be places of belonging for all students. However, leaders and their constituents are often at different points at different times on this journey toward cultural proficiency. Consequently, a moral obligation for educational leaders is to become culturally proficient in order to lead others in this direction.

The Cultural Journey

Pang (2005) writes “Culture is like the air we breathe in. It is all around us”(p. 37). Culture manifests itself in three levels: (a) our language, symbols and artifacts; (b) our customs and practices; and (c) our shared values, norms, beliefs (Brislin, 1993). In essence we are cultural beings. We are shaped by the unseen and often unknown influences that create us to be who we are. It is impossible to separate our cultural identity from the person that we are. Our cultural identity is created by where we were born, our age, where we live today, our parents, our socio-economic position, our sexual identity, our gender and a host of other influences. We are all products of multi-contextual experiences. Cushner (2003) identifies 12 attributes of culture that researchers have suggested influence teaching and learning. These cultural attributes include: race, ethnicity/nationality, social class, gender, health, age, geographic region, sexuality, religion, social status, language, and ability/disability. Our cultural identity whether we acknowledge it or not is the lens through which we see the world. It contributes to what we value and how we see others.

If we lived on an island with individuals just like us, it would not be so critical to understand cultural issues. For example, if we were superintendent of a school district where all our students were White and middle class and had been raised in a suburban community, we would likely have considerable agreement regarding what should be taught in our school curriculum. Finding such isolated communities today is almost impossible and certainly not representative of reality. Instead, we live and work in diverse settings with people who are like us in some ways, and culturally different from us in other ways. As we become increasingly connected beyond our traditional city, county, state, and national borders, we encounter vast and varied cultural diversity. As transformational leaders we must prepare ourselves, our colleagues, and our young people to become culturally proficient in order to be successful stakeholders and active participants in the global community. In this article, we briefly describe six locations on a continuum that begin with Cultural Deficit and lead to Cultural Community where cultural proficiency exists at every level. The locations along this journey include:

Deficit → Denial → Conscious → Celebration → Conscience → Community

As you read, first reflect where you might be on this journey as a transformational leader. Keep in mind that you are likely to be at different locations at different times on any of the attributes of culture. For example, you might be at Cultural Deficit regarding sexuality, but at Cultural Conscience regarding race/ethnicity issues. After you have identified where you are located regarding cultural proficiency on different cultural concerns, consider where others might be in your school community and reflect on how the various locations on the continuum might impact your leadership. Imagine what actions you might take to move members of the school community toward cultural proficiency on the continuum.

Cultural Deficit

The first stop on our journey to cultural proficiency is Cultural Deficit. This location is characterized by deficit and/or negative thinking. Individuals at Cultural Deficit tend to view others who are different from them in a negative context. They see others as not as good as they are; consequently their actions are discriminatory and promote prejudice. On our school

campuses, students in the minority cultures are often excluded from activities; they have no representation on the Student Council and are often not involved in enrichment classes such as AP or G/T. Neither the curriculum nor the teaching staff provides appropriate role models. For example, in English language arts classes, there is no evidence of Hispanic, African American, Asian or other literature that reflects the diverse demographics of the campus and district. Stereotyping exists with biased, negative beliefs about those who are different from you. Examples of these beliefs include the following: all Hispanics belong to gangs; all Muslims are terrorists; all immigrants come to the US wanting a “free ride”; kids from the housing project are badly behaved; people of poverty are lazy. Wide-spread tracking exists in the curriculum, and ethnic minority and poverty students are often placed into vocational and low performing classrooms. Expectations for students who are different from the mainstream White, middle class culture are low, or not at all. Educators positioned at Culture Deficit can be heard making such biased comments as, “These kids can’t do algebra!” or they believe that “these parents” are not interested in how their children achieve at school. The Cultural Deficit environment fosters bullying and other destructive behaviors when responding to students who are not “like us.” The Cultural Deficit environment communicates to others that “You are less than I am.” A first step on the road to cultural proficiency is to identify where on the continuum your own biases exist.

Cultural Denial

The next stop on the journey to cultural proficiency is Cultural Denial. Individuals at this point characterize others by denying their rights to have a different cultural identity. Cultural Denial individuals insist that they are “color-blind” and that they treat everyone just the same – generally like a White, middle-class American, if living in the USA. The goal is assimilation which is the “process that seeks to eliminate ethnic and linguistic practices and cultures and replace them with the host culture and language” (Pang, 2005, p. G-1). This is the proverbial Melting Pot and is the goal for all in the quest toward treating everyone the same. Individuals who are located at Cultural Denial seemingly believe in equality for everyone. While this may sound like a reasonable place to be, it has serious negative implications. When everyone is treated just the same, there is no room for accommodations for special needs. Consequently, students who are from poverty, or who do not speak the language, who are gay or who are a different ethnicity than the majority are often not treated in a culturally proficient manner. Instead, low expectations are held for these students, which may result in tracking and placing them in vocational and low performing academic classes. Educators who are at Cultural Denial usually do not believe that students are “less than” but instead they are well-intentioned, although they have a misguided acknowledgement of the need to treat everyone the same. Therefore, we must train educators to recognize the important difference between equality and equity. A second step on the road to cultural proficiency is to reflect within ourselves and identify areas where we are color-blind.

Cultural Conscious

Cultural Conscious is characterized by awareness of differences. At this location on the map as we continue on our journey to cultural proficiency, individuals have a new awareness of the differences inherent in various cultures. It is as though our eyes have been opened for the first time and we see an individual as uniquely different from ourselves. We become aware of differing cultural behaviors, such as when a child signifies respect to a teacher by looking down,

rather than by looking directly into the teacher's face. We acknowledge that some cultures, native American, for example, have a rich story-telling heritage and thus might learn especially well from an emphasis on auditory lessons. We discover that children from a Hispanic culture might value collaboration over competition.

A focus for behavior at Cultural Conscious is that of tolerance. We see the differences and have adopted strategies such as Affirmative Action that seek to level the playing field for students who come from different cultural backgrounds. We recognize that teachers and administrators are not representative of the student population, so we make an effort to hire a more diverse faculty. We begin to create classrooms that accommodate the needs of children who are different. A bump on the road to cultural proficiency at Cultural Conscious is that we sometimes continue to stereotype people and often do not recognize that within cultures there is still much individuality. Consequently, we need to be cautious about demonstrating an attitude of false generosity that might sound like this: "Well, their family is so poor, who could expect them to complete their homework . . . or participate . . . or study. . . ." Sometimes these claims emerge from staff development on "understanding poverty", but scholars have warned that this results in mis-educating teachers about the poor because the training often reinforces the stereotypes of economically disadvantaged students (Bomer, Dworin, May, and Semingson, 2008). False generosity is sometimes rooted in hidden biases that have never been addressed. As transformational leaders move toward cultural proficiency, those located at Cultural Conscious are openly aware of differences and encourage tolerance of others.

Cultural Celebration

The next stop on our journey is Cultural Celebration. This is an important location because here we acknowledge those cultural differences that contribute to a positive cultural identity. We celebrate events such as Cinco de Mayo, the Chinese New Year and Black Heritage Month. We culminate studies of other countries by sharing ethnic foods and learning important words in those languages. We acknowledge other religious holidays. We begin to intentionally introduce literature by writers of other ethnicities and religions into the curriculum.

