

September 14, 1999



*Excellence and Equity
in Public Education
through School Board
Leadership*

Andy:

I enjoyed talking with you at dinner last night. As discussed, enclosed are two NSBA publications that address the issue of system-wide improvement.

The first is a well researched paper on school based management which at chapter 4 discusses the role of the school district and principally the school board in that kind of decentralized structure. The report also makes the point that simply moving authority to this site level will not raise student achievement without adequate knowledge, data, training and support services—which again feeds into the district role.

The second report deals with the school board role to raise student achievement in a standards based reform environment. Chapter 2 articulates the role of the school board and from that the kind of policy discussions and planning that should occur at the district-wide level.

Looking to the federal role, we believe that there should be strong encouragement provided within Title I in terms of addressing student achievement for disadvantaged students—as well as in other titles to address student achievement generally—to improve the strategic capacity-building of school systems from planning to evaluations. We would hope that as the reauthorization moves forward, the need for supporting district-wide “generalship” will be valued along with professional development of teachers.

I’ll get back with you next week to see if we can set up a time to continue this discussion.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike', is written over the printed name 'Mike'.

Mike

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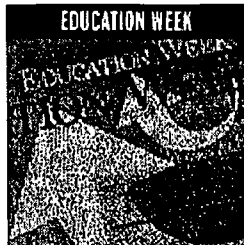
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Panel's Draft Report on Governance Draws Fire at Meeting

By Jessica L. Sandham

Denver

Members of the National Commission on Governing America's Schools say they aren't afraid of generating controversy if it means getting the education establishment to think of new ways to run schools.

The 18-member group, convened by the Education Commission of the States this past February to come up with innovative approaches to school organization and management, got its first taste of criticism last month when the panel unveiled a working draft of its report on governance during the ECS conference in Denver.

Some education leaders complained that the preliminary report, which lists four different governance models for schools, failed to draw from examples already in place in various city districts.

"In reading the initial document, I thought the report was confusing and at odds with itself," Michael Preston, the school board director of the 47,000-student Seattle district, said during the July 13 session. "We were disappointed that the report did not work with existing structures and bear out what is working well."

Governance Models

Commission member Lynnwood Battle, the president of the Cincinnati school board, said such criticisms resonated with the commission and would likely be reflected in the final report, which is slated for release in November.

At the same time, Mr. Battle noted, part of the commission's charge is to be innovative, and members expect to ruffle some feathers along the way. ("ECS Convenes Group To Explore School Governance," March 3, 1999.)

"We are committed to pushing the envelope to some extremes that probably haven't been considered before," he said. "We agree that is what's necessary now. We can't leave the system as it is, and tinkering around the edges is no longer acceptable either."

The draft report presents four different governance models on a continuum, with each option becoming progressively more decentralized than the one before it:

The first model would aim to improve the existing system by specifying and reallocating the roles that states, districts, and schools have in the educational process. It would make states responsible for setting standards

Read a related story, "ECS Members Take Closer Look at Teaching as a Profession," in This Week's News.

and providing resources, districts responsible for instructional guidance and school accountability, and schools responsible for providing instruction and improving student performance.

Under the second model, authority would be concentrated at the school level, giving schools more authority over resource allocation and hiring decisions.

The third model would take education out of the hands of government and empower independent agencies, or charter districts, to run schools.

The fourth would create new local educational authorities, or educational development boards, to manage a variety of independent schools and programs and encourage private investment in schools. Individual schools would primarily manage themselves, deciding the employment, evaluation, and compensation of staff.

Commission members emphasized that they have no intention of promoting the merits of one model over the others.

"The commission is not an advocate of anything except candor," said Theodore R.Sizer, a commission member and the chairman of the reform network known as the Coalition of Essential Schools.

But some critics assert that the commission needs to paint more detailed pictures of the models before they could be fairly assessed.

In an interview last week, Nat LaCour, the executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, raised concerns about the models. "Our main concern is that this is an effort to transfer authority away from the government and locally elected school boards and give that authority to groups that are not accountable to the people," Mr. LaCour said.

On the Web

Learn more about the ECS program, [Governing America's Schools](#).

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Kendra L. Brooks
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To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP, John B. Buxton/OPD/EOP@EOP, Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: school leadership

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October 22, 1999, Friday Final

SECTION: News : Our Schools, Forum for Progress Pg. 1

LENGTH: 1763 words

HEADLINE: Wal-Mart heir pledges to help fund school principal training
Walton's support a boost to superintendent's plan of an institute for school
leaders

BYLINE: JOE WILLIAMS and ALAN J. BORSUK

SOURCE: Journal Sentinel staff

BODY:

Billionaire John Walton pledged Thursday to provide financial assistance to help Milwaukee Public Schools officials and business leaders establish an institute to identify and prepare "excellent" school principals.

Walton, a Wal-Mart heir and the keynote speaker at the Journal Sentinel Forum for Progress at the Midwest Express Center, met in a side room during one of the forum's sessions with Superintendent Spence Korte and others to discuss his possible involvement in a project that Korte has deemed critical to the future of the 100,000-student school district.

"This is the kind of new initiative that I think demonstrates how focused the new School Board and the new superintendent are in improving what you have here in this city," Walton said in his keynote address. "Mr. Korte, your elected board will be your support to achieve this goal, and I have pledged them my support."

The forum was marked at times by rhetorical fireworks over the issue of school choice, as well as more peaceful discussions on technology in education and the role of parents in schools. About 500 people attended the forum, which was sponsored by the newspaper and co-sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Public Policy Forum.

