

THE USE OF TRAITS IN THE SUPERINTENDENT RECRUITMENT PROCESS:
THE PERSPECTIVE OF BOARD MEMBERS AND SEARCH CONSULTANTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how leadership traits defined in the literature compare with traits identified by boards of education as they conduct searches for district leaders. Additionally, this study investigated what influence and perspective board members and search consultants have on the process. To do so required knowing both traits of successful superintendents and the process of searching for superintendents.

The literature review revealed over 900 leadership traits that were clustered by the researcher into broader categories to manage the data. Thirty-seven board members representing 13 different districts, and 9 search consultants from the Capital Region of New York State were interviewed for their perspectives on how these traits were used in the process.

The ten traits found most often in the literature were *communication, goals, community, vision, integrity, finance, culture, decision-making, political, and experience*. The top ten traits found in the brochures were *community, student achievement, collaboration, experience, business office, communication, diversity, approachable, vision, and decisive*. This study found no evidence that there was a method to measure the desired traits.

The study revealed that there was little evidence that the research was consulted to develop the traits or that the traits were used throughout the process. Search consultants reported that the process was also influenced by bias, the “halo-effect,” where board members *connected* with particular candidates, and by “gut- feeling.”

Recommendations are made to move to another method of searching for school system leaders, provide training for search consultants and boards and to develop rubrics for the measurement of traits in superintendent candidates.

Key words: superintendent, superintendent searches, recruitment of superintendents, boards of

education, traits, characteristics and qualities, search consultants, recruitment brochures, New York State.

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To my parents: For never ending patience and knowledge. You have both given me so much. Thanks for the trust that allowed us all to explore so much in life and for the sense of family that keeps us all together. Thanks for two of the best friends anyone could ask for. Spuddy spuddy!

For Pop and Nana: The wisdom and experiences you shared and time we spent together will be with me forever. I am glad that so much of you both are a part of who my brothers and sisters and I are. Trips to Florida, visits to the New York office, weekend shopping trips, card games, birthdays and \$20 trivia questions are all some of the best memories I could ask for. Spending time with you two was always a choice, not a chore.

Nana H.: a great house with so many places to explore, apple pies, sauerbraten, relish, great stories and the black Norton. Thank you for such a rich heritage.

To My Husband: thank you for putting up with my long hours and for picking up the slack when I needed more time.

To my children: I know that I have had my face in my computer for a long time. Thank you for being patient and for helping out around the house.

Now go clean your rooms!!! I am back (cue evil laugh)!!! Love you all very much.

P.S.- no, you do not have to call me “Dr. Mom” and no, I cannot fix belly aches.

My brothers and sisters: 7 kids in one house- who would ever have thought we would all be so close. I wouldn’t have it any other way. I also wouldn’t trade any of you in, despite what I said when I was 8 years old.

To my friends- you all believing in me was my compass.

“A true friend knows your weaknesses but shows you your strengths; feels your fears but fortifies your faith; sees your anxieties but frees your spirit; recognizes your disabilities but emphasizes your possibilities” (William Arthur Ward).

To Dr. Barnett Sturm and Charlotte Gregory- two mentors that believe in me and have provided guidance for many years and are always there. Thank you both for who you are.

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If I could create a “wordle” cloud of each of your qualities I believe that *dedicated, insightful, inspirational* and *visionary* would appear largest.

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“The truth is that there is nothing noble in being superior to somebody else. The only real nobility is in being superior to your former self” (Whitney Young).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Recent research indicates that school superintendents play a significant role in the success of students (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Little is known, however, whether the research influences boards of education as they hire superintendents.

Cotter (1992), stated that school boards were often inexperienced and unprepared to conduct and organize searches, did not commit appropriate finances to the process, and had difficulty identifying traits for leadership. Boards still are responsible for conducting these searches, which include the creation of recruitment materials and more specifically search brochures. These brochures serve as a means of initial communication between school districts and potential candidates and list the competencies and traits desired in the new superintendent. There is no research as to whether or not boards are using current research to inform these searches and identify the desired traits.

Do brochures list competencies or traits that will lead to success in the superintendency and help districts select the candidate who will be the most effective leader? Are the identified traits aligned with what research has revealed to be necessary for school leadership success? What information do board members reveal about how and why these traits are selected and what information do search consultants, who guide boards through the search process, provide?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the desired leadership traits defined in the literature compare with traits used by boards of education as they conduct searches for new district leaders. Additionally, this study investigates what influence and perspective board members and search consultants have regarding the use of traits in the process. To do so requires

knowing both traits of successful superintendents and the process of searching for superintendents.

This study was initiated to provide an understanding of the purpose and use of the published traits contained in search brochures in a school superintendent search. It also was designed to provide insight and understanding of the search consultant's role and perspective in the search process. Additionally, this study examines whether boards and the consultants they use to assist them in the searches utilize research in identifying traits desired in candidates. This information may be useful in creating recruitment materials more closely aligned with what the literature and adopted standards identify as needed in school superintendents. It may also give boards of education an understanding of what the roles and perceptions of search consultants are. Finally, the information may also help candidates select districts that are better suited for their strengths and styles.

The Literature

A review of the literature enabled the researcher to compile a spreadsheet of over 900 traits that are identified by authors, scholars and researchers as those traits that are necessary in leadership. Most recently, Marzano and Waters (2009) identified five traits that specifically linked district leaders to student success; “ensuring collaborative goal setting, establishing nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction, creating board alignment and support for district goals, monitoring achievement and instructional goals and allocating resources to support the goals for student achievement and instruction” (p. 6). Professional organizations and state agencies have used research to identify standards that describe what is needed to lead and to improve student success. These organizations include: The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), National

Education Technology Standards for Administrators (NETS-A), and New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Nine Essential Knowledge and Skills (NEKS).

While these organizations list what they have found to improve student success, individual researchers and authors have also identified traits they found necessary for success in school leadership. Bennis (2003) identifies the following as essential to superintendents success: communication, distinctive voice, self- confidence, purpose, integrity, strong moral compass, character, adaptive capacity, resilience, authenticity, learning from failure, accepting responsibility, trustworthy, and experience. Björk (2009) contends that superintendents should be instructional leaders. Additional authors and researchers are identified throughout this research.

School boards customize the leadership traits they desire when recruiting a new superintendent and publish them in brochures and on websites. Search consultants provide guidance for board members and help boards identify and select the desired traits. "Superintendent selection is perhaps the most important work of school boards" (Anderson, 2006, p. v). A look at the demographics and statistics of New York State can provide insight on the importance of the selection of a school superintendent.

New York State Demographics and Statistics

Currently there are 681 school superintendents and 37 district superintendents of regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in New York State. The New York State Council of School Superintendent's (NYSCOSS) *Snapshot 2009* reported that 273 or 40% of NYS superintendents are currently eligible to retire and "...concluded that significant turnover in superintendents was likely" (Fale et al., 2009, p. 10). Retirement is just one reason that superintendents leave a school district. Vacancies also occur as other superintendents change

jobs and move from one district to another. In NYS, the average tenure of a superintendent is 4.7 years. Therefore, boards often find themselves in the superintendent search process. These leaders are those who provide leadership and inspiration for school districts, the public institution where the future of a free and democratic society is essential (Hoyle & AASA Commission on Standards for the Superintendency, 1993). Knowing that these leaders significantly impact student success, yet do not stay long in a district, is reason to study the search process.

Role of Search Consultants

The search process begins with the board making a decision of who will conduct or assist in the search. Many boards of education hire search consultants to conduct the search since it is not a task "...for which most (board) members possess knowledge and experience" (Kowalski, 2006, p. 360). Search consultants are referred to as gatekeepers (Kamler & Shakeshaft, 1999). They can be private consultants or a firm, an educational or school board association, a general management search company or a BOCES. In NYS, a majority of districts primarily use BOCES superintendents to conduct superintendent searches (Moffet, 2005). External search consultants are the next most frequently used advisors for these searches (Moffet, 2005). If a board decides to utilize the services of any search consultant, they chose a person or people who will direct and influence the search. Search consultants help boards of education secure, screen and employ candidates (Kowalski, 2006).

As boards spend many hours conducting searches, there is no guarantee that the time and effort spent will secure a leader with the desired traits and characteristics. However, "Districts with higher levels of satisfaction with the new superintendent in general, spent more time, effort and money on this vital board responsibility" (Wallace, 2003, p. v).

Use of Search Consultants

Boards try to attract a pool of high quality candidates. Search consultants play a role in creating this pool. “Studies have shown that search consultants rely heavily on a network of friends, professional associates, and associations to develop a field of candidates to present to boards of education for consideration” (Kamler & Shakeshaft, 1999, p. 51). Each search consultant brings his or her own qualities, biases, resources and knowledge to the process.

Once the gatekeepers are identified, the search brochure is created. Search brochures list many different personal and professional traits from district to district. Some boards produce brochures, which require candidates to hold state certification while other brochures do not include this information because candidates would not be considered if that certification did not exist. Some districts advertise for candidates who hold doctoral degrees while others do not mention it. The information in brochures also varies in how traits are described or defined; some list desired traits such as *visionary* leaving the definition of *visionary* up to the reader, while others give a description of what they think visionary means. Other brochures list skills such as working well and communicating with the board of education as separate traits while others do not mention the board at all. Another brochure may list the desire for the candidate to possess particular business skills while another district sees that as the role of the business manager and does not list it. While there are many similarities in the lists that appear in the brochures, each district uses their own language when listing traits. One brochure may list financial expertise as a trait while another lists experience in budget development, with specific capital project knowledge. The selection of traits in the brochures can be influenced by search consultants and even by the departing superintendent. Kowalski (2006), states that:

Searches are often influenced by board member perceptions of the departing superintendent. If the board members admire and respect this individual, they are likely to emphasize the departing superintendent's positive characteristics in setting selection criteria...In fact levels of satisfaction with the previous superintendent often influence the entire search process (p. 55).

The search brochure is an important part of the search process because applicants get their first look at the customized description of the potential leadership position and decide whether or not to apply. Search consultants use their resources to advertise and search for candidates. A consultant may utilize national searches and another may encourage local searches. Another search consultant may encourage applicants with whom they are familiar to apply because they have more *inside information* on that candidate. All of these factors influence the overall search process.

As boards of education advertise to try and capture a candidate who fits the profile they have created, a few questions arise. Are the traits listed on the search brochures different than those that appear in the literature? Are the traits different from district to district? If the list of traits in the brochure can be checked off in an interview as the candidate demonstrates them, does this guarantee their success? If a candidate is missing a certain number of the traits, are they no longer considered a potential candidate? Do boards of education really pick the person who possesses the traits listed or are there factors that do not appear on the brochure that influence the search process? Are the traits that are listed realistic, to what extent are they actually used, and do they help us find the leaders who can most impact student success?

In order to understand these questions, search consultants and board of education members were personally interviewed. A review of the literature was conducted to distill the

traits identified by researchers as necessary for success. In addition, search brochures were examined to understand which traits the boards of education identified as important.

Research Questions

This study examined the utilization of the traits boards of education develop when conducting a superintendent search. Representatives of 13 boards of education and nine search consultants were interviewed to determine how traits were utilized and whether or not the successful candidate actually possessed them. The study also examined whether or not the traits from the literature are aligned to those identified in the brochures. Five research questions were posed:

1. Are there common traits, characteristics and qualities (referred to throughout as *traits*) identified in the literature that indicate success in school system leadership?
2. Are there common traits found in the recruitment literature that boards of education use?
3. How do the traits from the literature compare with the traits from the recruitment literature?
4. What perspectives do board members have as they reflect on the use of traits in the search process?
5. What perspectives do search consultants hold as they reflect on use of the traits in the superintendent search process?

Significance of the Study

The vast majority of superintendent searches are initiated with the development of a set of desired traits. These traits describe the knowledge, skills and characteristics of the person sought to lead the district. The process used to develop the set of traits is often reflective of the board and community of a district. Yet, there is now research identifying traits of successful

superintendents. This research examines the connection between local processes and national research. Boards, search consultants, and superintendent candidates, informed by this research can potentially make choices with greater attention to the traits that improve student success.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this paper, several terms are use frequently and will be abbreviated.

Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES): Established by New York State Law in 1947 to provide a mechanism for school districts to share programs and services in a cost effective manner. In this study, three neighboring BOCES are used.

Candidates: Those who are applying for the position of superintendency.

District Superintendent: The superintendent of a BOCES who has been appointed by the Commissioner of Education in New York State and a regional BOCES.

Joint Management Team (JMT): New York State encourages inter-district cooperation through a system promoting sharing among the BOCES for particularly high cost services. Ten JMT's exist in New York State. Multiple BOCES form each JMT.

Skype: A free internet service that allows people to talk and see each other in live conversations via computers.

Recruitment information: Available related to the superintendent search process. In this study, it is the search brochure.

Search brochure: The document used by school districts to advertise a vacancy in the superintendency and one of the methods used to recruit potential candidates for superintendent.

Search consultant: A person or firm used to help boards of education with superintendent searches.

Traits: Traits, knowledge, characteristics and qualities used to describe what superintendents should be able to know, do or be. This study utilized three groupings of traits; those that appear in the literature, those used in recruitment, and those possessed by superintendents hired.

Wordle: An online program which sorts list of words by showing the most frequently occurring words as larger on the page (Wordle.net, 2010).

Delimitations

The study was limited to three BOCES in a JMT in NYS, and information from board interviews may only represent superintendent searches done in that area.

Search consultants are all from NYS and have lead searches within the three BOCES where the research was conducted. They may only represent practices and beliefs in NYS or in the regions studied. Also, this research identifies board members' perceptions, how they feel, and not necessarily the reality.

Additionally, search consultants may bring particular influence and preferences to the process in which traits are developed. This could result in similarities between and among districts utilizing the same search consultant. This research did not examine whether that was the case or not.

Limitations

The study was designed so that the sitting superintendent of each school district selected the board members who participated or chose whether to have the board president help with the selection of other board members. The data was a collection of perspectives of board members, who, since the superintendent chooses them, may be more likely to respond in a positive sense or

in the same manner as the board president who selected them. Board presidents and superintendents selected participants, possibly choosing those who agree with them.