At Cultural Celebration we invite others to move toward acculturation which involves "taking on the cultural ways of another group, usually of the mainstream culture" (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 126). This is the first step toward integrating into a new and different culture. As transformational leaders wanting to become more culturally proficient, we intentionally seek common ground, and while we celebrate our differences, we openly begin to examine our prejudices and biases inherent in stereotyping others. It is at Cultural Celebration that we identify the achievement gap in our schools and acknowledge that there are proactive strategies to be implemented which will reduce this gap. We begin to recognize more clearly the difference between equity and equality and understand that equity is more to be desired than equality. At Cultural Celebration we place value on diversity and recognize the value of acknowledging and celebrating differences.

Cultural Conscience

Cultural Conscience is characterized by an appreciation of other cultures and of diversity, itself. At this location our journey toward cultural proficiency has moved from that of a Melting Pot to a Salad Bowl with a wide variety of rich ingredients. We appreciate unique differences and

acknowledge how this very difference contributes to a richer environment for all. At Cultural Conscience we not only examine our biases but also commit to knowing about others in a way that leads to a collaborative, collegial environment. We participate in difficult conversations about issues where we used to be uncomfortable, such as sexual identity, racial or ethnic differences, and religious beliefs different from ours. As educators we commit to working toward equitable classrooms where support is available to meet the needs of all students. We expect all students to achieve at the highest level possible. For example, we do not make excuses for students of poverty, but instead, we provide academic support through Saturday classes, extended day, and other creative scheduling possibilities. We actively seek a highly qualified diverse faculty regardless of the ethnic population of the student body.

At Cultural Conscience we encourage individuals from different cultures to achieve positive acculturation, which ensures their cultural identity is maintained while extending their personal identity with growth in the new culture. We value the languages of others. In essence we say, "Let's join together," as we work collaboratively to build on strengths and provide support for individual needs. Cultural Conscience is the location where educators purposefully focus on social justice and integrate culturally proficient teaching into the school day.

Cultural Community

Too often our journey to cultural proficiency ends at Cultural Conscience. However, our ultimate destination should go beyond culture to a place we call Cultural Community. Cultural Community is characterized by a respect for all for our common humanity. In our discourse we affirm all individuals and the strengths that they bring to humanity not limited by cultural issues. In our classrooms we identify and meet needs for all students. We hold all students to high standards and use our knowledge of cultural issues to build positive relationships. Acculturation occurs. At the same time we recognize "acculturative stress" and provide support for the emotional strain and difficulties for ethnic students in the process of acculturating into a new society (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 126). While valuing everyone's right to a cultural identity, at Cultural Community we move beyond focusing on isolated cultural qualities to the human qualities which we share.

At Cultural Community work is collaborative and everyone has a place to belong. The newest immigrant finds a place to be valued. A gay student has no fear of being bullied. The cheerleading team is representative of all diverse groups. A student who wears a hijab has respect and support from educators on a Cultural Community campus. A student who is just learning the language is made to feel comfortable while leaders promote the value of multi-lingual communities. At Cultural Community educators infuse the curriculum with global issues so that students realize that while their ethnic background is American, Hispanic, Iranian or Indian, they are also a member of a world community where one's individual humanity is valued in addition to an appreciation of one's cultural heritage. While, to some degree, Cultural Community sounds like Utopia, as transformational leaders we should hold ourselves to the very highest standard even though we might often fall short.

Signs along the Way to Cultural Proficiency

Throughout this discussion of the six locations on a transformational leader's journey to cultural proficiency, we have identified important growth components. At Cultural Deficit we begin to

understand our own negative beliefs about others. At Cultural Denial we realize how color-blindness denies individuals the right to valued cultural identities. At Cultural Conscious we understand our cultural differences and become more tolerant. We recognize our own cultural uniqueness at Cultural Celebration. At Cultural Conscience we actively work toward building a socially just environment. At Cultural Community we look beyond cultural issues and focus on our common humanity.

Transformational leaders who are culturally proficient focus on moving toward Cultural Community, actively looking for markers of cultural growth within their district. The following are some of the indicators or signs that individuals are making progress on their personal and professional journey to becoming more culturally proficient:

- Educators have respect for and an interest in students' cultural backgrounds;
- Faculty and staff talk and listen to students;
- Faculty support higher-order learning for all students;
- Teachers build on students' prior knowledge, values, and experiences;
- Students see individuals who look like them in textbooks, on bulletin boards, as mentors and as community leaders;
- Educators emphasize student assets, rather than student deficits;
- Educators avoid stereotyping of students and understand that the identification of demographic groups is a cultural framework tool to use only as a guide to assist students in learning;
- Teachers implement ability grouping flexibly and sparingly;
- Teachers emphasize differentiated instruction;
- Teachers adapt instruction to students' semantics, accents, dialects, and language ability;
- All educators value the home language;
- Discipline rules are applied to behavior fairly and sensitively – school discipline is built on consequences, rather than punishment;
- Educators collaborate with families to support student learning; and
- Cultural proficiency training is provided to all in the district, including School Board members

As transformational leaders, we work toward cultural proficiency while encouraging the “capacity to create a compelling vision that takes people to a new place, and translate[s] that vision into action” (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997, p. 4). We demonstrate that we value faculty, children, parents and others who comprise the school community by our actions. Harris (2004, 2005) uses the acronym BRAVO – Building Relationships with Actions that Value Others. In order to be transformational leaders who are culturally proficient, it is not enough to say that we value others; instead we must become BRAVO leaders – leaders who build relationships with *actions* that demonstrate our value of others. In this way, as transformational leaders we may indeed reach Cultural Community in our journey to become truly culturally proficient.

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Redefining a New Professionalism

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Recently, the educational profession has undergone a series of events that has left in its wake feelings of disillusionment. With the recent layoffs and budget reductions throughout the state and country, educators no longer feel that the profession is valued, appreciated, and representative of what was once considered a secure profession. Even colleges and universities are experiencing the backlash from budget cuts in education. Young people entering college are now questioning whether or not education holds the promise of a bright and promising future. For those who are currently serving as teachers and administrators, there appears to be a cynicism and uneasiness that is robbing the spirit and diminishing the heart. While this lack of joy and fulfillment is pervasive in many careers throughout today's economy, the focus of this article is on the educational profession and what is necessary to regain a true sense of purpose and joy through the work of serving our young students.

In the book, *Leadership and Spirit*, Russ Moxley paints a very dismal picture. He says, "Today we have thousands of individuals who give physical and mental energy to their work but don't invest their souls and spirit in it. Work is not worth that" (2000, p.18). He goes on to say that, "we are a dispirited workforce, a workforce that gives our heads and hands, but not our heart and spirit, to our jobs. And, we have organizational leaders who, at best, are not aware that this is true and, at worst, add to the problem by how they manage and lead" (2000, p. 18).

As we think about the educational profession, there must be a renewed sense of urgency and focus on the importance of leadership. This must be coupled with a profound and deep understanding of how leaders ignite the spirit of those they lead to fully engage all of the energies in the work. This includes not only members of the work community but also students, parents, and the communities that are being served.