In his remarks, Walton emphasized that his support for reforms such as vouchers and charter schools was intended to help all schools improve, not just private schools.

He said response to creation of the \$200 million Children's Scholarship Fund, which he co-founded, has shown that urban parents care deeply about the education of their children. The fund received more than a million applications for 40,000 scholarships of \$600 to \$1,700 for children to attend private schools this year.

Walton, a director of Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and son of the chain's founder, has emerged as one of the most prominent national supporters of school choice and contributed to the campaigns of the winning slate of Milwaukee School Board members last spring.

Walton said the pace and breadth of school reform in the United States had picked up dramatically since -- and in significant part because -- the Wisconsin Legislature passed the first Milwaukee school choice plan in 1990. He said he doubted that Milwaukeeans realize the national importance of what is happening here.

His support of the plan for developing public school leaders could be significant in addressing what Korte considers a crucial need of the schools. School officials and business leaders have met several times in recent months to discuss some type of formal program to make sure there is a pool of "committed, caring and competent" principals to run the district's 160 schools.

Walton said he asked Korte to submit, in writing, a proposal for the program. He said he was committed in concept to providing financial assistance for any part that MPS could not fund.

Korte and other school officials said they did not yet have a specific idea what such a project would look like. He said the cost of the program would be "significant" but that he didn't view Walton's offer as a blank check.

"I've said since my first day on the job that our primary goal has to be finding 160 great school leaders," Korte said. "I'm not convinced that just spending 30 years in the classroom is enough to be a good school leader."

Korte said local businesses would play a crucial role in the principals project, and that Tim Sheehy, of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, was part of the meeting Thursday.

"We tend to think of this as just a school problem, but businesses have struggled with this for years," Korte said. "Where do you get your future leaders? How do you identify them early so you can invest in them?"

Walton said he was enthusiastic about what can happen with Milwaukee's schools.

"This city defines better schools as both better public schools and better private schools," Walton said. "As several speakers pointed out today, building better schools for all children of Milwaukee should take us beyond

the artificial, traditional distinctions between public and private schools."

The issue of school choice drew some heated exchanges at the forum's first panel discussion. Reginald Weaver, vice president of the National Education Association, and J. Kenneth Blackwell, Ohio's secretary of state, squared off over whether vouchers were the best way to help low income students in struggling schools. At some points, the two would not let each other finish their sentences, and crowd members cheered or groaned depending on which perspective reflected their own.

"You can elect to be on the side of a system that constantly under-educates those children, but I want to be on the side of those parents and those children liberating themselves to get another chance to, in fact, enjoy a better education," said Blackwell, a school choice supporter.

"What about the millions of dollars you spent on cab fares (in Cleveland for voucher students)?" responded Weaver, who opposes vouchers.

Michael Joyce, president of the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation, also got into the fray, peppering Weaver with questions about how much the NEA spent on fighting school choice in the courts.

Weaver countered that the Bradley Foundation had spent a lot of money itself on promoting school choice nationwide. "Why don't you give us some of that money?" he asked.

"We have spent a great deal of money to encourage competition, we're not afraid to report that," Joyce said. "You say you're not opposed to competition but you sure have spent a lot of money opposing it."

"Are you saying that the private and parochial schools are willing to subject themselves to the same rigors and same standards and same scrutiny from the state (as public schools), since (they) are accepting state money?" Weaver asked.

"Well, sure," Joyce said.

Joyce called the rise of school choice "the education story of the century," and said that in the foreseeable future, almost no one will oppose it.

On the same panel, Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist said creating outstanding schools -- public, private and parochial -- plays an important part in the city's future and that he foresaw Milwaukee having the best urban schools in the country.

During the forum's panel discussion on the use of technology in classrooms, speakers presented a host of examples of the impressive work technology permits students to do.

Louis Gomez, a professor at Northwestern University who has worked with urban school districts in developing the use of technology in science education, said that computers present "an incredible opportunity" to show that the country is committed to the education of all children, regardless of income.

Using a computer-driven presentation, he showed a video of a seventh-grade student from Chicago discussing how she did a science project, and he showed examples of the kind of data and resources that can be made available to students.

Using computers can mean students "don't just study science, they do science," Gomez said.

Donald Sunderland, vice president and chief information officer of Edison Schools, said the schools operated around the country by Edison, a private business, push for computers to be in the home of every student and teach "technology as a second language."

Sunderland said Edison's strategy emphasized getting teachers comfortable with computers, because a lack of teacher enthusiasm has been a serious obstacle to effective use of technology in classrooms.

But Jane Healy, an author and educational psychologist from Colorado, said that when she spent much of 21/2 years visiting schools as part of her work on a book, programs that used computers effectively were in the minority.

"In many cases, I saw things that absolutely appalled me," Healy said.

She said too few schools used computers in ways that made children think, and too many used them in ways that led to learning that was shallow, useless and easy to forget.

Healy said 80% to 90% of "edu-tainment" software aimed at children is "pure garbage" and she said too little attention is being given to questions about long-term health impacts of extensive use of computers.

Robert Schleck, principal of Milwaukee's Burdick School, said preliminary indications from research being conducted at the school were that attendance improved and attitudes were more positive among students involved in the school's widely praised computer-oriented classes.

But, he said, "None of this matters . . . if you don't have the human touch of the teacher."

Make it meaningful. Make it positive. And make it important.