Also, information from the past may not be as accurate as time has passed and interviewees are asked to recall information that may not be clear. Interviewees may also have disagreed with the hired candidate and may have sought to voice this disapproval through negative answers, as they were unable to be objective.

The coding system to cluster the 900 traits in the literature was designed by this researcher. Some of the specific wording was changed to provide an understanding of the themes and general topics covered; yet every effort was made to group traits by those that were similar. For instance, *vision*, *visionary*, *have a vision*, and *creates a vision*, were all placed under one category, *vision*, for the purpose of sorting like traits. Most brochures list traits using specific wording that was crafted by school stakeholders and valued by them. Search consultants often preserved this wording to promote ownership of the brochure and the process. Changing the wording on the traits may have change the specific meanings, but it was done to cluster similar traits. The same process was used to group the traits in the search brochures. Nonetheless, there is no guarantee that other researchers would have grouped them this way.

Bias

The researcher was a board member on the selection committee for two superintendent searches and may have preformed ideas about the search process based on those experiences. Also, the researcher is currently a superintendent. In order to mitigate these biases, the researcher piloted interview questions to avoid leading questions and used transcriptions to capture exact responses of participants.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

History of the Superintendency

The role of the public school superintendent in the United States has evolved since the first superintendent took office. The *clerical role* in the superintendency began with the first superintendent appointment in 1837 and continued through 1870 (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). The *master educator role* began by the beginning of the 20th century and endured until centralization caused district sizes to merge and management functions to be central. During the time period that encompassed the *expert manager role*, new schools were built, and more teachers were needed. Carter and Cunningham (1997) suggest that the role of the *chief executive officer* began in the 1960's.

As the role of the superintendent has changed over the years, the skills, traits and qualities that are desired by school communities have changed as well. Today's superintendent must possess many skills in order to lead districts and increase student success. This study focused on superintendent traits from three different perspectives. First, this study explored what the literature identified as the standards, qualities, traits and characteristics that superintendents need to be successful. The review of the literature also examined investigations of leadership traits that are not specifically from the education sector. This study then analyzed the brochures used in superintendent searches to identify which qualities, traits and characteristics boards of education are looking for. Finally, board members were asked to prioritize the traits identified in their district's brochure based on what was most important at the time of the search and whether that had changed between the search and now. Search consultants were interviewed to identify the processes they used to identify the traits, and were also asked how the traits guided the process of selection.

Leadership Standards for School Leaders

Professional organizations and accrediting organizations have both developed standards for school leaders. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) created a set of standards specifically for superintendents. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) through the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), along with NYS’s *Nine Essential Knowledge and Skills*, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) lists standards for all school leaders.

AASA and ISLLC standards, while not recently developed, (one from 1996 and the other from 1993), are identified in current literature and still used today. ISSLC lists six standards for educational leaders (see Figure 1) and AASA lists eight standards (see Figure 2). The full version of the AASA standards is found in Appendix A, and the full version of the ISSLC standards is found in Appendix B.

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.	Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.	Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.	Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community	Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.	Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
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Figure 1. Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders. Adapted from “Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders,” by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Copyright 1996 by the author.

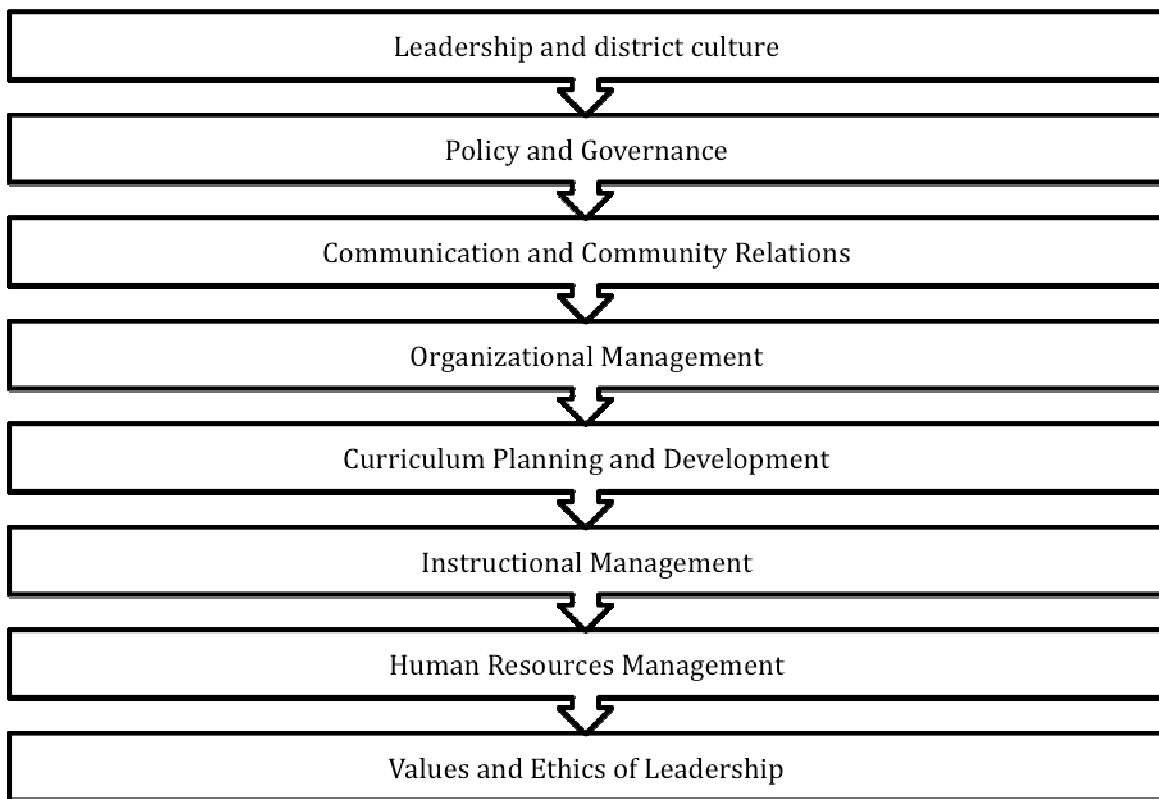


Figure 2. American Association of School Administrators Professional Standards for the Superintendency. Adapted from “Professional Standards for the Superintendency,” by J. R. Hoyle and the American Association of School Administrators. Copyright 1993 by the American Association of School Administrators.

The original AASA and ISSLC standards show many strong similarities and even use the same phraseology in some cases (see Tables 1 and 2). Both sets contain the traits *use consensus building, the importance of culture and diversity, and the use of data and curriculum*. There are also differences. ISSLC talks about pupil personnel programs, and AASA does not. In Standard 7, ISSLC addresses pupil personnel programs, which are not mentioned in AASA. The ISSLC standards are organized in three sections: knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Examining the full version of each set of standards provides additional information to demonstrate that there is a close alignment between the traits mentioned in both sets of standards.

Table 1

Comparison of AASA Standards 1-4 and ISLLC Standards

AASA Trait^a	ISLLC Trait^b
<i>Standard 1</i>	
Executive leadership	
Vision	Promote vision of learning
Shaping culture and climate empowering others	Understands school cultures, student- staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated All individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect Students and staff feel valued and important
Multicultural and ethnic understanding	Diversity and its meaning for educational programs
<i>Standard 2</i>	
Working with the board; formulating policy, standards, and regulations	The school community works within Framework of policies, laws, regulations enacted by local/state/federal authorities
Describing Public School Governance in our democratic society	
<i>Standard 3</i>	
Articulating district vision and purpose to community and media	An informed public
Responding to community feedback	Collaboration and communication with families Involve families/stakeholders in school decision-making
Building consensus to strengthen community support	Effective consensus-building and negotiation skills
<i>Standard 4</i>	
Skilled in analyzing and using data to make decisions	Relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals Curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
Framing and solving problems. Formulating solutions to problems	Potential problems/opportunities are identified Problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner
Quality management to meet internal and external customer expectations	
Quality management to allocate resources	Financial/human/material resources -align to goals of school

Note. ^aAdapted from "Professional Standards for the Superintendency," by J. R. Hoyle and the American Association of School Administrators. Copyright 1993 by the American Association of School Administrators. ^bAdapted from "Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders," by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Copyright 1996 by the author.

Table 2

Comparison of AASA Standards 5-8 and ISLLC Standards

AASA Trait	ISLLC TRAIT
<i>Standard 5</i>	
Skilled in curriculum design	Curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of the change process for systems, organizations,
Skill in designing a strategic plan to enhance teaching and learning	The principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
Uses theories of cognitive development	Applied learning theories, applied motivational theories
Employs valid and reliable performance indicators and testing procedures	Measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
Describes the use of computers and other learning technologies	Understands the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
<i>Standard 6</i>	
Knowledge and use of research findings on learning and instructional strategies and resources to maximize achievement	Emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate
Applies research and best practice to integrate curriculum for multicultural sensitivity and assessment	Curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
<i>Standard 7</i>	
Skilled in developing staff evaluation and assessments to improve performance	A variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed
Skilled in applying legal requirements for personnel selection, development, retention and dismissal	Pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families
<i>Standard 8</i>	
Models appropriate value systems, ethics and moral leadership	The purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society Various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics The values of the diverse school community Professional codes of ethics
Exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding	Diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
Uses social agencies and human services to help each student grow and develop as a caring, informed citizen.	Ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults

Note. ^aAdapted from “Professional Standards for the Superintendency,” by J. R. Hoyle and the American Association of School Administrators. Copyright 1993 by the American Association of School Administrators. ^bAdapted from “Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders,” by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Copyright 1996 by the author.

The New York State Education Department contributes standards to the field as well. The Blue Ribbon panel on School Leadership was charged with defining what was needed for leaders to be effective. In response, the panel developed *Nine Essential Knowledge and Skills* (NEKS) for district leaders, as shown in Figure 3 (Duncan-Portier, 2005).

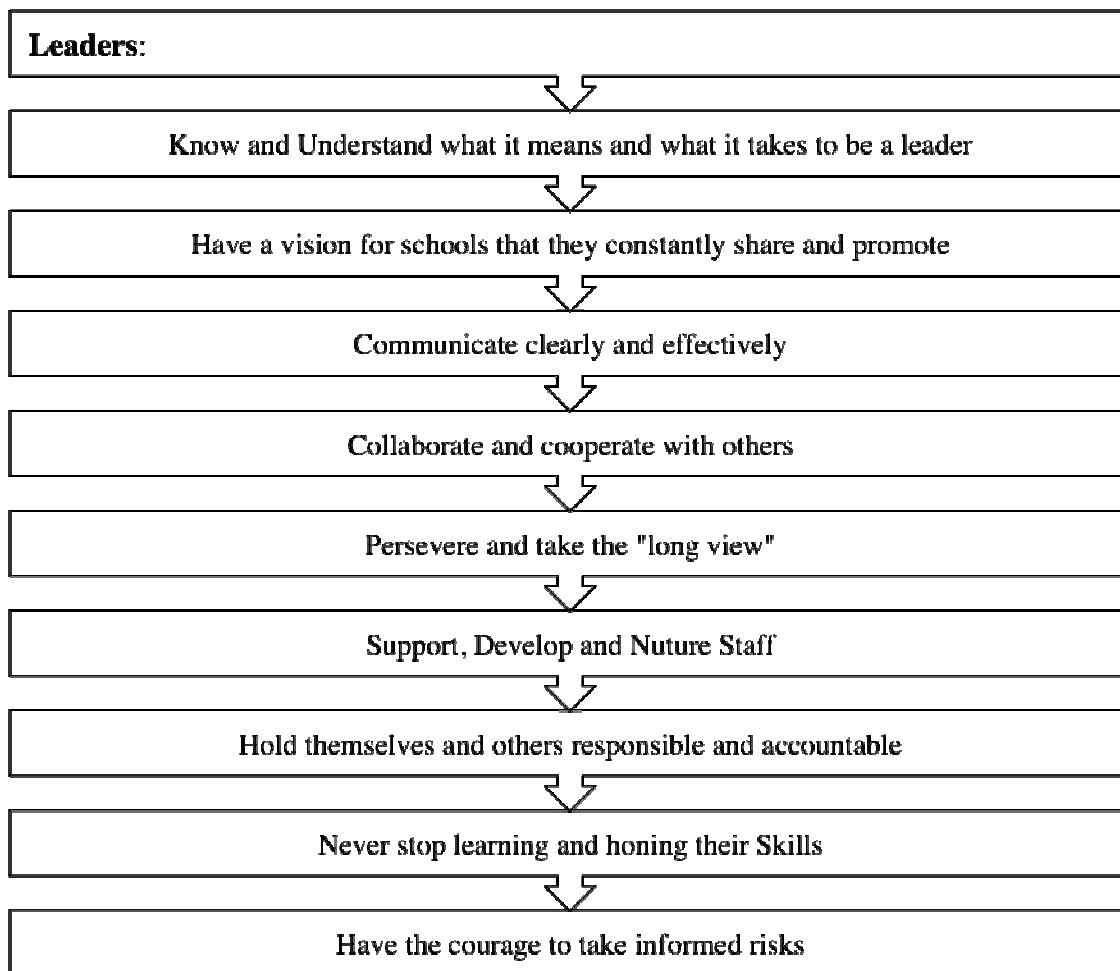


Figure 3. Nine Essential Knowledge and Skills for New York State School Leaders. Adapted from “Educational Leadership Initiative – Update,” by J. Duncan-Portier, 2005 in a Memorandum to The Honorable Members of the Board of Regents. Copyright 2005 New York State Education Department.

As in AASA and ISLLC, the NEKS include *vision, collaboration, professional development, and cooperation*. However, the NEKS talk about school leaders as needing to be in *continuous learning* themselves and be *courageous*. These are not included as part of the AASA or ISLLC standards.