Role of Transformational Leaders

Leaders are being called upon to transform the educational landscape, which will require developing, coaching, and mentoring people within the profession to adopt new and different mental models about the profession itself. Ultimately, leaders will spend more of their time developing people within the educational ranks to think and work differently. While the system and the work of the system will continue to be important, the larger issue for those in leadership positions will be on developing the people that comprise the system. The question that begs to be asked is how do leaders build organizations where there is a sense of purpose, commitment, and fulfillment? The notion of personal congruency or alignment to, and with, the organization's

mission and values isn't a phenomenon that just naturally happens. It requires leadership. What is the nature of that kind of leadership? How are leaders with these abilities developed? What do these leaders do to create organizations where each person within the organization is *willing* and *able* to engage heart, head, and hands with a spirit of connectedness and enthusiasm? Answering these questions requires leaders to move beyond business as usual to a much loftier goal of developing new understandings and commitment to the profession among those they lead.

There are literally thousands of books written about leaders and leadership. People are intrigued about the topic. People also differ on what makes a person become a great leader. In that regard, there is probably widespread disagreement about the attributes and styles that leaders must possess in order to create organizations where people work with a spirit of unity, connectedness, enthusiasm, and meaning. Some of the answers might be found in the work of Thomas Sergiovanni and Robert Starratt in the book *Supervision a Redefinition*. A rather profound consideration about human psychology and sociology is posited. When considering social systems, such as schools, Sergiovanni and Starratt state that humans and all of their complexity must be considered as the central factor in why systems do or do not work (1998, p.74). They further state that, "life in organizations is coming to be seen as far more complex, as involving not only rational thinking but also emotional responses...and that organizational culture can suppress creativity and extra effort as well as distort the interpretation of events" (1998, p. 74).

In essence, Sergiovanni and Starratt draw attention to the very nature of what professionalism means. They see it as being twofold. First is the notion of having competence in a particular field of study. Second, there is a requirement of the individual possessing professional virtue or ethics. Competence has to do with pedagogy and being an expert, which is more easily defined and accomplished. Such expertise entitles one to be autonomous. However, expertise is not enough to earn one the mantle of professionalism. Knowledge and skills have to be used for good intentions. Professionals enjoy privileges because they are trusted. Because trust is bestowed, it takes more than competence to earn it. Thus, organizations and the individuals who work within them must be ethical in their transactions and, therefore, deemed to be trustworthy. One unethical individual can, and does, jeopardize the entire corporate body.

There are at least four dimensions of professional virtue that are delineated by Sergiovanni and Starratt. These include "a commitment to practice in an exemplary way, a commitment to practice toward valued social ends, a commitment not only to one's own practice but to the practice itself, and a commitment to the ethic of caring" (1998, p. 75- 77).

Establishing the virtuous side of professionalism should be a high priority of leaders. It is imperative to examine what it means to be professional and how leaders develop professionalism within their organizations.

Four Dimensions of Professional Virtue

Commitment to exemplary practice. Commitment to exemplary practice means that the educator exemplifies cutting edge practices. He or she knows the latest research and constantly engages in personal reflection. These individuals research and/or question their practice and are comfortable experimenting with new approaches. They also collaborate and share with other colleagues forming the basis for personal growth and self-renewal. There is a strong commitment to mentoring and coaching as professional dialogue, collaboration, and learning become a way of life. If these behaviors are observable over time, norms of practice begin to change bringing about a cultural shift. Ultimately, higher levels of commitment to exemplary practice emerge.

Commitment to practice toward valued social ends. Commitment to practice toward valued social ends represents a service to students, parents, peers, and agreed-upon school values and purposes. Such a commitment raises the issue of purpose to a prime position. Using the Organizational Health concept, first conceptualized by Matthew Miles and then later defined by Fairman and McLean (2007, p.3), the goal focus dimension of Organizational Health is the ability of persons, groups, or organizations to have clarity and acceptance of goals and objectives. However, even this definition does not show the hierarchical nature of getting people to the level of true professionalism. Research into what is needed to attain high goal focus within an organization delineates clear stages of development beginning with understanding and moving through clarity, acceptance, commitment, and, finally, advocacy (2007, p.4). Professionalism in its truest sense ranges from commitment to advocacy and beyond.

Commitment to the practice itself. Commitment to the practice itself is the ability on the part of the individual to see the big picture. Instead of getting caught up in the mundane, day-to-day events, a person who is committed to improving the practice sees relationships between issues and policies as they relate to practice. Such individuals see the practice as a collective community instead of simply an individual exercise. When the practice is conceived as collective, then collegiality emerges as an expression of professional virtue. People feel compelled to work together interdependently. They enjoy teaming, collaborating, sharing, and from these practices, reciprocal relationships emerge. Contractual agreements are not what engage the heart. Instead, what binds the hearts of people is authority that is rooted in moral commitment. Under this scenario, commitment is based upon what Sergiovanni often refers to as a covenantal relationship (1996, p. 57). The ability to commit to something larger than self is the essence of high goal focus.

Commitment to the ethic of caring. A commitment to the ethic of caring is viewing people holistically instead of simply seeing them from the technical or task perspective. The organization is defined by how people are regarded and treated. Relationships are developed to the extent that people are trustworthy. When relationships of this nature develop, people are more internally motivated, are more accepting of responsibility, and require little, if any,

supervision. The hallmark of caring is not based on salary, recognition, or self-gratification. The true professional does whatever it takes to practice at exemplary levels.

All these four dimensions speak to stewardship and service. Education, particularly teaching, is extremely complex and calls for a deeper understanding of the concept of professionalism. While no one would refute that we are accountable for what we know (i.e. content), we must also be responsive to the clients we serve (i.e. students), as well as the context in which we serve (i.e. community). We are never separated from the knowledge of the content, the students, or the context. Teaching and leading involve all three. The challenge of educational leaders is raising the levels of commitment among the professionals they lead which will change their discourse and practice. When people within the organization are influenced by their prior education, personal understanding and sensitivity, and their cultural and class background, it becomes necessary for their leaders to elevate the discourse to enable them to embrace these four dimensions of professional virtue and avoid failure.

Professional Virtue

As leaders, it is obvious that we must inspire teachers to commit to certain obligations so they will effectuate optimal learning for all students. However, this can't be done unless the leader embraces, commits, models, and coaches what it means to have professional competence and virtue. In the book *The Character of Leadership*, the authors discuss how effective leaders are those "who combine the expertise of their discipline and their deeply held values with political skills, enabling their expertise and values to flourish in real-world conditions" (1998, ix). In other words, becoming a leader of consequence involves developing character. The book used Machiavelli's approach to training a Renaissance prince to illustrate that the acquisition of skills is irrelevant unless the leader acquires the appropriate qualities of character, or what Machiavelli called "*virtu*" (1998, p. xiii). Machiavelli believed that *virtu* can be taught and learned. The book is divided into four parts. Part Three, *Nurturing Character for Reliable Leadership*, defines virtue by selecting five essential attributes: integrity, courage, flexibility, talent, and prudence. When viewed holistically, these attributes define a leader of consequence.