Those were key themes of the forum's panel discussion on school-parent relations. Six panelists described varying research, approaches and programs dealing with the role of parents in education. But all of them came back to similar themes.

"If you're going to do parent involvement, it really needs to mean something," said Linda Wheeler, national director of Families and Schools Together, a program aimed at helping families whose dynamics aren't working well. Based in Milwaukee, the program is in use across the country.

Winnie Doxsie, president of the Wisconsin PTA, said parent and family involvement is the most consistent predictor of academic success for a child.

She said an important first step toward improving parent involvement is "regular, two-way, meaningful" communication between home and school.

Herbert Grover, former state superintendent of schools, said there had been talk at the forum about public schools being in trouble.

"I'll tell you the unit that's really in trouble in our society, and it's the family," he said.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, an author who has written extensively on family life, said too many children had been treated so indifferently by their parents and other adults that they were left feeling, as she put it, "I'm nothing to nobody." This "moral and spiritual deficit" connects to "a parenting time deficit" in too many households, and simple steps, like reading to a child every night, could be keys in reversing this.

Mondell Mayfield, principal of Andrew S. Douglas Community Academy, said the Milwaukee middle school had introduced a wide array of child and adult services as part of a plan to raise its accomplishments and play a positive role in its central city neighborhood. Mayfield said parents who feel their family is well-served by a school can be the best advocates for a school.

GRAPHIC: Photo 1
ERWIN GEBHARD
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Reginald Weaver (left), vice president of the National Education Association, and J. Kenneth Blackwell (right), Ohio secretary of state, heatedly debate school choice Thursday at the Journal Sentinel Forum for Progress. Other members of the panel are (from left) Spence Korte, Milwaukee Public Schools superintendent; Linda Johannesen, president of the Galef Institute; and Michael Joyce, president of the Bradley Foundation. Photo 2

Shoshannah Goldberg, 8 months, takes a nap while her mother, Jodi, listens to a panel at the forum. Photo color
ERWIN GEBHARD
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Walton (left) meets with Spence Korte (right), superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools, Thursday at the Midwest Express Center. At center is Susan Mitchell of the American Education Reform Foundation.

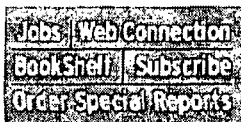
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Part One of our *Leadership in Education* series.

["Educational Free Agency,"](#) March 24, 1999.

["Principal Matters,"](#)
Nov. 11, 1998.

January 12, 2000

Policy Focus Converges on Leadership

By Lynn Olson

After years of work on structural changes—standards and testing and ways of holding students and schools accountable—the education policy world has turned its attention to the people charged with making the system work.

LEADERSHIP

A Special Report

At the classroom level, that has meant a flurry of efforts to attract and train good teachers and keep them in their jobs. But nowhere is the focus on the human element in public education more prevalent than in the renewed recognition of the importance of strong and effective leadership.

Widespread agreement that U.S. schools face a dearth of administrators capable of providing that leadership has in recent months roused a broad and influential group of policy contingents to action. Among the players are the U.S. Department of Education, the Broad Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, state governors and education officials, and the leaders of several national corporations.

The remarkable degree to which these and other groups are coming together to focus on a single issue is bringing with it millions of dollars in research grants and program funding, with a strong emphasis on reshaping the training and preparation of principals.

"Virtually everyone I talk to is focused on leadership at the school level in terms of the principal, and at the district level in terms of the superintendent and the school board," said Susan Traidman, the director of education initiatives at the Washington-based Business Roundtable. "Some are homing in on the crisis in leadership in urban school districts, but other groups feel that there's a nationwide crisis."

Yet despite the consensus that leadership counts, deep philosophical and political disagreements remain about what kinds of educational leaders are needed, where they should come from, and how they should be trained.

"There's just a whole lot of ground that needs to be plowed," said C. Kent McGuire, the Education Department's assistant secretary for educational research and improvement. "I don't think any of us feel that we've got our arms around this issue in a way where we're prepared to place really significant bets on any one thing."

Already, long-standing rivalries and political turf battles threaten to undermine attempts at broad, sustained improvement in the quality and quantity of school leaders.

Many policymakers, for example, criticize the preparation of school administrators in colleges and universities as outmoded and ineffective. But those institutions—which produce the overwhelming majority of principals and superintendents—have been left out of some of the recent discussions.

And the national organizations that represent school administrators fear they, too, may be bypassed. "Foundations are going to make a critical mistake if they don't deal with groups like ours," said Gerald N. Tirozzi, the executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. "We're tired of sitting on the sidelines, and we're going to be players in this—serious players."

Large-Scale Efforts

The recent focus on leadership brings together philanthropies, government, and education policy organizations:

- The Washington-based Institute for Educational Leadership has received a total of \$1.2 million from the Ford Foundation and the Education Department to serve as a hub for burgeoning leadership efforts. In part, the IEL hopes to synthesize existing research on the subject and identify promising strategies.
- At the third National Education Summit in October, state governors and business leaders committed themselves to providing school leaders with competitive salaries and better professional development. The references to leadership were added to earlier drafts of the meeting's policy document after many participants raised it as a topic of concern.
- The National Center on Education and the Economy, also based in Washington, has received \$200,000 from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to devise the prototype for a national institution to train principals.
- The Broad Foundation has committed \$100 million to improve governance, management, and labor relations in large urban school systems. The foundation is particularly interested in recruiting, supporting, and training entrepreneurial leaders and innovators. So far, the Los Angeles-based philanthropy has offered challenge grants to the San Diego and Sacramento school systems to develop training programs for principals.
- Educational administration's three leading professional groups—the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals—have reached a preliminary agreement to create a national board for leadership certification, similar to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The board would establish rigorous standards for exemplary work by school administrators and then oversee the

process by which administrators would become board-certified.