Although technology use and understanding has become a vital part of leading public school systems, it is not mentioned in depth or detail by AASA, ISSLC or in the NEKS. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has published technology standards (NETS-A) for administrators, which was updated in 2009 (see Figure 4 and Appendix C). The NETS –A provide performance indicators aligned closely with ISLLC and AASA standards with technology targeted as the outcome.

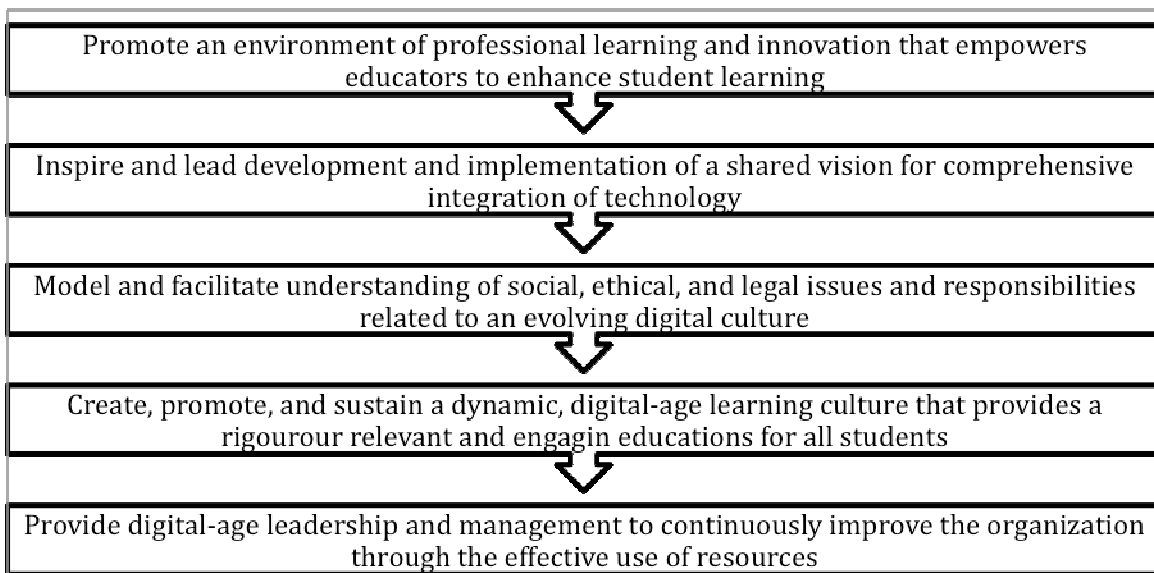


Figure 4. National Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for Administrators (NETS-A). Adapted from “National Educational Technology Standards (NETS*A) and Performance Indicators for Administrators,” by the International Society for Technology in Education. Copyright 2009 by the author.

Professional and regulatory agencies have developed standards. Simultaneously researchers have been studying and reporting traits of system leaders. The most comprehensive of these studies is the 2009 meta-analysis conducted by Marzano and Waters on superintendents. This research establishes a direct link between school system leadership and student success.

School Leader Traits From the Literature

In a 2009 meta-analysis by Marzano and Waters on school district leadership, research links district leadership to student success. Marzano and Waters (2009) concluded there are

“...five district-level leadership ‘responsibilities’ or ‘initiatives’ ...” (Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 6) that relate to student achievement. The *first* district level role is to “ensure collaborative goal setting” and the *second* initiative is “establishing non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction” (Marzano and Waters, 2009, p. 94). Superintendents have a vital role in working with the board to create and adopt district goals.

The *third* requirement Marzano and Waters (2009) found to be necessary in order for district leaders to have an effect on student achievement, is that leaders must create board alignment and support. The goals set by the board for the district must be aligned with goals set by each building. The superintendent works to align these goals with building leaders and communicates with the board the thoughts and feelings of the staff members. District level and building level leadership both must *monitor and evaluate* the goals in order for student achievement to be affected. “In this case, principals must keep district-level leadership informed about the quality, fidelity, intensity, and consistency of implementation of the district’s instruction goals. They must also monitor and evaluate the effect of the district’s instructional goals on teachers and on students” (Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 98). If the board makes changes to the goals, the principals articulate these changes into actions needed in the classroom.

The *fifth* initiative is the allocation of resources. The superintendent creates the budget and the principal must make sure that the materials, supplies, equipment and people exist to carry out the goals. Leaders who can manage budgets, work well with the board, control spending and allocate resources to where they have the most impact, will have the greatest impact on student learning.

There are other researchers that contribute traits in the literature. Anderson (2006) claims that superintendents must possess knowledge and ability in *personnel, finance, curriculum*

development, board goal development, and public relations. He adds *credibility* is necessary to be able to complete the job. Champy (2009) adds that when school leaders focus on *authenticity*, the sense of purpose for the organization becomes more evident. Bolman & Deal (2003) list competencies for leaders, which include *praising employees, including others in decision-making, listening, being flexible, and being adaptable.* *Valuing diversity* is a trait that is mentioned by Paz (2008) and others (Carver, 2008; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Gardner, 2006; Theoharis, 2009; Wright, 2009). *Fairness* is a trait found in the literature in the writing of Collins (2007), Fullan (2007), Hattabaugh (2009), and Meyer (2007). In addition to Marzano and Waters (2009), *flexibility* is also mentioned by Reeves (2002), Hattabaugh (2009), and Patrick (2006).

School boards have also completed studies on what it takes to lead organizations in change. The Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) (2007) lists superintendent traits as they relate to school boards. AASB identifies the 11 essential traits (see Figure 5). Anderson (2006) agrees with the importance of *financial management, communication and board relations.* Anderson also lists *instructional competency*, while the AASB focuses on the superintendency as it serves the *board.*

In Michigan, a study of 12 school boards by Muncatchy (1987) found three criteria that were identified as the most important for school leaders: *interpersonal skills, communication ability and track record of visibility.* The *Interpersonal skills* trait was also identified as vital by many other researchers (Failla, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Hattabaugh, 2009; Koons, 2004; Petersen & Short, 2001; Singh, 2008; Theoharis, 2009; Tocco, 2005; Wright, 2009). *Communication* was identified by over 29 authors, researchers and theorists (Anderson, 2006; Balenseifen, 2004; Bennis, 2003; Brent, 2007; Collins, 2005; Failla, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Glenn, 2008; Hattabaugh,

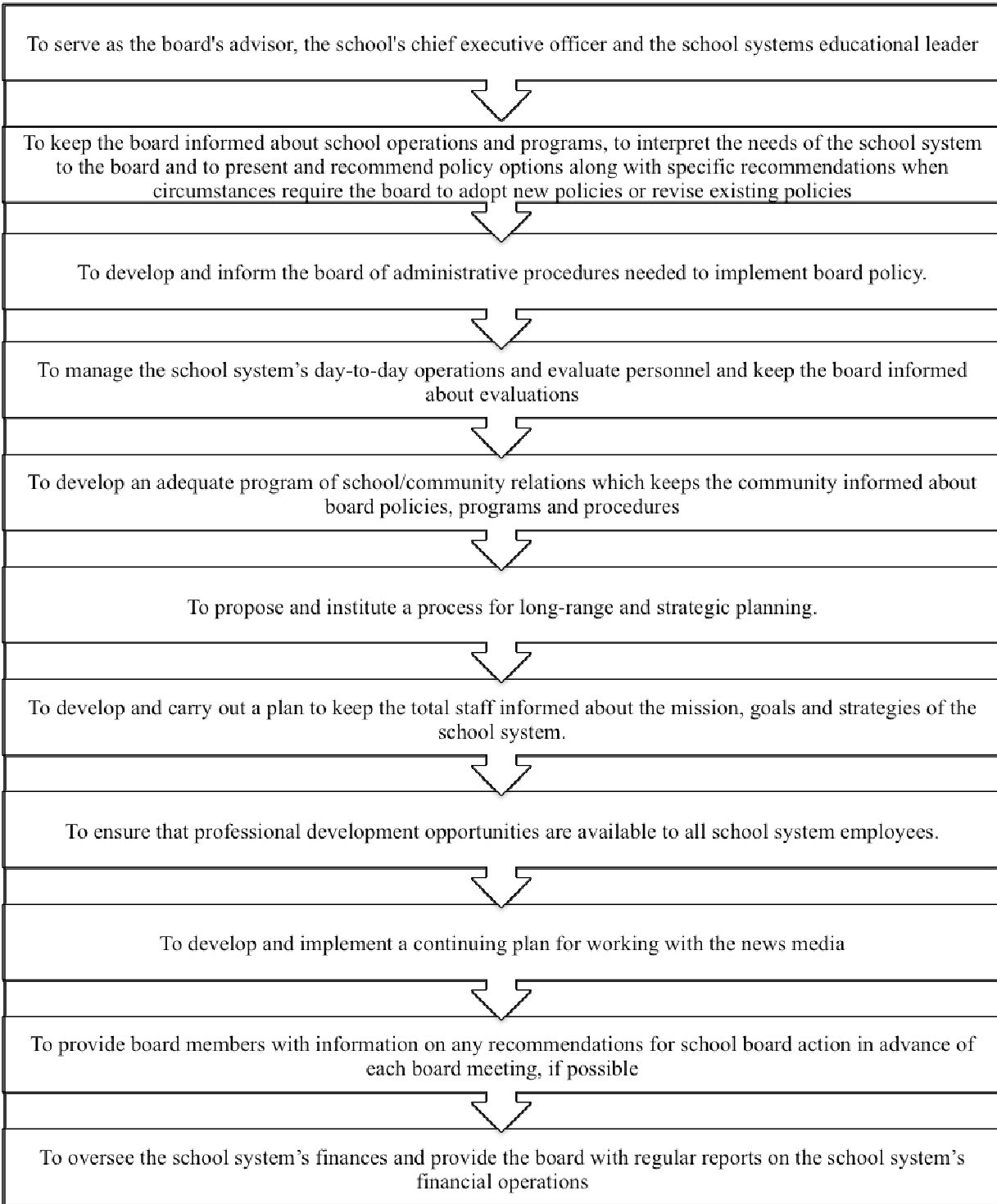


Figure 5. Alabama School Board Association Traits. Adapted from “School Boards & Superintendents: Roles & Responsibilities” by The Alabama Association of School Boards. Copyright 2007 by the author.

2009; Johnson, 2006; Koons, 2004; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Meyer, 2007; Muncatchy, 1987; Petersen & Short, 2001; Reeves, 2006; Singh, 2008; Wallace; 2003). Muncatchy (1987) also identifies *visibility* as an important trait as does Tocco (2005), Bolman & Deal (2006) and Hayes (2001), who make the distinction that a leader should be “*visible but quiet*” (p. 84).

Marzano and Water’s research contributes significantly to the field of education and reveals that superintendents do make a difference, as does the length of tenure of a superintendent (2009). Although the length of time that superintendents are in a district impacts student achievement, a positive affect can be seen as early as two years (Marzano & Waters, 2009). How long a superintendent needs to be in place for this type of change to be evident varies in the literature. Balenseifen (2004) identified many skills that were found to lead to longer tenure in superintendents; *character, communications skills, versatile leadership, public relations/community involvement, good character and success of the group is more important than the individuals*. Balenseifen (2004) also mentions that *recognition, relationship building, student-centered, financial skills, politics and experienced* added to *tenure* were significant, but not as significant as the first list of skills.

Servant Leadership “emphasizes that leaders should be attentive to the concerns of their followers and emphasize with them...take care of them and nurture them” (Northouse, 2010, p. 385). Many of the Spears (2004) ten servant leadership characteristics (see Figure 6) align with the Bolman and Deal (2003) human resources frame, which focuses on the needs and relationships in an organization.

The Bolman and Deal symbolic frame describes the importance of culture and that a leader can improve their ability to understand and influence their organizations when they

understand the frames of leadership (2003). As described by Deal and Peterson (1999), the symbolic leader understands the culture of the organization and takes on specific roles (see Figure 7).

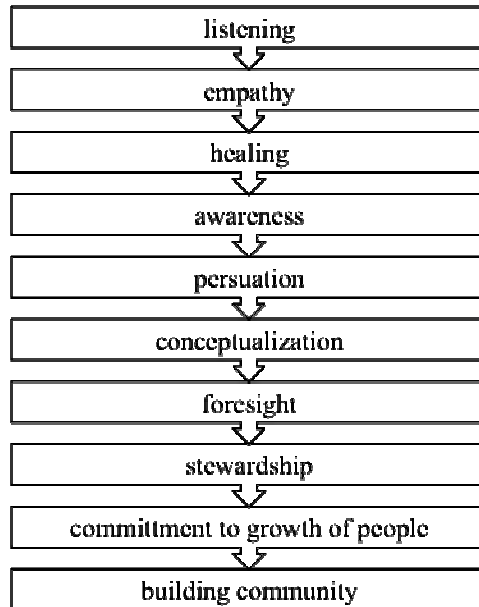


Figure 6. Spears’ Ten Servant Leadership Characteristics. Adapted from "Practicing Servant-Leadership," by L. C. Spears, 2004, *Leader to Leader*, 34, p. 7-11. Copyright 2004 by John Wiley & Sons.

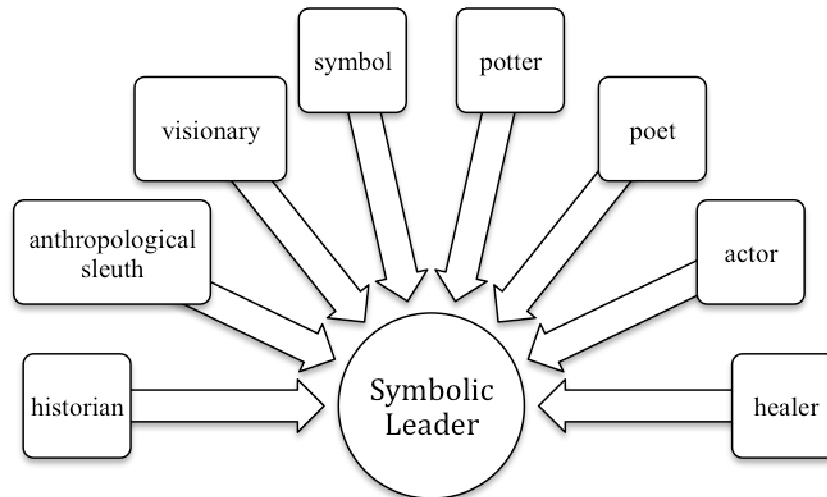


Figure 7. Deal and Peterson’s Symbolic Leadership Traits. Adapted from *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership* by T. E. Deal and K. D. Peterson, pp. 87-88. Copyright 1999 by Jossey-Bass.