According to Michael and Deborah Jinkins, "leadership finds our faults. The stresses of leadership probe us until our weaknesses surface" (1998, p. 102). They state, "everyone has hidden weaknesses, fault lines, stress points. They are woven into our character. And leadership finds them out" (1998, p.102). What we have witnessed throughout history is that great leaders have recognized and wrestled with personal issues and fractures within their own psyche and through personal reflection seem to have the ability to adapt. However, poor leaders seem to always be caught off-guard, surprised by their own weaknesses and impending vulnerabilities. Insight, therefore, becomes a powerful and transformative process when applied. Great leaders have learned to behave in a manner more appropriate to a particular context. Jinkins and Jinkins say that "if we can learn to behave in ways appropriate to better leadership-- and if we can develop the habit of making better choices—our character can be shaped in new directions"

(1998, p 103). They continue with the idea that as leaders we can change and grow. In other words, “Our choices about what to do are also choices about whom to be” (1998, p 103). Thomas Aquinas taught that “virtue is a habit—a practice” (1998, p. 103) that when followed can lead us into a new way of becoming. Thus, virtue is not narrowly defined as morality or as a code of ethics but as a way of being and becoming.

The Latin term virtue means “excellence” (1998, p.105). Jinkins and Jinkins delve into the actual root meaning of virtue only to unearth the ideas of valor, bravery, and worth, as well as potency (1998, p.105). Machiavelli sees virtue, however, as a social or political commodity that is never practiced in isolation. Virtue is public, practiced in relationship to a community of others, and synonymous with one’s ability to encourage certain things to happen in relation to other persons (1998, 105). One’s power to influence the course of events for the good is the virtuous element of leadership. This certainly embodies the notion that leadership is more than positional; it is fundamentally influencing people and events.

In order to develop the commitment of exemplary practice, the commitment to practice toward valued social ends, the commitment to the practice itself, and the commitment to the ethics of caring, leaders must behave in ways that are viewed as being excellent or virtuous by those they lead. While this certainly requires competence, it is probably more inclusive of the ability to scan the environment and know how to act in ways that serve the needs and interests of the organization without sacrificing personal integrity. According to Jinkins and Jinkins, “the greatest sin a leader can commit is to forfeit public virtue for the sake of private gain” (1998, p.113). Therefore, leading people to practice at exemplary levels is not possible if the leader is fixated on “personal survival or gain rather than the success of the organization” (1998, p. 112). Once these have been sacrificed, people are unwilling to commit to the level of excellence that Sergiovanni and Staratt defined as hallmarks of a “true professional.” Instead, leaders must be good stewards of the people’s trust and confidence in order to evoke high levels of trust and commitment.

Concluding Thoughts

The profession is based upon a code of ethics and deeply held values. Leaders need to be viewed as advocates of what makes the profession noble. While vision and passion are essential characteristics of leaders of consequence, they also need the “power to act” (1968, p.189) as well as the will and capacity to act. In other words, these leaders are seen as embodying all that is good and noble within the profession. Their character and courage motivate people to serve in exemplary ways. They are capable of leading others to accomplish greatness. Their passion is contagious. Yet, these leaders are well-grounded in the reality and complexity of the world. They are very perceptive and have the ability to “negotiate while remaining firmly grounded in particular values and virtues” (1998, p. 192). It has been said that leaders have three types of sight: hindsight, foresight, and insight. Hindsight requires an appreciation of the history and the ability to reflect on one’s practice and past decisions. Foresight is about vision and positioning an

organization to anticipate trends, be adaptive, proactive, and innovative. Insight comes from establishing relationships and being attuned to people. All three are necessary and are the fountainhead of wisdom.

If asked, people usually define great leaders as those that made a difference. These leaders changed conditions and left something that lasted. Our nation and our profession are longing for leaders who not only want to make a difference but also are willing to do whatever it takes to be transformative. A last thought from Jenkins and Jenkins is that “the ultimate purpose of leadership is not our own survival, but the transformation of the communities, the societies, and the institutions and organizations we serve. If we lose sight of this reality, we should leave leadership to others who have passion enough, character enough, and the necessary respect for public virtue required to lead” (1968, p. 193). Warren Bennis has put it rather succinctly, “So the point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely—all your skills, gifts, and energies—in order to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing. You must, in sum, become the person you started out to be and enjoy the process of becoming” (2005, p. 105).

In the end, a new professionalism will emerge when those within the profession embark on a personal journey of discovery where growing, changing, and developing competence and virtue are essential components, and the threads of leadership and spirit are woven into a tapestry of perfection.

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A Tale of Two Journeys

Jana Garner, Principal, Forney ISD

What happens when a personal leadership journey coincides with a district's journey to develop a tool for ensuring equity? Share the experience of my parallel journey as I learned the value of empowerment, collaboration, and teamwork.

When a district experiences rapid growth, one of the critical areas of focus for a superintendent and administrators is the issue of consistency between schools and equity for all students. This was a concern in our North Texas district after the student population grew from 2000 to 8000 in a short period of time during the recent housing boom. District leaders were careful to monitor equity in facilities and programs between schools. After all, stakeholders tend to notice when playgrounds, computer labs, and athletic programs differ drastically from one campus to another. As new campuses opened and new staff members came on board, another critical area of consistency became apparent. Student work needed to be assessed and reported in a similar manner at all schools to ensure equity for all students. The superintendent recognized the need for a grading/reporting handbook for teachers.

At the same time district leaders began to address the need for clear guidelines for grading and reporting, I was entering into a superintendent internship program. After a period of professional growth and learning, I was ready to develop leadership skills on the district level. When the superintendent suggested that I research grading handbooks as an internship project, my leadership goals and an important district goal began to merge. The result was an incredible opportunity to explore the values of empowerment, collaboration, and team-building.

This article is the story of two parallel journeys. As I facilitated our district's 18-month journey to define a philosophy of grading and reporting and develop a set of guidelines, I was also experiencing a personal journey of leadership growth. Along the way, I applied the skills I had learned from professional development training and university coursework to model the superintendent competencies. These skills proved to be the key to creating and sustaining a meaningful experience for colleagues while developing a worthwhile product.

Gathering Information / Building Networking Skills

(Superintendent Competency 010-b: The superintendent knows how to implement processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for informed decision making.)

In order to begin the process of developing our own grading/reporting manual, we needed to obtain and analyze similar manuals from other districts across the state. Instead of being a simple process of looking at samples on district websites, I soon learned that those types of procedural manuals are not published online, and I would have to make contact with district administrators in order to view them or obtain a copy. Cold-calling top level district personnel was not likely to

produce the results I wanted. I began to draw on networking skills to make connections. Our communications director was a valuable asset. As part of his job, he knew other directors in a variety of school districts. Using the contacts he provided, I was able to visit with people who could introduce me to the appropriate administrator. By approaching leaders in this way, I found them to be very willing to assist me with the project. I collected a number of samples and had the opportunity to discuss grading, reporting, and assessment with some of the most influential and accomplished leaders in the state. I now have a network of contacts that I can use as a resource in the future for sharing and researching ideas.