The groups are also exploring the use of the Internet to provide online courses to principals and other administrators.

- The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund is about to launch a multiyear initiative on school leadership.
- The Annenberg Institute for School Reform, based in Providence, R.I., plans to announce a task force on the future of school districts this winter that likely will address leadership development as part of its agenda.
- The Panasonic Foundation, based in Secaucus, N.J., is working with seven school districts on a Leadership Associate's Program that introduces school and central-office administrators to ideas about organizational theory, strategic thinking, public engagement, and systems change. Middle-level officials are vital to the continuity in any district, said Sophie Sa, the executive director of the foundation. "Even with changes at the top, there's this cohort that's been working, and they'll stay," she explained. "They'll outlive three or four or five superintendents in their lifetimes, maybe more."
- Several universities—including such leading institutions as Harvard, the University of California system, and Teachers College, Columbia University—have begun leadership-training programs in the past year.
- School districts such as Houston, New York City's Community District 2, and Philadelphia have made recruitment and development of principals a top priority.
- More than half the states have adopted or adapted new standards for school administrators crafted by the Interstate School Leaders' Licensure Consortium, a collaboration of states and professional organizations. The standards are built around the premise that good leaders are those who can improve teaching and learning.

Why Now?

The sheer abundance of such activity reflects a widespread—and growing—recognition that without strong leaders at the helm, larger efforts to improve student achievement will likely falter, if not fail entirely.

"I've never been to a great school where they don't have a great principal," Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware said at the education summit last fall. But, the Democrat added: "We haven't focused all that much in my state, and my guess is in most of the states around here, on principal leadership."

Certainly, the idea that strong leaders are important for good schools is hardly new. In the 1960s, the Harvard scholar Ron Edmonds noted that effective schools tended to have effective principals. And in the 1980s, Madeline Hunter traveled around the country urging principals to be strong "instructional leaders" who could coach their teachers on more effective practices.

But compared with other issues, leadership has largely been ignored in the most recent bout of educational improvement efforts. "To my satisfaction it's never really been talked about," said the NASSP's Mr. Tirozzi, a former Connecticut education commissioner and assistant U.S. secretary of education. "While we seemed to involve every other group and organization, the principalship pretty much seemed to be left out of the discourse."

Those involved point to a host of factors that have raised leadership to the top of the policy agenda.

Most noticeably, the push for standards-based reform—and the pressure on schools to deliver in terms of academic performance—have raised the demands and pressures on principals and brought an unprecedented level of public scrutiny to their job performance. In some cases, principals' salaries and contracts are now dependent on gains in student achievement.

But the focus on leadership also reflects a belated recognition that standards and procedures alone can't energize a dispirited teaching staff or bring parents and community leaders together to turn around a failing school.

"People are saying, in order for a school to be effective, you need a principal who is strongly committed to and focused on teaching and learning," said Paul Reville, the executive director of the Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform, based in Cambridge, Mass. "And we don't necessarily have people in those positions now who have that background or interest or expertise."

At the same time, the student population is becoming more diverse, increasing the demands placed on schools.

Nor have the management functions traditionally associated with school leadership gone away— if anything, they've become more demanding. Principals are expected to exert more control over budgets and hiring and to work more collaboratively with their communities.

The university-based programs that traditionally have prepared administrators have not responded adequately to such demands, many policy observers say. "There is widespread unhappiness and disillusionment with the lack of relevance of most administrator-training programs," said Michael D. Usdan, the president of the Institute for Educational Leadership.

Few districts have made it a priority to identify and groom potential leaders, despite a wave of pending retirements and chronic difficulties in finding candidates. In a 1998 survey, about half of 403 randomly selected districts reported a shortage of qualified candidates for vacant principals' positions.

That same year, the National Association of Elementary School Principals reported that the median age of K-8 principals was 50, and the average principal planned to retire at age 57. More than half of superintendents are also between 50 and 59 years old, with an

average tenure of five years.

Indeed, one of the primary reasons for the heightened concern about leadership is that so few people appear ready—or willing—to take the job, whether it's a big-city superintendency or the principalship of the local high school. "These positions are no longer highly desirable in a professional career," argued Mary Lee Fitzgerald, the education director for the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

'Casting a Wide Net'

But while most people agree on the broad outlines of the problem, the lack of consensus about solutions is reflected in the wide range of initiatives under way, as well as their exploratory nature.

"Are we talking about a single person or about a distributive model of leadership?" Mr. Reville of the Pew Forum asked. "How do we give teachers adequate guidance, direction, and support for the kinds of changes in instruction they'll need to be making and, at the same time, attend to the significant responsibilities of managing these complex school environments?"

The forum's efforts will seek to answer those and other questions, he said. "We're trying to convene people to begin to think through what does the new, realistic, instructionally focused model of leadership look like in schools," he explained.

Mr. Usdan described a similar role for the IEL's fledgling School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative: "One of the issues that has to be addressed is, how does one define educational leadership? Is it just school leadership?"