Carver (2008, p. v) identifies four leadership attributes that lead to change: “*distributed leadership, development of professional learning communities, capacity building and sustainable leadership.*” Hargreaves and Fink (2006) list seven sustainable leadership principles as “*depth, length, breadth, justice, diversity, resourcefulness and conversation*” (pp. 18-20). Carver (2008) also found that district leaders in districts where students were successful, acknowledged that all *students needs* must be met and that *curriculum balance* was a focus.

Michael Fullan adds to the understanding of successful leadership by offering *Six Secrets of Change*. He claims that there are six secrets that all feed off each other and that must be kept in balance for a leader to be successful (Fullan, 2008). His “secrets” are listed in Figure 8.

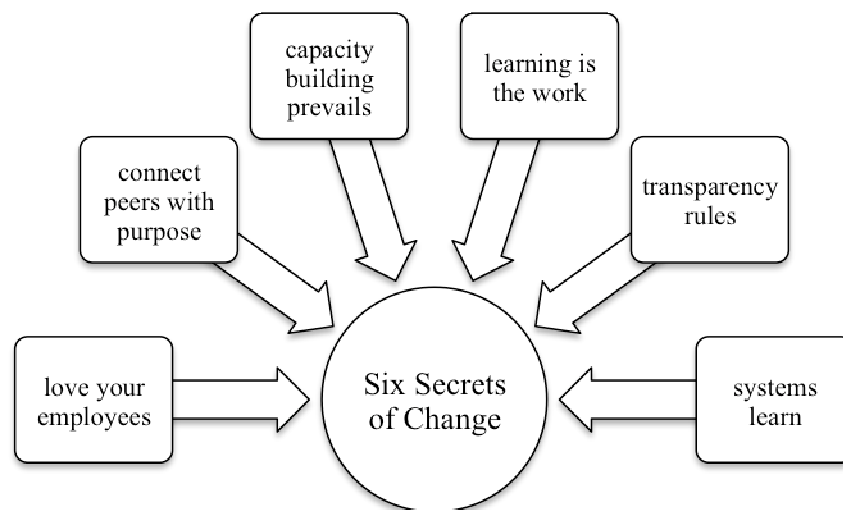


Figure 8. Fullan’s Six Secrets of Change. Adapted from *The Six Secrets of Change: What the Best Leaders Do To Help Their Organizations Survive and Thrive*, by M. Fullan, 2008, p. 11. Copyright 2008 by Jossey-Bass

Fullan also uses examples of the Shackleton expedition at conferences and in his writing as examples of leadership. He cites Morrell and Capparell (2001), who list Antarctic adventurer Ernest Shackleton’s outstanding leadership traits based on his famous 1914 journey (see Figure 9).

Marzano and Waters (2009) list 21 principal responsibilities in highly reliable districts and six district level initiatives that affect them. They identify many of the same traits as other authors including *knowledge of curriculum and instruction, culture, resources, vision, goals, curriculum, visibility and communication*. This work followed work by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), which listed the 21 responsibilities of a school leader.

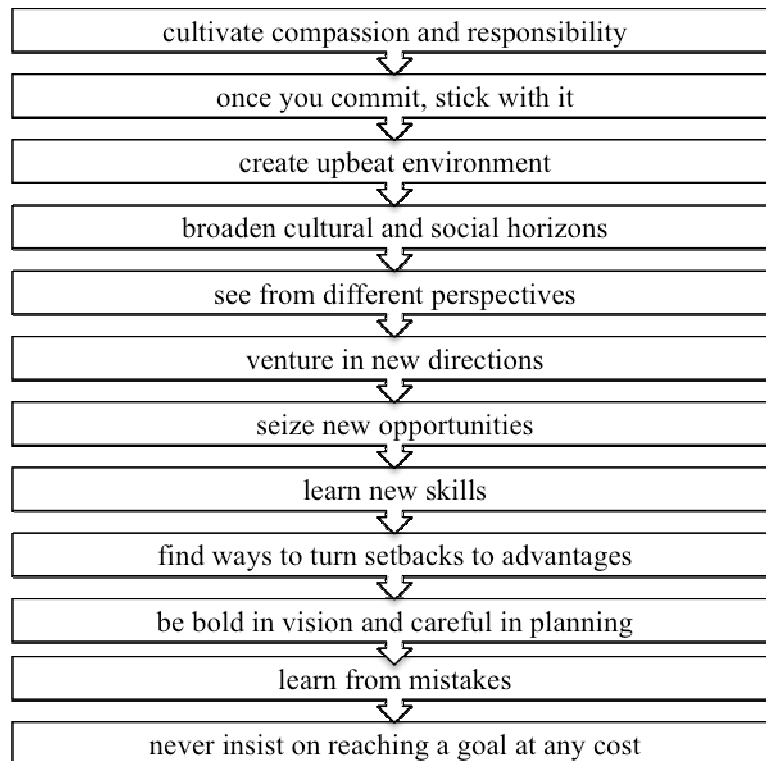


Figure 9. Shackleton’s Outstanding Leadership Traits. Adapted from *Shackleton’s Way: Leadership Lessons From the Great Antarctic Explorer*, by M. Morrell and S. Capparell, 2001, p. 45. Copyright 2001 by Viking.

Some traits are listed by only one source as being important. Many of these may be related to other categories but the authors made a point to list them separately. These include; *ability to write well* (Failla, 2005), *alertness and originality* (Brent, 2007), *fearless and ambitious* (Collins, 2007), *athletic accomplishments and popularity* (Brent, 2007), *attitude* (Johnson, 2006), *avoid promoting people out of their areas of strength, outreach and develop skills from mistakes* (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005), *breadth, depth and endurance*

(Carver, 2008), *building construction* (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 2000), *character and resilience* (Bennis, 2003), *witty, charisma and selflessness* (Singh, 2008), *comfort with issues of race and commitment to enacting justice* (Theoharis, 2009), *clear, distinct voice, legislate outcomes, naming the question and contingent rewards* (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005), *statesmanship, spirit, risk taking, creativity and honor* (Collins, 2005), *transparency, perspectives, cultural and social horizons and passion* (Fullan, 2008), *cooperation* (Brent, 2007), *deal with new trends* (Gardner & Laskin, 1995), *develop action plans* (Wallace, 2003), *encourage the heart* (Brent, 2007), *love and integrity* (Walker, 2003), *faith* (Bolman & Deal, 2003), *good fit* (Hattabaugh, 2009), *stewardship, healing and persuasion* (Bohanek, 2007), *highly ambitious for their group, not themselves* (Hayes, 2001), *improvises and shapes and is shaped by the school* (Bolman & Deal, 2003), *instinct* (Gardner & Laskin, 1995), *maintainer of status quo* (Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000), *mentoring* (Wright, 2009), *mold organization to meet the needs of the people* (Patrick, 2006), *move patiently, carefully and incrementally and restraint* (Badaracco, 2002), *plural leadership* (Vanourek & Vanourek, 2009), *promote high staff morale* (Mills, 2004), *put people first* (Bolman & Deal, 2003), *range of interests and stress tolerance* (Koons, 2004), and *success in previous positions* (Mills, 2004). Most of these traits, characteristics and skills are similar or in some ways related to others in the literature, but are listed here in the exact terminology used by the authors with whom they are associated.

Use of Traits in the Superintendent Recruitment Process

There are many challenges to the selection of a superintendent (Anderson, 2006; Rushton, 2001; Wallace, 2003). “The selection of a superintendent by a board of education is one of the most critical events in the operation of a school district” (Wallace, 2003, p. 1). Schools must avoid hiring “imposters” (Singh, 2008, p. 733). Imposter leaders are those who are

chosen for the wrong reasons and only serve to frustrate those who follow them (Singh, 2008). “The correct person will steer his organization and followers in the right direction, and use his leadership skills to galvanize them into enthusiastic action to achieve extraordinary results” (Singh, 2008, p. 734).

Superintendents are hired to lead public schools across our nation. Their roles are complex and require many skills, knowledge and competencies. Glass, Franceschini, and AASA (2007) summarized that more so than any other community organizations or business, the Superintendent of Schools has the biggest and most complex management job in any given community

Federal and State government, through the No Child Left Behind Act, focus on increasing student success. Successful superintendents are those who can make the changes and improve student achievement. “The State will use to hold local educational agencies and public elementary schools and secondary schools accountable for student achievement and for ensuring that they make adequate yearly progress in accordance with the State’s definition” (NCLB -115 STAT. 1446 PUBLIC LAW 107–110—JAN. 8, 2002).

Superintendents are selected through a hiring process established by New York State law. The process can be successful or can often be faulty, if not harmful to both a candidate’s career and to student success. Heskett (2009), from Harvard Business School discusses why we may not be good at selecting school leaders. He claims that often we are given lists of traits to look for without any ideas on how to identify or select them (Heskett, 2009, p. 1). Heskett also suggests that there are some leadership traits that cannot be measured (2009). He asked if “...selectors really know what they are looking for in a leader” (Heskett, 2009, p. 2).

Search processes can be complex and different from one district to the next. Very little data exists on the search processes across districts (Wallace, 2003). Heskett (2009) speaks of "...how much theory tells us about selecting for harder to measure characteristics such as possible *behaviors under fire* and *motives* as opposed to skills and past accomplishments" (Heskett, 2009, para. 1).

Do boards of education select leaders just on the traits identified in the literature? Singh (2008) identifies six factors that often determine the choice of leaders: *search for clones*, *premium on personal loyalty*, *preference for "show-horses," halo effect*, *personal ambition mistaken for leadership* and *nepotism*. In describing the search for clones, Singh (2008) states "Individuals with exaggerated self-images have a pronounced weakness for those who resemble them" (p. 734). They pick people who are like them and will most likely do what they want them to do.

As school boards begin these hiring processes, they identify the traits and characteristics that they believe are necessary to lead their districts. These traits are fundamental to matching a district with a leader. A study by McLaughlin (2005) concluded that, "More detail in the postings, brochures, and websites is needed in the recruitment process" (p. vi).

What is on the top of one board of education's priority list may not be so important to another board's search. It also may not align with what the leadership standards are or with what the research identifies as desirable traits or characteristics. Some districts may require the superintendent *reside in the district*, *have a doctoral degree*, have pursued a *traditional career path*, or even have a particular experiential *background*. Other boards may select or reject candidates because of typographical errors on the resume, late submission of resumes or a sloppy

physical appearance. Board members may all weigh personal traits differently than they weigh professional traits.

Kinsella (2000) adds to this perspective by claiming that personal attributes are critical when matching candidates with districts. Personal preference on both leadership and the personal characteristics of the candidates vary from board member to board member. Also, a board member with an interest in special education issues may advocate for a leader with a special education background or knowledge. A study by Mills (2004) claims that boards choose superintendents based on personal traits as well as attempting to choose traits of leadership and accountability. The ‘human connection’ was a strong determinant of a candidate’s success or failure in advancing in the search process”. Many times we end up with bad leaders or “imposters” because leaders are selected for the wrong reasons (Singh, 2008). Singh conducted his study in the corporate world but there seems to be transfer to the field of education.

Boards may look for specific traits based on their personal preferences but they also look for strengths or traits in the new superintendent that were weaknesses or not evident in the outgoing superintendent. They look to either replicate the traits possessed by the previous leader if that leader was popular and well-liked. On the other hand, the traits boards select could also be influenced by the previous superintendent who might not have left the district on good terms. In that instance, the brochures may emphasize what was not present or lacking in the previous superintendent.

There are certain biases that may affect the outcome of superintendent searches including gender and racism. A study by Dotzert (1998) revealed that many boards “do not see racism as a problem with their board but they also have little understanding how racism shows up in school business and politics” (p. iii). Another study shows that women must score higher in an

interview than a man to be considered (Failla, 2005). Evidence of this lies in the number of women in the superintendency. Handy (2008) reports that, “Women continue to be underrepresented in the position of the American public school superintendent” (p. vii). Since many boards are gender socialized negatively in respect to the hiring of female superintendents (Bastas-Christie, 1997). According to Bastas-Christie (1997), “...gatekeepers to the superintendency could present obstacles to the selection of the female superintendent” (p. 120).

Kamler and Shakeshaft (1999), report that a search consultant, in their study of searches on Long Island, New York, found that if a woman exhibits the same qualities as what boards look for in a man, that she will be seen as too male. Another search consultant from the same study claims that women get in the way of women; “If a woman is president of the board of education, or if there are a number of women on the board, a woman candidate is not going to be selected, you’re wasting your time” (Kamler & Shakeshaft, 1999, p. 57). This is in contrast to information that women are hired more often by boards that have more women on them (Kamler & Shakeshaft, 1999). Newer data indicates that the number of women in New York State superintendencies has increased from 8% in 1991 to 30% in 2009 (Fale et al., 2009) yet this does not necessarily mean that biases no longer exist and may indicate more vacant positions available as more superintendents retire.

As the search process includes some biases and at times a focus on personal rather than professional traits, boards may be creating a list of traits that do not lead to student success. Search consultants and boards should also be aware that we often connect more with people like ourselves which, may not necessarily lead to selection of the best candidate for the job. This is referred to as human similarity-attractiveness (Tallerico, 2000).

Boards may also be unintentionally decreasing the candidate pool by not spending

sufficient time and money to advertise for and attract the best candidates. Wallace (2003) found that superintendents were more successful in districts where more time and care was taken in the search process, more money was offered, where boards had more search knowledge and were committed to advertising in a large area, more females were included in the pool and more money was spent.