After the collection process was complete, I organized the information into spreadsheets for study and comparison. The superintendent created a council made up of principals and teachers who would use the information to begin developing the handbook for elementary staff. A second council was formed to develop a handbook for secondary staff. At this time, my internship project was officially complete. However, instead of an end, there was a new beginning. The assistant superintendent appointed me as facilitator of the elementary council. With supervision from the director of student services, I would have the opportunity to continue practicing the application of district leadership skills and superintendent competencies.

Council Work / Group Process Skills, Reaching Consensus

(Superintendent competency 010-a: The superintendent knows how to implement appropriate management techniques and group process skills to define roles, assign functions, delegate effectively, and determine accountability for goal attainment.)

As facilitator of a large, representative district council, my first thoughts were about trust and process. Being chosen to organize and facilitate the group validated my previous work and gave me the confidence to prepare and plan for success. I appreciated being trusted with a task that had the potential to add a valuable tool to our district resources. I felt empowered not only with the outcome of the project but with the time, energy, and dedication of the council members. I resolved to make our journey together worthwhile and provide the members with opportunities for growth and contribution during the process.

I began to organize and plan for our first meeting. How do thirty people work together to discuss ideas, review material, and make decisions? What process would be the most effective? To answer these questions I turned to my previous leadership training. I reviewed methods and formats for leading discussions that ensure input from all participants. I chose a group participation activity to kick off our work. I created five key, open-ended questions about student work. During the activity, council members rotated down a row of chairs to answer each question with a partner. The activity was timed and each person's answers were recorded. In thirty minutes, we had a good idea of how teachers and principals in our elementary schools view student work. After the activity we worked as a group to compile the answers on large

charts. In this way, the philosophies, thoughts, and ideas of each person were validated and charted for all to see.

After our first meeting, I received positive feedback from council members who appreciated the use of an organized method to ensure participation by everyone. They also appreciated the clear expectations of the meeting and the efficient use of time. This feedback encouraged me to hold myself accountable for making every meeting productive and ensuring participation from everyone.

(Superintendent Competency 007-a: The superintendent knows how to enhance teaching and learning by...studying current professional literature and research.)

The key questions we charted in the first meeting addressed different areas of student work that would become topics in our grading policy handbook. In addition to using ideas from our members and samples from other districts, it was important for our council to review current research in the area of student work. Members shared information from a Texas ASCD session with Dr. Cathy Vatterott (The Homework Lady) (2009) about best practices in regard to homework. We also reviewed current work by Guskey & Bailey (2009) and Robert Marzano (2009) in the area of student assessment and grades. In meetings addressing other topics, we relied on research from the National Bureau of Economic Research (Dee & Jacob, 2011) as well as policy mandates from Senate Bill 2033. Through this study and focus, council members became more aware of twenty-first century ideas and the recent trends and changes in student learning and achievement. It was exciting to have members bring research and information to share at our meetings. We began to think as a team.

(Superintendent Competency 010-d: The superintendent knows how to use strategies for working with others...to promote collaborative decision making and problem solving, facilitate team building, and develop consensus.)

The next phase of the process was to create topic statements and reach consensus. For this work, I chose a small group process. I divided the council into five groups with each group made up of at least one administrator and representative teachers from a variety of grade levels and campuses. Our first step was for each group to review each topic question along with the responses collected from the first activity and draft a statement to share with the others. In addition to the question responses, I also provided each group with samples of similar topic statements from the grading manuals of other districts. The groups rotated through all five topics and recorded their drafts. In the next meeting, different groups were formed that consisted of a representative from each of the former five groups. In this way, each new group had a member who could explain the ideas behind each draft. After the new groups discussed and edited the drafts, we reviewed the statements as a whole group. Because every member had contributed to the drafts of each topic, we were able to reach consensus as a whole group to accept the drafts as final.

For the next several months our council met regularly to continue the work of discussing topics and creating drafts for the grading/reporting handbook. We prioritized the topics and I provided activities and resources for each topic to facilitate our teamwork. Throughout this process, I witnessed the results of group work and collaboration. Because they took part in a significant way in all decisions, the council members felt validated and were willing to put forth the energy required to sustain the process.

Finalizing / Technology Skills, Problem Solving Skills

(Superintendent Competency 010-c: The superintendent knows how to frame, analyze, and resolve problems using appropriate problem-solving techniques and decision-making skills.)

When a new school year began, council members suggested meeting bi-monthly instead of monthly. We discussed the idea as a group and decided that we could make adequate progress with fewer face-to-face meetings. There remained, however, a lot of work to be done. I was interested in finding a way to keep our members engaged and working as a team between our meetings. I found the solution in technology. I set up a Moodle course on our district network. I was able to organize all our documents and resources along with meeting agendas, notes, and announcements into the easy-to-operate format. I provided a short training at one of our meetings and our members were quickly set up to review information, post input in a forum, and work on drafts whenever they had time. In addition, Moodle provided an excellent accountability tool for the work of our council. The superintendent and other central office administrators had access to review our progress and the documentation of our work at any time. I was pleased that this connection would bring to light the dedication of our council members and the work they had accomplished.

(Superintendent Competency 010-e: The superintendent knows how to encourage and facilitate positive change, enlist support for change, and overcome obstacles to change.)

Even though we had a great start, we knew it would take a long time to cover every topic. At some point, we had to decide we had enough topics for a start-up handbook and prepare to publish our first edition. We did that during the summer after our second year of work. The director of student services submitted our drafts to the superintendent's cabinet for approval. With a few edits, the cabinet approved the Elementary Grading / Reporting Handbook. Although it would be a work in progress, the teachers could begin to utilize the guidelines we put in place.

An important step remained. How do we inform the teachers and staff about the grading/reporting procedures and ensure buy-in for the upcoming school year? The principals and teachers who served on the council became the best resource for rolling out the change. I created a slide show presentation for them that introduced the handbook and highlighted the important changes to grading policy. The teachers on the council were effective "bridge builders." They were the connection between the classroom practice and the ideas we worked on in the council. When these teachers and their principal presented the slide show and handbook on

their campus during staff development at the beginning of the new school year, staff members accepted the change more readily and knew they had a contact person who could answer questions about procedures. It was very rewarding to be part of a district roll-out and watch the results of our work put into practice.

Ongoing Process / Evaluating Change

(Superintendent Competency 010-f: The superintendent knows how to apply skills for monitoring and evaluating change and making needed adjustments to achieve goals.)

There is no doubt that the Elementary Grading / Reporting Handbook is a fluid document and always a work in progress. Our council experienced the process of initiating a procedure, evaluating the results, and making corrections when we piloted one of our policies in our first year of work. We decided to go ahead and initiate a new guideline for weighting homework, classwork, and test grades in grades one--six. This information was shared briefly with staff members before the start of school that year and published in the elementary campus handbook. As we continued our meetings throughout that year, we began to get feedback from teachers. Some problems existed in carrying out the policy as written. In one of our meetings that spring we discussed the need to re-evaluate the policy. I developed a survey for council members to use to gather information from their campus staff. Using data provided by district staff and the results of the survey, we reviewed the policy and made appropriate changes. The revised policy was included in the first edition of the Elementary Grading / Reporting Handbook. Because we were responsive to the teachers and parents and made an effective change, the council gained respect and value in the eyes of the stakeholders in the district. This process illustrated the future of the handbook: a continual process of implementation, data collection, review, and change when needed.