Sibyll Carnochan, the director of policy and research for the Broad Foundation, said that originally her organization had planned to focus its \$100 million effort primarily on the problem of attracting, training, and keeping urban superintendents. But, eventually, it settled on a much wider agenda that also focuses on principals, school board members, district-level managers, and union leadership.

"The leadership issue is bigger than the superintendent," Ms. Carnochan said, "though clearly there's a lot of work to be done there as well."

Despite all the discussion, some remain skeptical that the focus on school leadership is serious.

"There's a lot of talk. I haven't seen a lot of money being put into this problem the way, certainly, it has into quality teaching," said Joseph Murphy, a professor of educational leadership and organization at Vanderbilt University.

"When people realized quality teaching was indispensable, resources began to flow," he argued. "I'm waiting for some energy and resources that would convince me the interest is reality, not just conversation."

on the Web

The [Institute for Educational Leadership](#) maintains a [directory of leadership development and training resources](#).

The National School Boards Association offers "[Leadership Qualities](#)" as one chapter in its [Education Leadership Tool Kit](#).

The [Education Leadership Institute](#), at Teachers College, offers its definition of [education leadership](#), including the resource "[The Hidden Crisis in Education Leadership](#)" (PDF file, requires Adobe's free [Acrobat Reader](#)) and links to related Web sites.

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Superintendent Exiting in Texas: A Challenge for Rural and Small Districts?

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Superintendent Exiting in Texas: A Challenge for Rural and Small Districts?

Twenty-first century challenges for rural and small Texas school districts may well include increasing the pool for selection of public school superintendents. Officials at the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), who conduct a majority of the superintendent searches in Texas, confirm that the applicant pool for superintendent vacancies has grown smaller through the decade of the 1990s (D. Killough, personal communication, August 24, 1999). At the same time, others note that superintendents now face more difficult social, economic and political conditions than superintendents of past years (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kowalski, 1999). The apparent decline in applicants for the position of superintendent in Texas and the data from this study about superintendent exiting raise concerns about the availability of effective leaders. What appeared to be a substantial number of rural districts involved in superintendent turnover (Czaja & Harman, 1997), led to the question about the pattern of exiting the superintendency altogether. The present treatise will examine whether there is a relation between increased vacancies and the difficulties current superintendents face. However, some history of rural schools in Texas may offer some insight.

Just a half century ago, the decentralized system of rural schools was the unifying force in Texas communities. This was also true of many regions in the United States. The word system is used loosely because every crossroads community and rural district in Texas had its own school, fiercely guarded its autonomy and existence, and steadfastly administered the school through a three-person board of trustees regardless of suggestions or directives from the county superintendent (Sitton & Rowold, 1987).

According to Sitton and Rowold (1987), the School Law of 1884 provided for a system of rural education in Texas; and the number of communities desiring to establish local schools burgeoned. Sitton and Rowold claim that these rural Texas districts were determined to thwart reform. As will be observed by the testimonies obtained from exiting superintendents, some individuals in rural districts continue to thwart change, the outcome of which is seemingly to reduce the pool of potential leaders for public schools, particularly in small and rural schools.

To clarify, superintendent *turnover* and superintendent *exiting* are not necessarily interchangeable terms. *Turnover* occurs when a superintendent vacates a superintendency, whatever the reason. *Exiting* occurs when a superintendent vacates a superintendency and moves into some other working role, whether in or out of education (Hall & Difford, 1992; Tallerico, Burstyn & Poole, 1993). Exiters comprise a portion of the yearly turnovers in the superintendency; how large a portion is yet to be determined in most states.

Overall, research on exiters is scant but five recent studies have addressed this issue. For instance, Giles and Giles (1990b) analyzed what happened to superintendents who vacated their positions in California between 1986 and 1989 and found that 80 percent (372) of vacating superintendents did not move to another California superintendency during that time. Follow-up surveys of exiters indicated that 6.2 percent (28) moved into a principalship, 4.5 percent (21) assumed an associate, deputy, or assistant superintendent position, and 3 percent (14) became directors in a central office. A total of 13.7 percent of superintendents vacating the superintendency took other roles rather than retire. Giles and Giles (1990a) also determined that the primary reason superintendents vacated the role was "...to escape from an intolerable board/superintendent relationship" (p.4).

Hall and Difford (1992) found that approximately 8 percent of superintendents in Colorado exited or could not be traced to the next job location. Another 15 percent were found to be seeking employment. In a separate study cited by Hall and Difford (1993), Fields found in Indiana that an average of 16 percent exited the superintendency and worked in some other capacity in education. Another 6.7 percent took employment in the business community.

Tallerico et al. (1993) investigated the exiting of 24 female superintendents from 9 different states. One-third of these former superintendents left voluntarily and took a different position in education. These former superintendents moved to fill the roles of an assistant superintendent, a university professor, or a principal. Those leaving voluntarily cited new job opportunities, child-rearing concerns, and personal endeavors pulling them from the role. Reasons that caused women to leave involuntarily or be pushed from the superintendent role were: 1) problems with the school board, 2) union interference creating problems with board members, 3) excessive time demands, and 4) moral and ethical discord. Fifty percent of the women were from rural districts, 30% from suburban districts and 20% from urban districts.

Czarnecki (1996) isolated factors influencing voluntary exiting from six former superintendents, both male and female, in New York. "The influencing factors were a lack of privacy, limited opportunities in the district, dislike for the position, lack of security, position lost its appeal, frustration with politics, differences with the board on educational philosophy, looking at broader horizons, position too time-consuming, and significant change in board membership" (p. viii). The former superintendents moved to positions of assistant superintendent, principal, executive director of an association, university administrator, and private school proprietor. Two males and two females were from rural districts and one male and one female were from suburban districts. According to Czarnecki, all were from relatively small districts that ranged in size from 1,234 to 2,858 students.