The community is often included in the development of traits and the overall search process. Community involvement can have an effect on the search process and can affect superintendent tenure. White (1993) from Northern Arizona University conducted a study where districts that worked with community members and district employees to identify the needs of the district, had superintendents that stayed for more than four years. As boards have an obligation to select the best superintendent, superintendent candidates have as much of an obligation to determine whether or not the district is a “good fit” as the hiring committees do. Looking at the hiring process may reveal information about what the board of education and community think and feel.

The Role of the Search Consultant

Many boards of education enlist the help of outside organizations or individuals when conducting superintendent searches. Search consultants play a major role in the selection of a superintendent. The literature contributes information about how search consultants are used in superintendent search. Rickabaugh (1986) found that the roles of *expert*, *resource person* and *process person*” are generally the functions provided by search consultants. Search consultants are perceived to create the best applicant pool by both superintendents and search firms (Anderson, 2006).

Search consultants, also referred to as headhunters, help boards in the search for the next

superintendent (Tallerico, 2000). These headhunters serve as gatekeepers, often deciding which resumes will be presented to the board. Boards of education who employ these consultants hope that they will "...capture and represent its interests in the gate-keeping process" (Tallerico, 2000, p. 20).

There is very little formal evaluation completed on search consultants which makes it difficult to assess the process yet 91% of board presidents and 89.7% of superintendents in an Illinois University study showed strong support for use of a consultant and 91.5% of those board presidents would use the same consultants again (Blair, 1980; Rickabaugh, 1986).

"The role of the consultant is to determine the leadership strengths of a candidate for the position of superintendent and recommend the candidates who meet the district's criteria to the school board" (Failla, 2005, p. iii). Some boards never see the entire candidate pool that has been pre-screened by search consultants. "[Consultant] biases and prejudice can play a part in limiting the pool of candidates who are available" (Failla, 2005, pg iii). Consultants prioritize what they think are the desired traits. Failla (2005) found that in a study of four consultants, "...age, physical appearance, gender, race and socio economic status partially affected the determination of leadership" (p. iii).

Boards of education may not be selecting search consultants that help them avoid judging leadership ability on intangible characteristics (Failla, 2005). Kinsella (2000) describes other traits in her research:

The hired search consultant acted as a gatekeeper of the process, its people and all pertinent information. He exerted his power through influence in recruiting predominantly all while, married males, initially screening applications, allowing access of some applicants to candidate status, sponsoring a "select six" candidates in the first

round of interviews, and filtering information throughout the process. The gatekeeper/s activities controlled the search...” (Abstract, para. 4)

Kinsella (2000) also found that “...professional attributes proved critical in the eventual ‘match’ of a candidate to a school district” (Abstract, para. 3).

The desired traits that boards articulate to search consultants may be altered or unintentionally shaped as certain candidates are screened out by search consultants and never get the opportunity to interview. A board can list traits they seek but they may be decreasing their chances of finding that person by allowing search consultants to cut the candidate pool. Certain unwritten criteria and biases come into play here and women and minorities are left with less of an opportunity than their white, male counterparts (Tallerico, 2000).

One such unwritten criterion emerges in the actual interview. As Tallerico (2000) has suggested “these unwritten rules involve headhunters’ and school board members’ (a) defining quality in terms of hierarchies of particular job titles, (b) stereotyping by gender, (c) complacency about acting affirmatively, and (d) hyper-valuing feelings of comfort and interpersonal chemistry with the successful candidate” (p. 37). Many board members claim that the interview can be the determining factor in the success or rejection of a candidate as they state that the existence (or not) of “chemistry” and “gut reactions” during the face to face encounters (Tellerico, 2000, p. 18). How does an evaluator explain, “I just knew he was the one?” Tallerico (2000) states that:

This hyper-valuing of ‘how we connected with the candidate and “who we could relate to best” is more likely to disadvantage people of color and females than white male applicants. Why? First, it is important to note that the majority of headhunters and school board members are nonminority males in both this case study and state and nationwide.

Also, most of the key sources of recruitment and reference checks valued most highly by headhunters and school board members are white men. (p. 36)

The standards and traits identified in the literature yielded over 900 desired leadership qualities, traits and skills (referred to as *traits* throughout the study). While some traits were only recognized by one author or by one organization, many were repeated multiple times. The question remained, given the extensive research and theory about superintendents and school leadership, how does this impact the critical role of school boards to hire superintendents? Further, because boards of education frequently employ search consultants to conduct their recruitment process, how do search consultants develop and use traits in recruitment and selection processes. These unanswered questions became the basis from which this research arose.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how the desired traits used in school superintendent searches were selected and used by boards of education and search consultants and what perspective consultants and boards had about the traits used in the superintendent search process. The researcher was the key instrument, collecting all data, examining search brochures and interviewing all participants (Creswell, 2009). The focus was on what information the literature contained and what "...meaning the participants [search consultants and board members] held about the problem" (Cresswell, 2009, p. 175). In this case, the perspective explored was that held by the board members and search consultants in regard to the development and use of traits in the search process and selection of traits.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in attempt to gain information to conduct the study:

1. Are there common traits, characteristics and qualities (referred to throughout as *traits*) identified in the literature that indicate success in school system leadership?
2. Are there common traits found in the recruitment literature that boards of education use?
3. How do the traits from the literature compare with the traits from the recruitment literature?
4. What perspectives do board members have as they reflect on the use of traits in the search process?
5. What perspectives do search consultants hold as they reflect on use of the traits in the superintendent search process?

Selection of Participants

District and Board Member Selection. Three BOCES were identified in a nearby geographical area in the Capital Region of New York State. Each of the three BOCES district superintendents were contacted by telephone, agreed to participate, and then completed informed consent forms (see Appendices D and E). All districts in each of the three BOCES, 78 in total, were listed and five names were drawn randomly from each BOCES. The last superintendent search from each district drawn was the focus of the board member interviews. The superintendents of the 15 districts selected were initially contacted and asked if their district would participate. One superintendent did not wish to participate. Three others, who agreed to participate but did not return consent forms or contact forms were dropped from the study. Four more districts were then drawn from the original pool and invited to participate. All four agreed, yet only one district returned the necessary forms and was included in the study. The sampling yielded a total of 13 districts as participants, four from two of the BOCES and five from the third. Urban, rural and suburban districts were all represented in the sample.

Once the school superintendent's consent was received, he/she extended the invitation to participate to the board president (see Appendices F and G). The superintendent and/or the board president then identified two other board members that would also participate in the interviews. Each board member was sent a cover letter (Creswell, 2009) explaining the details of the study, so that they could make an informed decision whether to participate (see Appendix H).

Addresses and contact information were obtained by contacting superintendents of the participating districts. In order to be included in the study, board member participants had to provide an informed consent form (see Appendix I) and an information sheet (see Appendix J) that provided contact information and times to call. In one of the 13 districts, however, only one

out of three board members returned the necessary forms. This district was still included in the study to gain an additional perspective from a board president who was present for the original superintendent search in his/her district.

Search Consultant Selection. Each of the three BOCES district superintendents provided the name and contact information of the person who did the search for each participating district. An additional three search consultants who had worked in the Capital Region of New York State were recommended by the BOCES superintendents, the school superintendents and the search consultants. The three additional search consultants identified were contacted and agreed to be included in this study. Some districts used their respective BOCES to conduct the search, and others used private search firms. For this study, a total of nine search consultants, one private search consultant and eight BOCES search consultants, who conducted searches in the geographical region of the Capital of New York State were contacted and agreed to participate. These nine search consultants had conducted a search in at least one of the BOCES in this study. In total, these nine consultants had completed 267 searches in 12 years in all of New York State.

The Interview Process

Board Interviews. A digitally recorded guided interview (Lichtman, 2010) of ten semi-structured questions (Creswell, 2009) was conducted with three board members from each of the 12 districts and one board member the 13th district, at the convenience of the board member. For purposes of validity and reliability, the questions were piloted with a board president and two board members from a district not included in the study. The questions were then revised based on the feedback from the pilot participants and finalized. Questions generally included the

interviewee's opinions of the traits that were listed on the search brochures. The final list of questions was:

1. Here are the traits that were listed on the superintendent search that was done for the recent superintendent. How did you contribute to the list of traits that are listed?
2. How fully do you agree with the contents of this list?
 - a. If not what would you add or take away?
3. Reflect on the interview process. During that time, how did you prioritize these traits?
Please rate them from 1 to 10 with one being what was the most important to you.
4. If you had to create a list of traits today for a superintendent search brochure, how would you rate these traits?
5. If this has changed, why? For example, additions, deletions, change in priority.
6. Does the current superintendent possess the traits from the original search documents?
Rate #1 on strongest traits, # 10 not as strong etc.
7. Do you think the current superintendent possesses the traits that were originally identified? Please list the traits that are missing or additional.
8. What were your own perceptions (what did you want the final candidate to be)? How did your perceptions compare to what the brochure said?
9. What is your gender? Male Female
10. How many years have you served on this board of education?

Each participating board member was sent an electronic, scanned version of the search brochure from his/her district via e-mail upon receipt of the consent forms. A second copy of the brochure was sent just prior to the interview for convenience (Lichtman, 2010).

Interviewees were given the option of a telephone interview (Lichtman, 2010; Creswell, 2009), a Skype interview, or an interview in person. For this study, 37 interviews were conducted where one interview was conducted in person and the rest were conducted by telephone.

All interviewees were asked to have the search brochure available during the actual interviews. All but two board members had the brochure available during the interview. These interviews which took less than 30 minutes. For the other two interviews, the brochures were read by the researcher over the telephone, repeating information as needed. These two interviews took significantly longer to conduct, up to 70 minutes.

Search Consultant Interviews. After the board member interviews were completed, the information collected was used to develop questions for search consultants that provide perspective on the search process. The questions were first piloted by interviewing a BOCES district superintendent whose BOCES was not included in the study. The search consultants were labeled *search consultant one* (SC1) through *search consultant nine* (SC9) for the purpose of this study. All nine search consultants were interviewed and were asked the following seven open-ended questions including follow up questions (Creswell, 2009):

1. How do you structure the process for establishing the traits desired in a superintendent?
2. To what extent does this process typically go smoothly?
 - a. Follow up - Do you typically encounter differences of opinion on what traits should be included?
 - b. Follow up - On what traits do boards agree/disagree the most?
 - c. Follow up- how are these differences of opinion typically resolved?
3. To what extent are the traits the same for all the searches you conduct?

- a. Follow up- if no, then how do you customize the traits for each search?
 - b. Follow up- if yes, go on
 - c. Follow up- what traits are different from district to district?
4. When it comes to producing the list of traits and traits for a superintendent, does it make a difference what kind of district it is?
 - a. Follow up- Do the traits look the same for a high versus low performing school?
 - b. Follow up- Do the traits look the same for a rich or poor district?
 - c. Follow up- Do the traits look the same for an urban vs. rural district?
5. To what extent do the boards actually use the desired traits in the selection of the new superintendent?
6. In your experience to what extent do the boards use the predetermined traits to distinguish among candidates as they narrow the field for final interviews?
7. When the board has difficulty agreeing on a final candidate do the members rely on the traits to reach consensus?

Organization of Interviews and Participants

A spreadsheet was created to systematically track progress of the interviews. The spreadsheet listed the current superintendent, all board members who were selected for interviews and all email addresses and phone numbers needed. As each board member returned their forms, they were highlighted in yellow. Once all three board members from one district returned the survey, the interviews were scheduled and conducted. All telephone calls and messages were noted on the spreadsheet and all email attempts were kept in a separate computer folder. When the interview was completed, the participants were circled in blue highlighter and marked "done." This helped to monitor the status of each district and board member.

All interview recordings were confidential and kept in a locked office where only the researcher had access. Specific names and specific districts or consultants are not identified in the study, as gender is the only identifiable information included in the survey. Interviews were transcribed confidentially and professionally and charts were created to organize responses to each interview question. All information received or created electronically were stored in a password protected computer in the researcher's office.

Use of Incentives

Participants were not paid for participating in the study but were entered into a drawing for one of four \$25 Barnes and Noble Gift Cards. One school district agreed to be in the study but asked not to be included in the drawing and was not. Since many search brochures were not available on line and in some cases difficult to locate, a separate drawing for a gift card was held for those who provided a copy of the search brochure from the last superintendent search using an envelope provided by the researcher (see Appendix K).

Document Review

A document review of the search brochures was conducted. Brochures were provided from the three BOCES superintendents and individual districts and were scanned and stored in a password protected computer in the researcher's office. All brochures contained search criteria and the qualities the successful candidate should possess. Traits listed on each brochure were combined into a single document file and analyzed for common themes. This was exactly the same process used with the traits from the literature.

Data Analysis

Qualitative procedures were used to collect data, including interviews and document review (McEwan & McEwan, 2003). Once data were collected, the researcher analyzed and

formed themes (Creswell, 2009). “The researcher begins by gathering detailed information from participants and then forms this information into categories or themes. These themes are developed into broad patterns, theories or generalizations that are then compared with personal experiences or with existing literature on the topic” (Creswell, 2009, p. 64).

Once data was organized, it was coded for emergent themes and inductive analysis was utilized (Creswell, 2009). An initial list of categories was developed and modified as more interviews were conducted and more information became available (Lichtman, 2010). All transcribed and compiled data was only available to the researcher.

The Coding and Clustering Process

The Literature. For the first clustering (Creswell, 2009), the standards and the literature were joined to become one set in this study. This was done because the standards developed from the literature. This list provided a comprehensive view of what authors, researchers, government agencies and accrediting agencies consider desired traits for school leaders (see Appendix L). This set is referred to throughout this study as the *traits from the literature*. Initially, the traits from the literature were listed on a spreadsheet individually. Identical traits, those that were listed exactly the same way, appeared together when the spreadsheet was sorted alphabetically. Traits that were considered the same, but had slightly different wording, were grouped with traits that were almost identical. This was done to help sift through the specific language that appears in the literature as authors and researchers describe similar concepts with different terminology. Some of these are indicated in the examples below.