Reaching a Goal / Lessons from the Journey

(Superintendent Competency 002-i: The superintendent knows how to encourage and model innovative thinking and risk taking and view problems as learning opportunities)

Creating a new tool for a district and implementing the change is an experience that cannot help but be a learning process. The opportunity to parallel the journey of our district's growth with my journey of leadership growth was enormously valuable in validating the training and professional development I had received and in establishing my leadership footprint. I am grateful to the administrators in the district who trusted me to design and lead such a comprehensive project. In all future endeavors I will apply what I learned from the dedicated members of the district council with whom I shared an 18-month journey – nothing is as powerful as collaboration, teamwork, and bringing out the best in others.

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RtI: Not Just a One Sided Triangle

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The twenty-first century school is charged with serving a socio-culturally diverse group of students with varying needs and interests. These needs and interests require schools to prepare students for life successes through a balanced education that ensures both mastery of academic skills and the social competence required to be productive adults (Payton et al., 2008). In addition to the cultural diversity of the millennium's student group is the diversity of student abilities and motivations for learning. Some students are set on the track for academic excellence, extra-curricular activities, and college readiness, whereas others are disengaged and struggle to meet minimum academic requirements. Students who struggle or who are chronically disengaged make up more than 40% of the high school population who have progressed from elementary to middle to high school (Payton et al., 2008). Without intervention, these students will be left behind.

As educators it is important to recognize that focus on academic intervention alone is not enough to sustain educational success for today's learner. Emerging research linking academics and behavioral success (Bohanon, Goodman, & McIntosh, 2009) indicates that the integration of the two could lead to improved student outcomes. Recently Dr. Sara Rimm-Kaufman (2006) in a three year longitudinal study at the University of Virginia, Curry School of Education, connected low academic skills with problem behavior. Behavior problems in low performing students are evident as early as kindergarten and can follow a student through his or her academic career (Bohanon et al, 2009; Wilkens, 2002).

Like academic interventions, positive behavioral supports (PBS) are effective in promoting academic success (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). In her study on teaching pro-social skills to students, Rimm- Kauffman found that elementary students who were taught these skills performed better socially, had improved academics, and felt more connected to school and their teachers than peers who had not been exposed to pro-social skills. Sugai and Horner (2007) purport that student achievement is not simply indicative of good teaching but rather a combination of good teaching in conjunction with good classroom management.

Unfortunately, some educators argue against implementing a combined approach to academic and behavioral programming (Payton et al., 2008). Their arguments suggest that a holistic approach deters from time spent teaching core academic material. However, documented research (Payton et al., 2008; Rimm-Kaufman, 2006) indicates the teaching of social skills in conjunction with academics can be correlated to an increase in student performance on standardized tests and grades (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Northeast Foundation for Children, in duplicated studies, found students who participated in social skills instruction concurrent with academics showed significantly greater gains in social and academic functioning than students from comparison schools in which no social problem-solving or social skills curriculum was operating (Elliott, 1993, 1995, Rimm-Kaufman, 2006).

Students who have participated in integrated systems have exhibited better pro-social skills, felt more connected to school, reported feeling safe, and demonstrated an improved attitude toward school and academic achievement (Payton, et al., 2008). In addition school systems participating in an integrated approach have reported fewer discipline referrals, and increased test scores

Integrated systems are typically implemented by school classroom teachers and staff, and support personnel. Teachers who participated in integrated systems reported an increase in job satisfaction, and believed that the program improved campus collaboration (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Due largely in part to the integration of behavioral support in the academic realm, a return to a “humane, respectful and dignified treatment of students by teachers, teachers by students, and students of their peers” (Sprick et al, 2006 p.xxi), has been noted (Elliot, 1993; Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). As an unintended result of the program, more high-quality instruction, including instructional feedback, higher level questioning, and constructivist learning was offered than in classrooms that did not use an integrated approach (Rimm-Kaufman).

Where the Two Shall Meet

One of the most notable “buzz-words” in education today is “Response to Intervention” (RtI). Penned with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), RtI would forever change the identification process for students suspected of having a learning disability (Hale, 2008). Recently, research has supported the idea that the RtI intervention model can be effective in providing social and behavior supports for other students as well (Brock, L.L., Nishida, T.K., Rimm Kaufman, S.E., Chiong, C. & Grimm, K. (under review); Bohanon et al., 2009; Sprague, 2004). RtI whether academic or behavioral consists of four distinct tenets: a) Evidence –based interventions, b) data-based decision making and problem- solving, c) student performance, and d) continuous progress monitoring (Sugai & Horner, 2007). Further, combining the two systems into one provides for an integrated system of supports for students (Bohanon et al., 2009).

Because academic and behavior RtI initiatives possess a shared vision, addressing them together allows schools to efficiently employ campus resources. Both academic and behavior RtI systems are similar in their focus on using a three tier model. In addition, the universal teaching of all students, a continuum of supports, and the utilization of a plan of action by a student assistance team are common to both (Bohanon, Goodman, & McIntosh, 2009; Sprague, 2004). They also share an emphasis on the use of data for program development as well as progress monitoring, evaluation, and evidence-based practices.

Operationalizing the implementation of a well-designed integrated model of academic and behavior supports, requires identifying essential processes and outcomes (Bohanon et al., 2009; Horner & Sugai, 2007; Sprague, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). An academic RtI system is set up to identify long-term outcomes, a core academic or universal curriculum, and structures to remediate academic instruction. Behavior RtI systems identify core behavioral expectations, a process for teaching problem-solving and universal social expectations, and how acknowledgement of behaviors will occur. (Bohanon et al., 2009; Elliott, 1993; Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Behavior RtI systems also involve reinforcing policies that support behavior expectations.

Both systems contain critical features and specified interventions to be outlined prior to implementation.

In the three tier model of support, the base, identified as the universal tier, is geared toward 80% of all students. In this tier, maximizing time for instruction, improving academic and social relationships, and developing a culture of respect are the universal outcomes expected in both systems. Academic systems identify the core curriculum, frequent assessments, evidence-based practices, interventions, and basic academic outcomes in the universal tier. Equally, behavioral systems have similar tenets. The behavioral system sets common rules across settings for all students as well as preventative practices (classroom management), frequent assessments, and evidence-based practices (pro-social skill instruction). In the universal tier, data are collected and informed decisions are made regarding which students need additional intervention and the nature of the support based on function (Bohanon et al, 2009; Burns, & Cooling-Chaffin, 2006; Sprague, 2004; Sugai and Horner, 2007).

Students who do not adequately respond to the universal interventions move to the second tier of the RtI model in which they receive targeted small group interventions as part of the general education curriculum. Approximately 15% of students, commonly referred to as “at-risk,” fit into this category. Academically the small groups would focus on increased academic support and strategies in the area of risk, whereas behaviorally an intensive focus on pro-social skills would be needed. Programs providing embedded intervention, self-management, parent collaboration and training, and school-based adult mentors (Barnett et al., 2006; Rimm-Kaufman 2006; Sprague & Walker, 2004) are typically available in the second tier. It is important to note that the interventions in this stage should not be isolated but rather taught in conjunction with one another. The most effective treatment combinations and methods for efficient progress monitoring that integrate academic and behavioral data are needed (Bohanon et al, 2009). Too often educational systems veer toward the punishment model, and lose students at this stage. Sprague and Walker (2004) suggest developing alternatives to out-of school suspension and offering opportunities in community and service learning.