Allen (1996) studied the exiting phenomenon associated with 20 former women superintendents in

Texas. All left the superintendency sometime between 1990-1991 and 1994-1995. The study determined that: a) there is an exiting phenomenon among Texas women superintendents, and b) the rate of exiting for these women fluctuated from two percent in 1990-1991 to 7.04 percent in 1993-1994. Allen also cited the reasons for exiting, the primary "pulls" and "pushes" that the women studied most frequently mentioned. Pulls included marriage, new job opportunities associated with a larger community, freedom from schedules, and better pay. Pushes included politics, superintendent-board relations including turnover, finances, and opposition to instructional programs, ethical/moral/legal problems, working conditions, gender-related problems, and other miscellaneous reasons. Fifteen of the exiting superintendents were from districts classified as rural, two from rural districts growing toward suburban status, one from a suburban district, and one from a suburban district moving to urban status.

The present study sought to combine the genders and: a) establish exit rates, b) reveal type of district associated with exiting superintendents, c) compare reasons for exiting rural and other types of districts, and d) record where exiting superintendents subsequently found employment in education. The years studied were 1994-1997.

Method

Participants

A list of all superintendent turnovers was obtained from the Texas Education Agency for the years 1994-1995, 1995-1996, and 1996-1997. Phone calls were made to each district to locate former superintendents and determine the exiters. The total number of superintendent turnovers in Texas for the three years was 511. Limited information was available for 419 of them. Of the 419, 96 exited the superintendency and took a subsequent position either in another public school role or outside of public schools altogether. Not all former superintendents could be located. When exited superintendents were located, some chose not to be interviewed while others were eager to participate. Some were never located in the two-month time frame. The sample of those who chose to participate consisted of 38 exiters. Thus 38 participants, both men and women, were interviewed. Deceased, retired, and those whose whereabouts were unknown were not included in the exiter numbers.

Procedure

After the exiters were determined, a protocol of interview questions (see Table 1) was developed, and all procedures were approved by the SHSU Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Recording devices and supplies were obtained so that, with participant permission, interviews could be accurately recorded and transcribed. Thirty-eight interviews were conducted with people who no longer served in the superintendency but were still employed by the public schools.

Table 1
Protocol for Superintendent Study

I am doing some research regarding the exit of a superintendent from a school district. Your previous district was supplied by records from the Texas Education Agency. Then some investigative work allowed me to locate you. This project has been approved by the Sam Houston State University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. There will be little risk for you and results will be reported only as group data with no possible identification of participants. This phone call will be the only contact with you and will take very little time. Would you be willing for me to ask you a few brief questions? May I tape the interview? Your name need not be stated once the interview begins and I would be happy to send you a copy of the final results if you desire. (Get the address at this time.)

Okay, I am starting the tape at this time.

Let's start with the school district. How large was the school district in which you were employed?

What were the circumstances of your exit?

Tell me about the school board in your district. What were the groups with agendas? How did they respond to you?

What did you believe you had to offer the district?

What about your staff? How receptive were they to your ideas?

What is your current position? How does it differ from your previous position?

Talk briefly about your physical health.

What about your mental health? What kind of emotions have you experienced as a result of the exit?

What kind of thoughts have entered your mind?

What kind of professional assistance have you sought?

What kind of plans do you have for the future?

Is there anything you would like to share about this experience that I have not asked?

I am turning off the tape now. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. I appreciate your time and energy.

In 1996-97 (Texas Education Agency, 1997), there were 1,059 districts comprised of the following community types. As can be observed, rural schools comprised the largest single category.

Table 2
Community Types

9 <i>major urban</i>	the largest school districts in the state which serve metropolitan areas of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Austin, Corpus Christi, and El Paso
62 <i>major suburban</i>	other school districts in and around the major urban areas
33 <i>other central city</i>	the major school districts in other large Texas cities
87 <i>other central city suburban</i>	other school districts in and around the other large, but not major, Texas cities.
78 <i>independent town</i>	the largest school districts in counties with populations of 25,000 to 100,000.
130 <i>nonmetro, fast growing</i>	the school districts that fail to be in any of the above categories and that exhibit a 5 year growth rate of at least 20 percent. These districts must have at least 300 students in membership.
214 <i>nonmetro, stable</i>	the school districts that fail to be in any of the above categories, yet the number of students in membership exceeds the state median.
430 <i>rural</i>	the school districts that fail all of the above tests for placement into a category. These districts have a growth rate less than 20 percent and the number of students in membership is between 300 and the state median, or the number of students in membership is less than 300.

Additionally, there were 16 charter schools listed as a subgroup. These classifications were relatively meaningless for the present investigation because school districts in independent towns and in the nonmetro, fast growing categories are most often considered rural and/or small by educators not familiar with the Texas Education Agency classification. Therefore, the districts were classified by telephoning each district in the study and asking how the district classified itself.

Limitations of the present investigation include those typically associated with qualitative research, including availability of participants. Another limitation was that even non-parametric statistical analysis between rural and other types of districts from which exiters emerged was contra-indicated because of small cell sizes.

Results

Frequencies and percentages were determined for the number of each year's exiters, individuals who left the superintendency and did not take another superintendent position. Table 3 displays the results.