Communication, board relations, community, goals and vision are a few examples of how these traits were sorted. For instance, the original list included, *board advisor, board relations, board relationships, advising the board, and board alignment*. These were all clustered under

“*board*” on the final trait count. They were categorized this way to show how many sources listed a relationship or an understanding of *board functions* and *board relationships*.

Traits were also grouped together under the category of *communication*. *Communication* was listed individually as *communication*, *communication skills*, *oral communication*, *communication ability*, *communicate the needs of the district*, *communication ability*, *clear and distinct voice*, *clearly communicates*, *gifted linguistically*, *speaks well*, *strong communication skills*, and *written communication skills*.

Community was another cluster that included related traits not worded specifically as *community*. They included *community relations*, *community resources*, *community involvement*, *building partnerships with community*, *community collaboration*, and other traits that indicated that the leader should be able to work with, include, and value the community.

Goals was another cluster identified. *Collaborative goal setting*, *goal setting*, *goals*, *setting goals with high standards*, *board alignment and support of district goals*, *ability to set goals*, *placing district goals in the forefront*, *goals for achievement and instruction*, *loyalty to goals*, *monitoring of goals*, *non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction*, and *strengthen the school with goals* were all placed under the cluster of *goals* to demonstrate the importance and presence of leaders working with goals.

A final example of how the traits were clustered is using *vision*. The literature frequently refers to leaders possessing and being able to carry out *a vision* (Fullan, 2008; Hattabaugh, 2009; Hayes, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Koons, 2004; Reeves, 2002, 2006, 2009; Simmons, 1999; Singh, 2008; Theoharis, 2009). Authors and researchers use *vision*, *visionary*, *creates a common vision*, *establish a vision*, *vision of learning shared and supported by the school community*, *visionary*

leadership and *vision and planning*. These were all placed under the cluster of vision for the purpose of this study.

The Search Brochures. The traits in the brochures that were used for each superintendent search were also sorted (see Appendix M). The first sort was by those traits that were identical and the second clustered by similarity. Examples of clustering in the brochures are found under the headings of *business office*, *student achievement*, *collaboration*, and *experience*. The specific schools and brochures are not cited in order to maintain participant confidentiality.

Whenever the functions of the business office were listed as important traits or abilities for leaders, they were grouped under the cluster *business office*. This included candidates ability to recognize the value and importance of *management of transportation, operations and maintenance and food service, to grow professionally in each of the responsibilities of the business office, ability to provide strong leadership in business and financial operations, knowledge of all aspects of school district management is required, recognizes the value and importance of management of transportation, operations and maintenance and food service, recognizes the value and importance of management of transportation, operations and maintenance and food service*. These were all grouped under *business office* because they were related to the ability of leaders to know and understand the function and processes involved with school business management. *Budget* was not included under the business office cluster because it appeared separately from business office in most of the brochures.

Student achievement was a trait listed specifically as “*student achievement*” by some brochures but the following were also clustered under the heading of student achievement: *ability to lead and motivate staff and students to higher level of achievement, able to balance*

student achievement with educating the whole child, advocate for the learner, committed for fostering new partnerships to support student achievement, demonstrated record of success in improvement of student performance, demonstrated experience closing the achievement gap, increase emphasis on engaging students in their education, committed to staff development, evaluation and instructional improvement (also included under staff development and evaluation), proven experience in leading data-driven analysis of student performance to guide professional development (also included under data), puts students first, understanding of standards, curriculum renewal, instruction of 21st century skills, program evaluation and student assessment (also included under other categories), understanding of standards, curriculum renewal, instruction of 21st century skills, program evaluation and student assessment, commitment to raising student achievement to meet to exceed continuously evolving global standards, expand educational opportunities we offer, expand educational opportunities we offer, emphasizes the importance of education and demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence, and child centered.

Collaboration was listed specifically as “*collaboration*” and then the following were also placed in that cluster: *good team leader w/ strong affinity for collaboration, cooperative decision-making and participatory management, demonstrates a collaborative leadership style, and good team leader with strong affinity for collaboration including cooperative decision-making and participatory management.* Also included under collaboration for the brochure spreadsheet was *teamwork* as the brochures listed both *collaboration* and *teamwork*. However, the literature used the phrase *collaboration* almost exclusively.

A final example of how traits were grouped is found under “*experience*”. The following traits were clustered under the heading of *experience: experience leading and organization*

according to its mission and strategic plan, experience motivating and inspiring staff and students to assume leadership roles, administrative experience with building responsibilities and/or experience appropriate to central office duties, at least five years of successful teaching experience, demonstrated success in urban education, experience in administration, have building level and/or central office administration experience, have significant leadership experience in a complex educational setting, and proven record of accomplishments.

Data from the board interviews and search consultant interviews were also examined for emergent themes. In both cases, a chart was created that listed the specific responses from all of the interviewees where like responses were grouped together.

Protecting Human Subjects

This researcher acknowledges that this study is an interpretive inquiry of what she sees, hears, and understands and that this interpretation "...cannot be separated from her own background, history, context, and prior understandings" (Creswell, 2009, p. 176). *Protecting Human Research Participant Training* from the National Institute of Health was completed by the researcher to insure safety of all participants. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Sage Colleges Internal Review Board in December 2010 (see Appendix N).

Chapter 4: Findings

School board members, search consultants and the literature identified the traits required or desired in a school superintendent. Interviews of 37 board members and nine search consultants, as well as a review of superintendent search brochures and the existing literature, provided the information for this study upon which these findings are based. The search consultants were labeled *search consultant one* (SC1) through *search consultant nine* (SC9) for the purpose of this study.

In this section, the findings from the interviews are organized and presented. The frequency of the traits listed in search brochures and those found in the literature are described in narrative form, and in chart form where applicable. *Wordle* charts are used as graphic organizers to enhance understanding of the overall trait frequency and distribution. Information was then organized around the research questions that guide this study.

The 37 board members interviewed represented 27 males and 10 females. Almost half (17) had five years or less experience on the board. The years of experience of the sample is shown in a Table 3.

Table 3

Years of Experience of Participating Board Members

Years of Experience on the Board	Number of Board Members
1 to 5 years	17
6 to 10 years	15
11 to 15 years	3
16 to 20 years	2

The number of board members with five years or less of board experience was 17 (46%), the number of board members with six to ten years of experience was 15 (40.5%) and the number of board members with 11 or more years of experience was five (13.5%). Of the board members interviewed, 32 (86%) have ten years or less experience as a board member. Of the board members interviewed, 69% had actually participated in the last search process as board members. The remaining 31% had not been on the board at the time of the search process. This research identified no difference in the collective responses of these two sub groups.

Research Question One

Are there common traits, characteristics and qualities (referred to throughout as traits) identified in the literature that indicate success in school system leadership?

Hiring a superintendent is the legal responsibility of school board members in New York State. Boards often contract with search consultants to assist and help organize the process. “The goal is to find a person who best matches the desired profile, but no one, in most cases, in all cases, possesses all those traits” (SC7).

A literature review revealed an original list of 900 desired traits. When organized into a spreadsheet, there were approximately 90 identical matches or traits that had the exact wording used by one or more different authors or researchers. A further look revealed that some of the words were similar but had different endings or tenses. These words had similar meanings (*vision, has a vision, visions, visionary*). The list was further analyzed and categories were created of similar concepts (*vision, has a vision, visions, visionary* were all placed under “*vision*”) so that they could be clustered into broader categories of what the literature and the brochures claimed was important for leaders to know, be able to do or possess. The clusters formed helped to demonstrate how many of the authors and researchers address these topics.

The complete list that was created once all traits were grouped is in Appendix L.

Clusters that appeared six or more times are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Traits From the Literature That Appeared Six or More Times

Trait	Examples of Use	Number of Appearances
Communication	Ability to, recognize importance of	30
Goals	Have goals, ability to set goals	24
Community	Value community, involve community	17
Vision	Have one, ability to create shared vision	14
Integrity		13
Finance	Knowledge and ability in	12
Culture	Understand, value and be able to create	12
Decision making	Ability to make decisions and include others	11
Political	Understands the politics in the position, understands government	11
Experience	Experience in doing the job and knowing the job	11
Learn	Ability to learn about community, learn from mistakes, continually grow in knowledge, etc.	10
Diversity	Identify, understand and value diverse culture and community	10
Curriculum	Knowledge in, ability to develop	9
Problem solving	Ability and knowledge	8
Collaboration	Ability and knows how and when to	8
Responsibility	Is responsible, knows how to delegate	8
Motivates		8
Listening		7
Commitment		7
Fairness		6
Values		6
Ethics		6
Board relations		6
Skills		6
Interpersonal skills		6

As shown in Table 4, the study of the literature revealed that the traits identified with the greatest frequency were *communication*, *goals*, *community*, *vision*, *integrity*, *finance*, *culture*, *decision-making*, *political*, and *experience*. To provide a visual representation of this data, a Wordle chart was created (see Figure 10). All traits from the literature were entered into a sorter as list of text. The larger words on the chart are those that appeared on the list more often.



Figure 10. Wordle of Traits From the Literature. Created at Wordle.net.

Research Question Two

Are there common traits found in the recruitment literature that boards of education use?

The 13 brochures used in 13 superintendent searches were also examined. A list of over 200 desired traits (see Appendix M) was compiled from the brochures. Seven were identified with the same exact wording. While many of the traits from the literature were the same except for a few endings or tenses, the traits from the brochure had language that was not similar. One search consultant interviewed indicated that the language in the brochures represented the

“...exact wording that was developed by stakeholder groups was preserved so they would have more ownership of the brochure and of the process” (SC9). Table 5 below shows those traits that appeared in six or more searches.

Table 5

Traits From the Brochures That Appeared in Six or More Brochures

Trait	Examples of Use	Number of Times the Traits Appear in Brochures
Community	Understanding, involving, valuing	22
Student achievement	Can improve, hold as a priority	18
Collaboration		12
Experience	Specific background requirements	12
Business office	Ability in and knowledge of	11
Communication	Ability and skills in different forms and in different situations	9
Diversity	Identifies, values and embraces	9
Approachable		8
Vision	Can create and carry out	8
Decisive		8
Board	Ability to work with and relate to, inform	7
Curriculum		7
Accountability	Is and makes others	7
Certified	As a school administrator	7
Technology	Knowledge, ability and vision	7
Teamwork	Encourages, facilitates	6
Standards		6
Budget	Ability and use of resources	6

The most frequently listed traits that appear in the search brochures are *community*, *student achievement*, *collaboration*, *experience*, *business office*, *communication*, *diversity*,

Culture was most often defined as a candidate’s ability to understand the culture and diversity of a district. *Diversity* almost always referred to a candidate’s ability to understand the distinctiveness and culture of a district. *Decision making* and *decisive* also spoke to a candidate’s ability to make and facilitate decisions. The specific terms were kept to represent the specific terminology used by both sources, but due to the highly similar meanings, the terms could be interchanged.

Table 6

Rank Order List of the Most Frequently Occurring Superintendent Traits

Traits From the Literature	Traits From the Search Brochures
Communication	Community
Goals	Student achievement
Community	Collaboration
Vision	Experience
Integrity	*Business office
*Finance	Communication
Culture	Diversity
**Decision making	Approachable
Political	Vision
Experience	**Decisive

*Indicates similar terms. **Indicates similar terms.

Research Question 4

What perspectives do board members have as they reflect on the use of traits in the search process?

During board interviews, board members were asked to identify which traits from the search brochure used in the last superintendent search in their district that were most important to them. The traits that board members most frequently identified as one of their six top priorities are shown in Table 7. *Communication* was identified by 34 out of 37 board members as one of

the top 6 priorities from the search brochures. *Students* was identified by 18 board members in the top 6 and included specific traits such as *student achievement* and *putting students first*. *Integrity* was as identified by 17 board members as a top six priority. *Integrity* and *Communication* were each identified most often by board members as the number one priority with eight board members listing them as their number one priority. *Integrity*, *Communication* and *Students* appeared most often in board members' top three traits with *integrity* identified by 12 board members as being in the top three, *communication* identified by 22 board members in the top three, and *students* identified by 14 board members as being in the top three.

Table 7

Frequency Table of Board Members' Top Six Priority Traits

Trait from the Brochure	Board Members Identifying As a Top Six Priority Trait	
	Number	Percentage
Communication	34	92%
Students	18	49%
Integrity	17	46%
Business office	11	30%
Curriculum	10	27%
Vision	9	24%
Professional development	8	22%
Visible	8	22%
Collaboration	6	16%
Experience	6	16%
Decision making	6	16%

The top traits from the literature, the top traits in the search brochures and the traits boards identified by boards as a priority were examined for similarities and differences (see Table 8). Three traits tied at tenth place as the most identified board priority and all were included in the table. In the top ten traits for all three categories, *communication*, *community*,

vision, finance/business office, and experience are mentioned. *Goals* and *political* are identified by the literature but not by the brochures or as a board priority. *Student Achievement* is listed by the search brochure and *students* is prioritized by the board members in this search but the literature does not address either specifically as a trait. Board members prioritized *curriculum, professional development* and *collaboration*, which were traits not mentioned in either the literature or the brochure top ten.

Table 8

Comparison of Top Traits From the Literature, the Brochures, and Board Priorities

Literature	Search Brochures	Board Priorities
Communication	Community	Communication
Goals	Student achievement	Students
Community	Collaboration	Integrity
Vision	Experience	Community
Integrity	Business office	Business office
Finance	Communication	Curriculum
Culture	Diversity	Vision
Decision making	Approachable	Professional development
Political	Vision	Visible
Experience	Decisive	Collaboration, Experience, Decision making*

*Three way tie.

An analysis of the board interviews revealed that there was little alignment when board members from the same district prioritized traits. For all districts in this study, not a single district had all three board members in agreement as to what the top priority was from the trait list. In four of the districts, two board members agreed on what the number one priority was. Appendix O shows how each board member prioritized each cluster from the brochures.