Tertiary supports are typically designed for only five percent of students. In this tier intensive academic support, intensive social skills teaching, individual behavior management plans, and multi-agency collaboration are suggested. Supports at this level require daily, focused intervention on the students’ areas of need, in addition to increased data collection and weekly progress monitoring. Though this tier focuses on the fewest number of students, it requires more resources, support staff, and monitoring than implementing effective supports both behaviorally and academically at the lower tiers. Unfortunately, many systems move students from the first to the third tier without effectively implementing supports in the second because of the perception that a holistic approach to academic and behavior systems is labor and time intensive. This leads to over-identification and over-representation of minority or economically disadvantaged students.

Current Practices and Future Directions for Integrating These Models

The positive impact of holistic programs on academic and behavioral outcomes cannot be denied. School districts across the nation are moving toward programs founded in academic, social, and emotional learning (Elliott, 1993; Rimm-Kaufman, 2006; Sprick, Knight, Reinke, &

McKale, 2006). However, as new programs and processes are implemented, they are at a disadvantage when coupled with existing structures.

A recent study completed for Texas A&M University at Commerce demonstrated a correlation between teacher perceptions and practice when implementing positive behaviors support (PBS) systems. Sixteen administrators from the Region X and XI, in the Dallas- Fort Worth area, were surveyed regarding their perception on teaching social and emotional skills through PBS. The responses to the survey were correlated with AEIS data using the constant comparative method. The study identified a correlation between administrator support of PBS practices and academic success (Wilkins, 2011). However it also identified a disconnect between the implementation of PBS and discipline practices such as suspension and DAEP placement. Though more than 75% of the administrators believed in the positive behavior support programs in the RtI model, only 53% reported teacher support of the programs (2011).

More importantly, respondents felt that there was a correlation between teaching social skills and academic success. However 50% reported that they did not feel competent delivering social skills or PBS to students with behavioral difficulties. Coupled with the feeling of insecurity in teaching social skills, respondents indicated that their districts had several curricula and models in use, but they had been provided very little training (Wilkins, 2011). None of the respondents reported the effectiveness of the programs or the number of years the program or programs had been implemented. What did appear to be a pattern in the responses was a lack of organizational systems and practices to sustain the programs.

This suggests that to sustain lasting change in the practice of integrating the teaching of academic and behavior, RtI systems should be clearly developed to include three specific components: systems, practices, and data (Bohanon et al, 2009). Systems are needed to support and implement the ongoing use of effective practices (Sugai & Horner, 2007). Knowledge of effective research-based practices is essential in developing a base for systems changes. However, knowing does not equate with doing (2007). Changing adult behavior is critical to the success of an integrated program. Developing a team, shared vision, operating routines, and action plans all supported by administrative leadership will lend to systems change.

Changing a system means identifying the needs of the organization and developing priorities and commitments prior to employing new programs and processes. Using data to develop an awareness of the current reality of the organization can provide a vast amount of information. Both academic and behavior RtI systems involve auditing current levels of implementation, using the data to develop action plans, and identifying the RtI system as a top priority within the building (Bohanon et al. 2009).

Evidence-based practices are the keystone to academic and behavior RtI systems. According to Horner et al. (2005), the selection of practices should be based on the following:

1. A short list of critical priorities identified by a school, district, or provincial/state team.
2. A limit of only one or two major adoptions at one time.
3. Strategies that have been proven effective in addressing the desired outcomes.

4. The ability to monitor progress of implementation to determine need for improvement.

Well-designed programs that simultaneously foster students' social, emotional and academic growth are recommended in a holistic integrated approach (Payton et al., 2008).

The improvement cycle as identified in *Coaching Classroom Management* (Sprick et al., 2006) is a comprehensive model for using data. By reviewing, prioritizing, revising, adopting, implementing, and cycling back to reviewing, the model provides a continuous feedback loop to inform the system and practices. Data should be collected and compiled in an ongoing manner and reported to all stakeholders on a regular basis to guide improvement.

Conclusion

Preparing students for life success requires a broad, balanced education that both ensures the mastery of basic academic skills and prepares students to become responsible adults (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007). Though it is easy to focus school efforts solely on academic intervention and success, the research begs for an integrated model that combines academic and behavioral models tailored to meet the diverse needs of the twenty-first century learner.

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Research



Professional Perspective



Creative Work

Creative Works


Picture This...

We are always inspired and amazed with the creativity of women school executives. The following authors combine creativity and personal reflection in a way enriches our understanding.

Metaphor is the bridge to new understanding. We make meaning for ourselves and share the pictured meaning with others.

Simple Joy

by Karla Moyer, Ed. D.



Graceful fingers manipulate, transform
Variagated golden strands
Of long thick liquid silk.

Tactiley triggering memories-
Simple blissful moments

Wrapped in eduring love,
No illusions, just pure white gratitude
For the past and the present

Nudged by a neigh? A coo?
Two divergent experiences
Braided, kneaded together
The depth of love and trust spoken
With a blink of dancing, reassuring eyes-
One moist ebony, one diaphanous blue.

Drifting between two loves
I am not telling this with a sigh, but as a woman gratefully created
From whispering touches of a horse and a daughter.
My angels.

Karla Moyer is Superintendent of Florence ISD. She and her family live at Star M Ranch in Florence, Texas. When she is not at school, or donating her time to the community, she can be found riding her Missouri Fox Trotters or driving her Belgian Draft Horses.



Move That Bus!

Melissa McIntosh, Assistant Superintendent
Jefferson ISD

“Move that bus!” If you are a television fan, that quote brings to mind the show “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” However, if you are more of a literature fan, this quote probably prompts visions of the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins. The visual created with the bus analogy is one that sticks. Every executive has felt the pressure of being the driver of the bus and trying vigorously not only to get the bus moving but keep it moving in the right direction at an appropriate speed. Drive too slowly, and the bus gets hit from behind with state and/or federal expectations or the favorite of leaders--the unfunded mandate. If the driver goes too fast, you leave passengers behind. Without the passengers, the work of the district would not be completed in an appropriate manner. With the driver having such important responsibilities, how can he/she assure the passengers that they will all arrive at the selected destination on time without delays?

Directions from the Manual

Every vehicle comes with an operation manual. While many drivers jump behind the wheel, turn the key, and take off, a woman school executive knows better. As Michael Fullan (2008) expresses, “followers expect leaders to know what they are doing, especially in relation to complex, critical issues of the day” (p.117). Women school executives must be very cautious and dedicated to reading all the necessary manuals to ensure a safe trip. The drivers read everything from Texas School Law books to the Texas Education Code. These leaders are so cautious that they will even consult attorneys to deepen their understanding of the expectations. All of these matters are handled with great care just to ensure that she knows how to drive the bus and how to get it moving in the right direction.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

Most drivers today do not leave anything to chance, so cautious drivers rely on Global Positioning Systems better known as GPS. The woman school executive wants everyone to have confidence in the route we are going to take to our final destination. In order for the passengers to know where we are going, the Superintendent in collaboration with all stakeholders creates a vision, mission, and beliefs. These three pillars keep the bus in the right lane. When we are

driving (leading), it is easy to get distracted and miss a crucial turn or exit. Just as the driver relies on the GPS to keep us on track to arrive at our destination in a timely manner, the vision, mission, and beliefs guide the district and keep us united and focused on the correct lane. If the passengers all have a different opinion on what the destination is and how long it should take to get there, it can lead to chaos and confusion.