Table 3
Frequency and Percentage of Exiters in Texas, 1994-1997

Year	Number of Exiters	Percent of Exiters	Total Number of Turnovers
1994-1995	34	18.58	183
1995-1996	33	22.60	146
1996-1997	29	15.93	182
Total Period	Total Exiters	Average Percent	Total Turnovers
3 Years	96	18.79	511

The total number of turnovers for the three years was 511. Exiters numbered between 29 and 34 for each year with a total of 96 over the three years. Percentages for exiters ranged from 15 to 23 percent with an

average of 18.79 percent. Thus, over three years approximately 19 percent of the total turnover were exiters.

A review of the type and size of all districts involved with a superintendent's exit to other roles indicated the following: a) In 1994-1995, 74 percent of districts with an exiting superintendent were small (under 5,000), and 75 percent of the total exiting districts were classified as rural; b) In 1995-1996, 88 percent of districts with an exiting superintendent were small, and 91 percent were rural; and c) In 1996-97, 83 percent of districts with an exiting superintendent were small, and 86 percent were rural. Thus, smaller districts and those classified as rural tend to have the greatest number of superintendents who exit from the superintendency. Given the number of Texas districts that consider themselves rural, these percentages may not be surprising. However, the reasons that superintendents gave for leaving the small and rural districts may be of interest to those involved in preparing superintendents and to those who select superintendents to serve in small and rural school districts.

Although Allen (1996) studied only women, reasons for exiting the superintendency provided by both men and women exiters in the present study were similar to her findings. For instance, pulling factors were demonstrated by the following:

An opportunity came open...and I felt it was a good match for some strengths that I could bring into the region.

It was all personal. I wanted to come back here and retire.

Personal reasons. My husband died.

Pushing factors in the present study appeared to be dominated by the relationship between the superintendent and the school board including what exiting superintendents perceived as legal and moral issues. Elections and changes in board membership seemed to affect the superintendent's decision to leave. It appears, too, that understanding of the role's expectations frequently varied among superintendent, school board members, and district constituencies so that support among the various entities was lacking. Other pushes from the superintendency appeared to revolve around the issues of responsibilities and time constraints in small districts. Several illustrations follow:

[Female, Pre-K-8 district, 625 students] Well, I brought a lot of organization to the district and a lot of accountability from the board. We really worked well together as a team, except for this one guy. ...I tried to talk to him about working as a team and bringing in various speakers. They listened to TASB (Texas Association of School Boards) speakers, and what I found would happen is that he would either be late or not come at all for some of these sessions, because you know, when you know everything, you don't show up. A couple of them would tell me they were going to go to the TASB conference [and then decide not to come].

And there I had wasted school district money, you know, like a hundred bucks a night, in addition to their registration fee, and it was like they had no remorse or apology. They would do this year after year...I just tried to be friendly and polite and not hold grudges, but they were playing by a different set of rules. It got to the point where some teachers would call them over the least little things, and I was having to respond to things in personnel that were none of their business. We would go to meetings where even TASB people would stand up and say, "Stay out of personnel." And I was thinking, I am going by what the law says.

Although she did not state it as such, this superintendent obviously believed she was being manipulated through passive-aggressive behavior. She tended to use traditional methods and techniques to intervene, such as conference meetings, hoping that the board members would be enlightened and change their attitudes and behavior. However, the systemic nature of the interactions indicated that she might change her behavior toward the board members to effect the desired outcomes.

[Male, K-12, 600 students] Ah, it was an unusual board. It was strange, as a matter of fact. They had a lot of hidden agendas. The board wanted to run it themselves. I think there was a governance problem. I had gotten a divorce. That was a big deal with them, things like that. ...the principals were okay. The principals were, by and large, good. The teachers were by and large, good. The central office administration, the secretaries and the people in that building were not. It

was the first time I have ever run into that. ...Isn't it a heck of a note that nonprofessional people who don't know anything about education decide the destiny of professional administrators...

Here, again, the superintendent felt hurt and angry over the victimization he perceived. The systemic nature of the problem is evident in his description of the administration and the board. They perceived him as a threat, and he perceived them in the same manner.

[Male, K-12, 825 students] So I went to a school that was on the bottom and we had some success there ...the community was really split, and a lot of healing took place while I was there, but it was kind of taking its toll on me ... When I got there the board was extremely divided. They literally, some of them by their own words hated each other ... So everybody thought things were going well, but behind closed doors, our Board meetings were lasting until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. The former president hated the current president and vice versa, and the majority was in my corner, but I just grew weary. I was already worn out ... Ah, the old blood had some friends who were on the staff. Sometimes when vultures see blood, they flock together, and these two board members were some of those people...and said, "If you see him doing anything, we want to know it." ...You know the stress just really got to me. That is why I said in March, it just really wasn't worth it. I just got out of the hospital, and after a board meeting that was just unreal, the next day I told my wife, I said, "You know, I am going somewhere." So when I am with kids, it is just like adrenaline. I have never been happier in my life that I am right now.

This superintendent actually felt fairly effective and proud of initial accomplishments. However, in addition to systemic problems that emerged, he began to neglect his sources of strength (i.e. time with students, the purpose for his position) and participate in activities that increased his chances of burnout (i.e. uncontrolled board meetings) and challenged his mental health (i.e. some paranoid idea that may have had some basis in fact).