During the interviews, the 37 board members were asked if there were any traits the candidate demonstrated that were not listed as desired in the search brochure, and if there were any traits that the brochure listed that the successful candidate did not have. The summary of the responses is found in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9

Additional Traits Not From the Brochures & Possessed by the Successful Candidate

Additional Trait	Board Members Identifying the Trait	
	Number	Percentage
School finance	5	13.5%
Willingness to confront	1	2.7%
Knowledge of education law	1	2.7%
Willing to engage community	1	2.7%
Visibility	1	2.7%
Ability to accept criticism	1	2.7%
Negotiations and contract management	1	2.7%
Versed in NYS standards and curriculum	1	2.7%
Very fair	1	2.7%
Hardworking	1	2.7%
Staff support	1	2.7%
Patience	1	2.7%
Integrity	1	2.7%
Not part of the good old boy network	1	2.7%
Interpersonal skills	1	2.7%
Extremely organized	1	2.7%
Keen ability to analyze data and craft solutions	1	2.7%

Fifteen of the 37 (40.5%) of board members interviewed said that the successful candidate did not possess any *additional* traits nor were they *missing* any of the traits that were advertised as desired. Five out of 37 (13.5%) stated that the extent of knowledge and expertise

in school finance was not listed in their brochure but was found to be a strength of the successful candidate. Other board members listed fair, hardworking, patience, able to accept criticism, and integrity as personal traits that were not identified in their brochure but existed in the successful superintendent. Individual interviewees also indicated that the successful candidate, in all cases, the current superintendent, possessed knowledge of education law, willingness to engage the community, ability in contract negotiations and management, staff support, support of the arts, and was visible in, and willing to engage the community. These additional traits were referred to as “perks” by many of those who identified them. Direct quotes from board members included:

“We got all we wanted and more.”

“The expertise in the finance end of it was a perk.”

“...demonstrates an understanding of business more than we expected, a *real perk*.”

“...is able to accept criticism, a real plus in this business.”

Table 10

Traits From the Brochures & Missing Or Not Strengths of the Successful Candidate

Trait Missing Or Not Strengths	Board Members Identifying the Trait	
	Number	Percentage
Interpersonal skills	1	2.7%
Traditional background	1	2.7%
Open-door style	1	2.7%
Staff development	1	2.7%
Approachable	1	2.7%
Curriculum knowledge	1	2.7%

Overall, the responses indicated that most of the candidates possessed almost all of the recruitment traits with a few additions. Most of the interviewees identified missing or additional traits after some thought. These traits did not come to their minds immediately. Board members

identified interpersonal skills, traditional background, open-door policy, staff development, approachable and curriculum knowledge as traits that the successful candidate did not demonstrate once they took the position. Traditional background was mentioned by one board member who felt as if the successful candidate should have followed what they considered a traditional path to the superintendency and climbed through the ranks from teacher, assistant principal and then principal.

When interviewees were asked how fully they agreed with the traits that were listed on the brochure, 32 out of 37 (86%) fully agreed with the contents of the list and stated they would not change anything. One said that they would agree but that the traits looked like “fluff.” Another stated that they agreed but that it looked “boiler plate” and reported that it was the same as other brochures they had seen. One board member was not sure if he or she agreed totally or not.

When they were asked if there were any traits that were missing in the successful candidate in a separate question, different board members identified five different traits. All of these were discovered *after* the current superintendent took the position except for “non-traditional background.” This trait was identified by one of the three board members from that district. The reason provided by a board member as to why this trait was forgiven was the strong financial background and ability the candidate demonstrated during the interview.

Research Question Five

What perspectives do search consultants hold as they reflect on use of the traits in the superintendent search process?

During interviews, one search consultant explicitly reported that the board does not go back to the list of desired traits when they cannot decide on finalists. Instead, they list strengths

and weaknesses. In the three instances this has happened, one candidate was eliminated because of a trait they did not possess. Also, in all three instances, that trait was not listed on the original list. The elimination occurred because the candidates were not knowledgeable about local politics, history and culture.

The same search consultant also claimed that a candidate, with fewer of the traits than other candidates, was often selected because "...they all but memorized the NYS Report Card for that district and told the board exactly where the strengths and weaknesses were, were able to talk about the number of special education students and how it was disproportionate." The search consultant also reported that in most cases, this was often the first time the boards had heard this information about their district.

You can tell a lazy person by the amount of homework they do. I tell candidates to learn as much as you can about the district. People are often hesitant to say negative things about a district in an interview. Boards want to hear where perceived shortcomings are. You really can't put down 'knows the district' on the brochure, this must come out in the interview. (SC6)

Search consultants add information and perspective to why some particular traits were forgiven. SC4 said, "Previous success as a superintendent trumps some desires for various qualities." The same consultant explained further:

They may not be a great communicator or a ball of fire behind a microphone, but they passed 5 budgets, some of which were tumultuous and they have been able to heal some of the wounds or some of the scars of incoherence in a district. So we will let that pass for not being a ball of fire at graduation speeches. (SC4)

In another part of the interview, the same search consultant added the following: “The farther down you get in the process, the more the individual desires take over. And who gets to go from semi finalist to finalist is a mirror of what the board politics are” (SC4). This consultant also said:

Sometimes I have had my heart in my throat watching final deliberations among some boards who in fact, allow politics and their feelings about things trump traits and talk about traits that are not there or not a big deal to make their case...the traits that were listed in the brochure become less and less the focal points and the views of board members, particularly as it mirrors general board politics, come first. If the board has difficulty agreeing on a final candidate, that means that some of their usual board politics and leadership dimensions don't carry the day. Then yes, they do resort to things more about the candidate, such as success in previous jobs, ability to communicate, good writing skills, and long history of raising scores in their previous gigs. (SC4)

Search consultants were asked to explain how they structure the input process for which traits are identified for a superintendent search. SC7 said, “There is a notion that we are gatekeepers...my position is that I am not placing, I am trying to help a board determine what it wants. My job is to facilitate the process, not place candidates.” All search consultants indicated that they work with the boards of education closely to identify needs of the district, compile a list of traits that will be used by the boards and indicated that stakeholder groups were included at some point in the process. Every search consultant said that stakeholder groups were instructed to list strengths and traits for each candidate and were not to “pick” a candidate. They were careful to set up the process so that stakeholders did not choose, but rather provided feedback according to established guidelines.

Two search consultants indicated that they start with the board deciding what the process will be. SC6 indicated that boards have expressed their concern that the process is forced upon them so those boards decide the specific process that will be used. SC2 indicated that he/she starts first with community and stakeholder groups who generate lists of traits for the board to discuss and prioritize. SC1 indicated that the discussion surrounding the development of the traits was based on three guiding questions: “challenges facing the district near and long term, personal traits desired and professional competencies.” SC7 started with a planning meeting with the board, stakeholders and business groups and asked them to identify “the hallmarks of the district, what the district is known for and what the challenges are in the next 5 years.” Another search consultant stated that a list of traits was initially compiled by the board and then given to the communication department and possible brochures were created for the board to review.

SC3 said that there have been two or three confidential searches in which the search consultant and the board completed the entire process. For the rest of the searches, they present traits to each stakeholder group and ask them to rate them. They then present to the board the results of how each group rated the traits and what the top ten overall are. These are the traits used in the brochure. SC3 stated that boards, in earlier searches they conducted, would include traits that were not actual traits possessed by the successful candidate. “For example, one brochure said that the successful candidate must have a doctoral degree from an approved or accredited university. For two searches that district conducted, the successful candidate did not possess a doctoral degree but both brochures had it listed.” Another search consultant commented that often school districts located near universities would require a doctoral degree because the professors in the universities thought it was necessary.

The other search consultants indicated that the traits were revisited periodically while going through the process. A few consultants mentioned that they used surveys, scoring systems or questionnaires throughout the process and while working with stakeholders to help identify characteristics and traits of their next leader.

SC8 said that the process goes smoothly because people are involved in the process and create the traits and brochure. While the searches generally go very smoothly, there are a few instances when the process can be hindered or delayed. Community members can influence board members who, in turn, think they have to represent these isolated views and push one trait more than another (SC1). If a superintendent leaves a district on bad terms, the board members often focus on emphasizing traits that were lacking in that superintendent. If a superintendent left the district on good terms and was highly respected, replicating the traits they exhibited becomes the focus of the search.

Search consultants report that personal agendas of those involved in the search may also influence the selection of traits (see Table 11). If a board member is interested in sports or the arts, they may insist on listing those traits that support sports or arts as desired traits. In addition to personal agendas, some board members are just oppositional (SC1). What can influence the selection of traits? Answers according to the search consultants interviewed are contained in Table 11.

Search consultants provided insight as to which traits boards agree and disagree on the most when creating search brochures. Tables 12 and 13 show which traits the search consultants identified as those most agreed or disagreed on by the boards with whom they worked.

Table 11

Factors Influencing the Selection of Traits in the Creation of Search Brochures

Factor Influencing the Selection of Traits	Search Consultants Identifying the Factor	
	Number	Percentage
Board members who feel they represent the community but do not	1	11%
If the superintendent was asked to leave or left “badly”	1	11%
Unrelated issues may hinder the process	1	11%
Personal agendas	1	11%
Some people just want to be oppositional	1	11%

Table 12

Traits Upon Which Boards Disagree On Most for Inclusion in the Brochure

Trait or Issue	Search Consultants Identifying the Trait or Issue	
	Number	Percentage
Desirability of degree of similarity to the previous superintendent	4	44%
Curriculum based versus business based strengths	4	44%
District residency	3	33%
Experience as a principal or teacher	2	22%
Member Specific Agendas	2	22%
Doctoral Degree	2	22%
Inclusive in Decision Making Processes	1	11%
Involvement in Direct Negotiations with Bargaining Units	1	11%
Degree of Transparency	1	11%
Political Skills	1	11%
Ability in Recruitment of Personnel	1	11%

Table 13

Traits Upon Which Boards Agree On Most for Inclusion in the Brochure

Trait or Issue	Search Consultants Identifying the Trait or Issue	
	Number	Percentage
Experience with building projects if a building project is being done	3	33%
Appreciate their community, community beacon, community skills	3	33%
Personal integrity	3	33%
Someone who is visible	3	33%
Communicator	1	11%
Transparency	1	11%
Accessibility	1	11%
Ability to interact with board	1	11%
Work ethic	1	11%
Consensus builder	1	11%
Shared Decision Maker	1	11%
Support the children	1	11%
Someone who has the ability to get along with others	1	11%
Someone who can bring stakeholder groups together	1	11%

Four out of the nine search consultants reported that much board disagreement is about whether or not they want to hire someone who was like the past superintendent. If a board member liked the past superintendent, they often advocated for traits that are like that person. If a board member did not get along with the past superintendent, they suggested traits that made up for any deficiencies or helped define what they would like to see different in the next superintendent. SC9 recalled a search where the superintendent that left demonstrated “poor choices on what they expected for integrity so in that particular search, there was greater emphasis placed on integrity and someone who was a good role model.”

Differences in Searches From the Perspective of Search Consultants

Search consultants were asked whether or not the traits were the same for each search they did. Four consultants indicated that the traits were “remarkably similar,” “80 to 85% the same,” “90% the same,” and “highly similar.” Other search consultants indicated that often the differences in traits used in searches are based on what the outgoing superintendent had or was lacking, what the specific needs of the district are (in a capital project, status of test scores). One search consultant commented that the traits depended on what the “pressing issues in the district were.” SC9 added that though traits are similar they try to capture the wording of the district to promote ownership. “The brochures will include traits and characteristics that look the same but we will use the language of the community. There is often variation to show we have heard what the district is saying.”

SC4 said there was a saying in his/her office; “Before Alex Rodriguez had his problem with steroids, the joke we ended up making with boards is that you probably want a superintendent somewhere between Gandhi and A-Rod. Everybody wants everything. The person cannot only be a Supreme Court justice but can also score from second base on a base hit to right.” The same search consultant added, “Almost every board treated it as an opportunity to get a star, whatever the [heck] their definition of a star was.” Another search consultant reported, “Everybody wants a star.” SC7 added, “It’s all about the match, there is not a mythical superintendent that no matter where they go, they will be successful.”

SC8 added “there are unique events and circumstances that may bring some things more into focus than others.” Unique circumstances that may influence the selection of a candidate included:

“If there is a bitter collective bargaining situation, that may raise that kind of experience factor.”

“If they are having trouble with special education, where special education parents are not happy with their choices or non special education parents thing all the money is going to special education kids...then analyzing, evaluation and leading special education programs might be an issue.”

“If they are concerned with the efficacy of the administrative organization, they want someone to bring change to that kind of organization.”

“If they have problems with the budget, they look for someone who is conversant with financial matters.”

“If they have a building program, that will be the focus.”

“If they feel there is a problem with community relationships, budgets voted down, angry people at board meetings, they may look for personal traits that may address that.”

Search consultants were prompted to comment on whether the traits were different for large and small enrollment districts. Figure 12 summarizes their responses.

SC8 commented that the bigger the district, the more likely there would be a national search and the smaller the district, the more local it will be.

Search consultants were prompted to comment on whether the traits were different for high performing versus low performing districts. Their verbatim responses are shown in Figure 13.