Detours and Road Construction

Sometimes even with the greatest technology, we hit a roadblock or end up stuck in traffic. As the leader of an organization, women school executives hit their fair share of road blocks. Some delays surface as a board member who needs more information about a particular matter, a parent who is frustrated with a teacher, a teacher who is struggling with a student or leadership that is not as effective as you would like it to be. The aforementioned roadblocks are common obstacles for every leader. So, if we know delays are inevitable, how do we cope with these unwanted roadblocks? The first key is to make sure you read and understand the manual. John C. Maxwell (1998) says, "Leaders who want to succeed maximize every asset and resource they have for the benefit of their organization" (p. 83). If you are ever unsure or lack complete understanding, reach out to those who can light the path. Call attorneys, auditors, the Texas Education Agency, law enforcement or whomever or whatever it takes to ensure that the bus is legally out on the street. Second, find other strong drivers whom you can lean on and glean from to make you a better driver. Find someone with more experience who can help you avoid making detours. Third, know who your greatest supporters and biggest critics are on the bus. There are not many people who like back-seat drivers, but you better know who they are so you can evaluate the information they give you before you act upon it. Phillip C. Schlechty (1997) stresses, "it is certain that saboteurs can cause trouble no matter where they are, but I have found that the best place to have them is on the inside where they can be watched rather than on the outside where they can cause trouble without its being detected until the effects have been felt" (p. 218). On the contrary, keep your greatest supporters in the front seats. They know and understand that you are an exceptional driver, and you only have the passengers' best interest at heart. These individuals will keep watch with you during the trying times, and they will be there to keep you from giving up and drifting off course.

Staying the Course

During the journey there are times when we grow tired and weak. However, you must remember that there are passengers who are counting on you to get them to that grand, glorious destination. While the trip will not always go smoothly, the woman school executive must always realize her value and relevance in providing a safe passageway. While the focus of this article is on the complexities of being a school executive, the most important cargo is not even inside the bus. The cargo is the students in our districts. The students need a strong school executive who will be their advocate. A strong leader will ensure that the road they journey on leads to a successful future. What kind of driver are you?

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BIOGRAPHY

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So, You Say I'm Like a Computer System?

Dr. Sharon Ross, Superintendent

Jefferson ISD

While reading a technology major's assignment, I reflected on aspects of the Courageous Leadership of Women compared to the Architecture of Windows and technological changes over time. Inspired by the author's explanation of "Windows Executive – A Component of The Architecture of Windows," I sought further meaning, comparatively, of the architectural design transparent in woman school executives leading pathways of greatness.

So, how is a woman executive like a computer environment system? Envision a scene in which a highly energized woman races throughout the organization with wires and chips connected inside her computerized brain. Lights are flashing! Bells and sirens scream! All systems on go! She's a processor, a chip that does the thinking! She's a CPU, telling others what to do! What a phenomenon! Women school executives build immense capacity and excel beyond the norm.

Take a look inside the architecture of a computer program or parts. Examination of the services revealed vivid similarities of Women School Executives. The table below shows the make-up and design of the two leading systems! Women Leaders, you rock!

Windows Executive	Women School Executives
Object manager – allocates and manages resources. All other subsystems pass through the object manager to gain access to program resources	Instructional Leader – provides instructional leadership influencing decisions of subordinates to gain leadership knowledge and skills needed to access resources
Cache Controller – provides consistent operation between local and remote files	Liaison - connects school district to city, state, and national concerns
Input/Output Manager – allows communication with subsystems. Accepts/ translates file requests. Improves disk performance. Stores read requests.	Communications Director – provides direction for communications coming in and going out. Translates information to the media
PnP Manager-- handles plug and play. Controls the complex manner in which drivers are installed.	Systemic Planner - controls the manner in which the vision, mission and beliefs drive work embedded in district operations
Power Manager-- deals with power events	Community Liaison - attends events and represents the district. Conducts/attends presentations and functions locally, statewide and nationally
Security Reference Monitor-- enforces security rules and determining resource accessibility Processor – the chip that does the thinking of the computer. The CPU, central processing unit – brain of the computer, controls information and tells other parts what to do	Overseer - enforces district rules, policies and administrative regulations. Approves budget considerations for resource purchases
Task Scheduler-- allows execution of different task.	Delegator - delegate’s different tasks to team members charged to execute the plan.

Women school executives, you are challenged to continue leading with courage, enhancing and constantly loading the operating system, creating a techno-centric environment!

Dr. Sharon Ross has worked in education over twenty years and is currently serving in her fourth year as Superintendent of Jefferson ISD in Jefferson, Texas. Within the education field, Sharon is passionate about systemic planning and rural school improvement.

My Mother's Hands

Lu Anna Moore Stephens

*My mother's hands were seldom idle
They touched the stove and the fridge
They helped my sister and me
As we tried to build a bridge
She held our hands
She showed the way...she helped with something new.
She loved us so, she told us often
We loved her in return.
Her guiding hands helped us when we stumbled
Her faith in us never wavered.
When our turn came and we had little ones
We needed to show them what to do
We remembered Mother's hands and what she did for us.
She showed us love, patience, kindness, reassurance...
Her precious hands always held out to us.
She became sick. In twenty three hours she was gone.
I miss her so. Not a day goes by that I don't look up
And with my hands reach up.*

The *Journal of Texas Women School Executives* is accepting submissions for the January 2013 edition of its online journal that

- Support applied research from women school executives in the field as well as in universities
- Support women school executives
- Build leadership capacity for women school executives
- Highlight the spirit of commitment and creativity of women school executives

Research Articles, Professional Perspectives, and/or Original Creative Works are currently being accepted for consideration to be published in the second online edition of the JTWSE.

Deadline for submissions is June 1, 2012

The *Journal of Texas Council of Women School Executives* does not accept submissions published previously or under review by another journal. By submitting a manuscript, the author agrees that the work has not been published and is not under review by any other journal. Presentation at a conference or concurrent consideration for presentation does not disqualify a manuscript from submission to the *Journal of Texas Women School Executives*.

Papers are received by email only at glinn@uttyler.edu. All submissions must be sent as a Word file with a cover memo indicating author's affiliation, contact, proposed category, and confirmation of non-review status. For this to be a truly blind process, please sanitize the manuscript by eliminating any identifying references within the article.

Upon receipt of submission the editor will send notice of receipt to the contact author. The editor will review the submittal for suitability for the journal and specific category. If deemed not suitable, the editor will provide guidance for the author. If deemed suitable, the manuscript will be sent to the editorial review board at the end of the month. Authors should know the disposition of their manuscript within about 60 days.

See <http://www.tcwse.org/jtwse/about.html> for more information and submission details.