[Male, K-12, 2,600 students] Well, I had been a long-time high school principal. And the superintendent there had left and the board had asked me to take the job. I didn't really seek the job and I was most unhappy in the job because I felt like I had spent almost my entire career with students, being around students; and I was dealing with adults and adult problems, primarily the school board. And I did not enjoy that phase of education at all. And that resulted in me resigning from the position.

This superintendent, too, cites the school board as the source of his problems as well as his separation from students, an obvious source of strength for him. As indicated by two of the previous vignettes, losing touch with students may be disabling for some superintendents.

[Male, K-12, 225 students] It was very enjoyable particularly looking at other superintendent jobs but I didn't really want to do the same things that I had just got through doing, because all of those dealings with relationships with the board and all the things that go with those types of transition you can see doing the exact types of things over. A lot of mine has to do with the fact that I have a very young family. I have small children and just the sheer hours it was taking to do the job, I felt like I was taking the time away from my family...

When this superintendent assessed his priorities, he found his intimate relationships with spouse and children to be more important than school-related relationships. He specifically mentioned relationships with the board as seeming to lack fulfillment.

[Male, K-12, 198 students] I was brought in as a change agent maybe because the district was really in severe financial difficulty, academic difficulty, loyalty difficulty. I made some changes very quickly. I stepped on a lot of toes of people whose great-grandparents had settled the area. And they said they wanted to be into the 21st century, but they didn't ; they wanted to run it like in the 40's and 50's...

Finally, this superintendent was brought in as a change agent, but this term apparently invokes various connotations for various people. In fact, his rapid changes without preparing his constituencies may have

contributed to his demise.

Thus, the reasons for exiting the superintendency include pushes, pulls, and interactions between pushes and pulls to culminate in the decision either to accept an opportunity that was difficult to refuse or to cut the losses and find a new position. Finding a new position may have been influenced by job availability or by a desire not to repeat previous negative experiences. However, without increased knowledge of systems and leadership theory, are these superintendents destined to be continually frustrated by school boards and other stresses associated with the superintendency?

Most former superintendents found employment in education. The majority assumed roles as higher education professors, assistant/associate superintendents, central office directors, elementary/secondary principals, teachers, or education service center directors/consultants. A few moved to direct private schools, and one assumed the role of state commissioner of education. The remaining exiters assumed positions in businesses outside public education.

Discussion and Conclusion

The role of a rural superintendent appears to be difficult for some, and the complexity of issues and the daily demands on education leaders may seem to be increasing. The present study found results similar to the Hall and Difford(1992) study that reported 13.5 percent nationwide turnover with 16 percent associated with smaller schools having fewer than 350 students.

In Texas, where there are both enormous urban districts and tiny rural districts and every variation in between, the turnover rate has been increasing and the exiting from small, rural districts is important to consider, as the present study illustrates. In 1992, Parker found the turnover rate near 15 percent. In 1997, Czaja and Harman found the turnover rate near 19 percent. Exiters comprise only a portion of the turnovers. The present study demonstrates that approximately 20 percent of turnovers in the superintendency are the result of superintendents leaving that role and seeking other employment in any role except the superintendency. When one considers the time and effort to prepare for a leadership role as a superintendent, considers what sort of events and reasoning contributed to the decision to abandon the role altogether, and then considers the effect that such rapid loss of training and experience may have for a district, including students, faculty, staff, administration, school board, and community, the percent of exiters in Texas is of concern to educational leadership programs and to school boards who must choose the "next" superintendent.

So how can educational leadership preparation programs address these issues? Obviously, it must be done proactively rather than reactively. It seems fair to surmise that preparation and training for the superintendency must include candidate self-reflection and analysis to be fully aware of strengths and weaknesses before taking a rural superintendency. Conflict resolution strategies, consensus building, and communication skills are essential. A genuine, unromantic representation of what a superintendency entails, particularly in rural and small school districts, must be achieved while, at the same time, maintaining and nurturing the desire and confidence of those seeking eventually to assume the role. Many of the exiters indicated that their expectations did not meet the realities of the job. In fact, they reported feeling overwhelmed and overworked with no assistance and were frequently concerned that they had no time for their family or personal life. The need for balance is either not addressed adequately in preparation programs or goes unheeded by the idealistic, enthusiastic superintendent.

Along with these aspects, however, should be thorough knowledge and practice of systems and leadership theories. In a rural district the superintendent will frequently be the individual with the most formal education. So who would be expected to have the most knowledge about communication, human behavior, and group dynamics? If there is any hope for unity or effective governance, the person who has the most skills, presumably the superintendent, would build community support and intervene in conflict situations so that win-win situations are achieved.

How can school boards address these issues? Board member training is one way that Texas districts attempt to build an understanding of roles. Other opportunities could come through the support of

studies including an analysis of the exiting situation in Texas from the school board perspective. Comparing characteristics of boards in small, rural school districts with larger suburban and urban boards might offer some insight. Investigation of the hierarchical structures varying between larger and smaller districts that allow for one-person operations or various assistants to complete a bulk of the required tasks may also enlighten would-be superintendents and small and rural school boards. Interview techniques that would allow candidates and boards to determine if the district's composition and expectations are aligned with the potential employee's personality and aspirations might be beneficial.

There is no question that effective, stable leadership is required as we move into the 21st century. Carter and Cunningham (1997) summarize it in this way. "Our nation's school districts must have more stable leadership, as do most of our private institutions;...we need greater continuity at the top of the school district organization to sustain and nurture the continuous improvement process (p.242)."

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