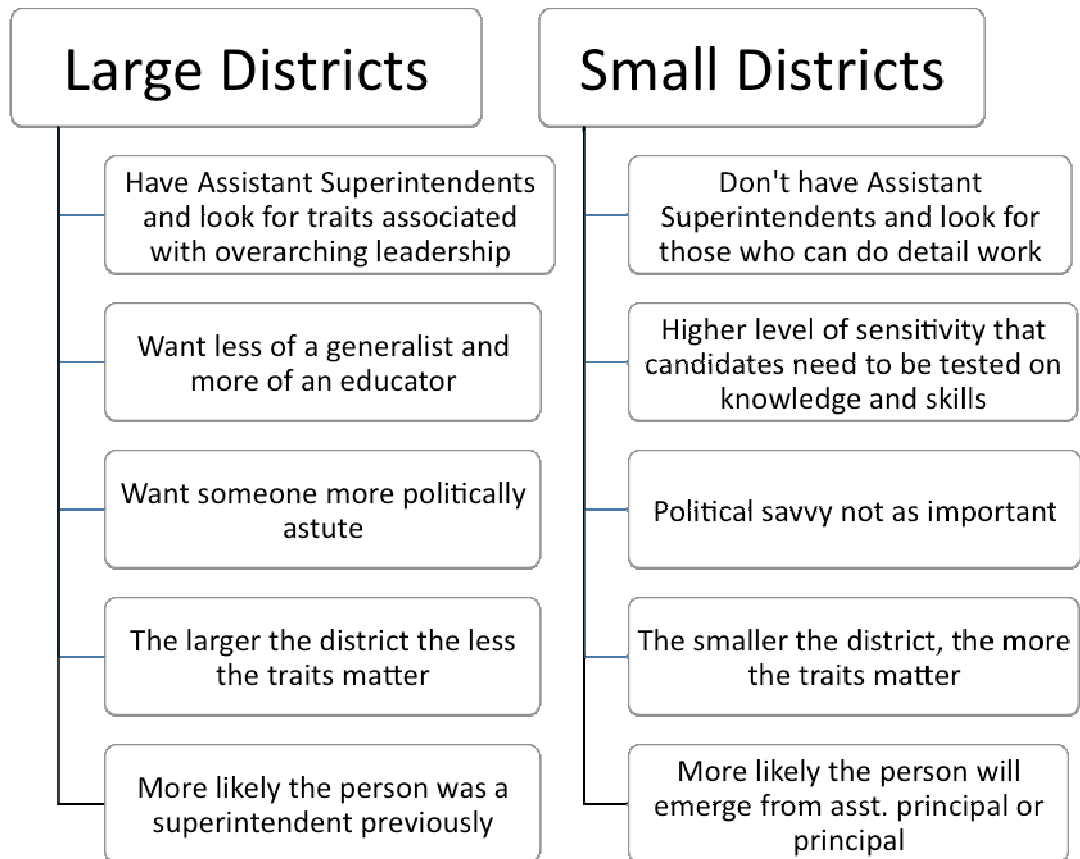


Figure 12. Traits Desired in Large versus Small Districts.

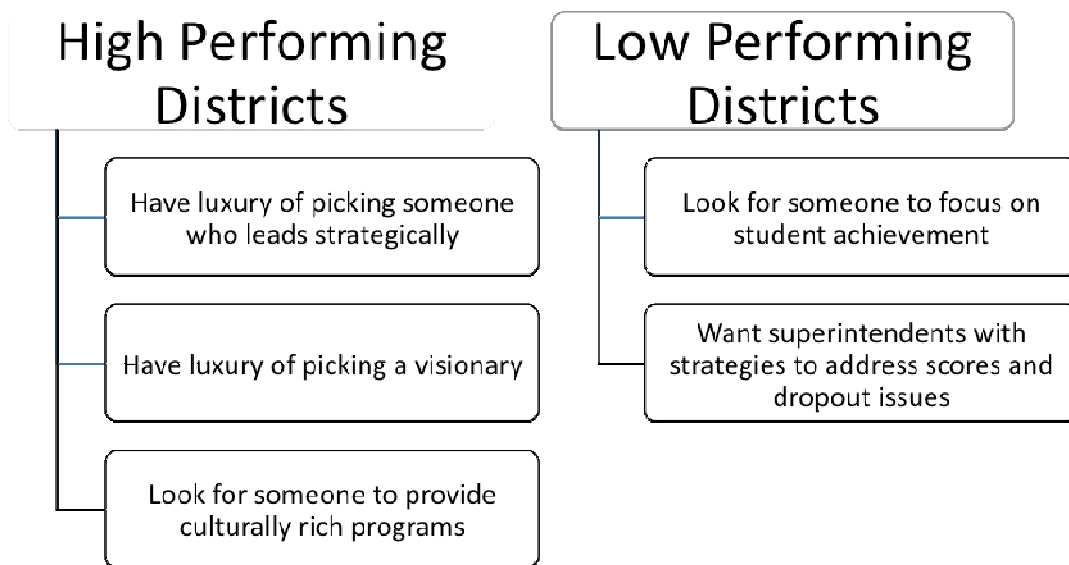


Figure 13. Traits Associated With High Versus Low Performing Districts.

When search consultants were prompted to comment on whether the traits were different for rich districts than they were for poorer districts, a few explanations were given (see Figure 14). For this information, the interviewer did not define poor or rich and was not asked to do so by any interviewee.

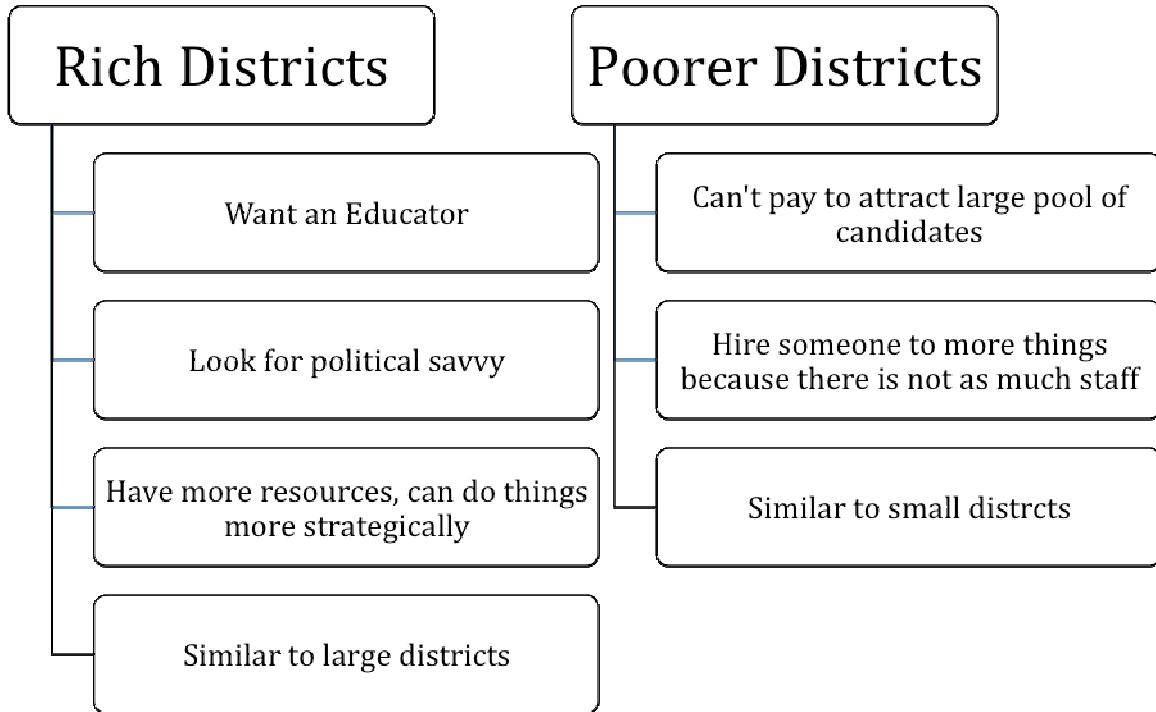


Figure 14. Traits Associated With Rich Versus Poorer Districts.

When search consultants were asked to comment on whether traits were different for urban versus rural districts, they provided responses shown in Figure 15.

Also, there were some distinctions identified for suburban school districts. Suburban districts are more likely to consider themselves diverse and address issues of diversity than are the smaller and the less wealthy districts according to SC6. Also, SC3 indicated that suburban schools want someone with great written and communication skills so they can say “that is our superintendent” and be proud of them. Also, suburban districts, according to SC2, “...didn’t

care if a candidate lived in their district, they just wanted kids to have more opportunities, more choices, more colleges.”

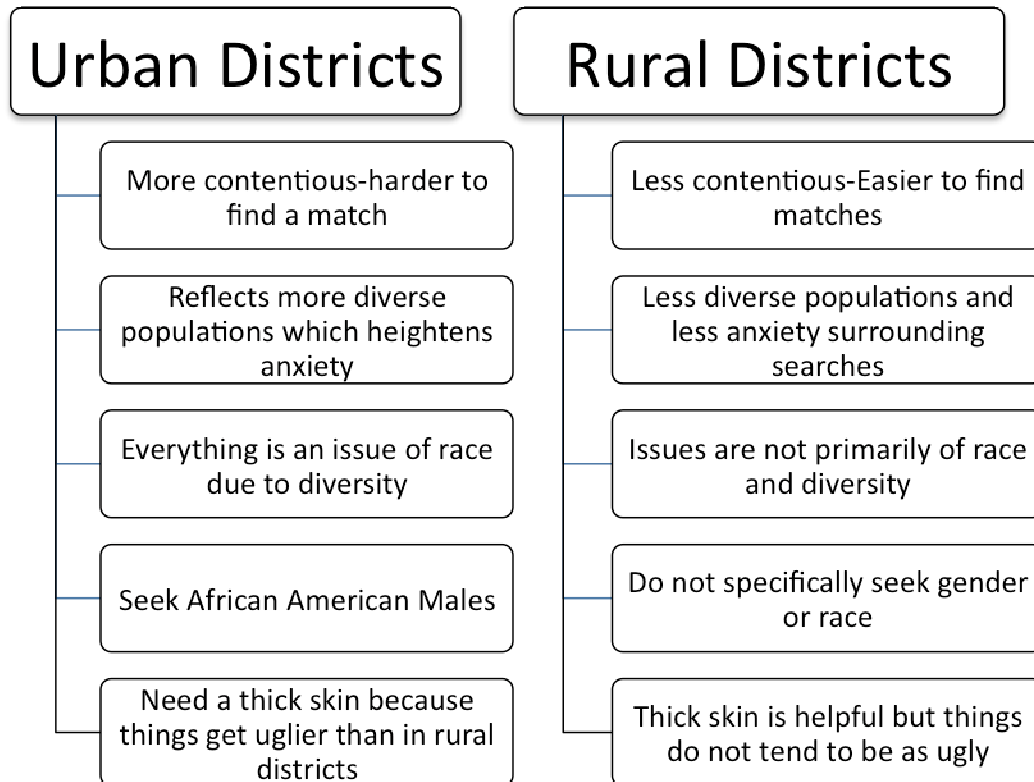


Figure 15. Traits Associated With Urban Districts Versus Rural Districts.

Unanimous Votes for the Successful Candidate

Most of the consultants agreed that the board needed to be happy with their choices. SC3 reported that when it comes to the final few candidates, most often those finalists possess all of the listed traits. SC1 said that they tell the boards they work with that “It is harder to get out of a marriage than it is to get out of a superintendent contract (so make sure this is the person you want and they have the traits you think the district needs).” SC5 said that they always tell their boards “If it ain’t love, it ain’t marriage.” Five out of nine search consultants said that they tell boards the importance of voting unanimously for the successful candidate in public. Search consultants’ comments on unanimous votes when approving a new superintendent included:

“ I tell them they should come out unanimously, it is an ugly thing not to.”

“I tell them they need to.”

“Creates mistrust if they don’t.”

“I encourage boards to do so because the person should start with a clean slate.” “It is a distraction if you saddle them with something less than a unanimous vote.”

“One candidate took the job without a unanimous vote of the board and it hurt them.”

“ If you do not come out unanimous, it gives the public descending votes to use” (those who are looking for trouble will go to those who did not vote for the superintendent).

“Very important to candidate that the vote is unanimous.”

“We encourage boards to do so.”

As a follow-up question, search consultants were asked if or how they customized the traits depending on what type of district they were working with. Most of the responses were consistent with what the consultants said as they were describing the differences between the types of districts in Figures 12 through 15 and offered no additional information on how the searches were customized. Responses included:

“Emphasis is put where the board thinks it should be.”

“They all want a person that would appreciate their community, support their children and be very visible.”

“Rural districts want a jack of all trades and suburbans want to maintain academic excellence and will be good face for district.”

If test scores are bad”, ...we look for someone who has strengths in producing educational outcomes.”

“The larger the district, the more likely the candidate has superintendent experience.”

“Brochures look similar but when it comes to choosing, they zero in on someone’s ability to raise test scores through improved teaching.”

“We look at the district and align traits with what is needed.”

“There are some events that may cause a board to look for certain traits.”

“They are 90% the same, they just capture the language of the community.”

“Must capture the essence of what the community is looking for.”

Search consultants were asked to what extent boards use the traits listed during the search process. Their responses included:

“When they get hung up on things, I bring them back to the traits list.”

“For the final two, we put the traits on the board and see how close each are to them.”

“When it gets down to the final three I think it is more of who impressed the board in the interview.”

“The traits are embedded in the questions.”

“Experience is a reason for forgiveness.”

“The farther down you get in the process, the more individual desires take over.”

“They generate some good discussion and generate good interview questions.”

“They tend to forget them for the final round. I have to remind them.”

“Use characteristics to formulate questions for candidates.”

“I warn them to be careful of looks and personality and bring them back to traits.”

“Comes down to the perceptions of the board and not the traits.”

“...brochure is more important for board and stakeholders.”

“I try to make sure they use them. They are used to profile and select the initial candidate pool.”

“The traits are handed back to the board during the process.”

“When they get to the final 2 or 3 candidates, they probably have the traits (or something is wrong with the process).”

“They are used initially but boards attach to a candidate based on their personal characteristics and personality.”

“They are used in reference checking.”

Certain board members do not use the traits but use personality and personal characteristics. Search consultant six adds, “I warn them to be careful of the flashy personality and tie.” Search consultant three talked about how boards and stakeholder groups attach themselves to someone they identify with or who happens to say something that appeals to them personally. This was referred to as the “halo effect.” Search consultant nine cautions stakeholders about candidates who can “theatrically sell themselves,” and how important it is to “get to the root of the candidates.” Search consultant eight brings boards back to the traits they identified and tells boards, “the least reliable predictor of success is the personal interview and the most reliable predictor of work is past success in work. So don’t rely on the personal interview because for two hours that person is going to be anybody who you wish them to be.”

Boards may not use the traits as they intended. Five out of the nine search consultants referred to “gut feeling” when it came to the selection of the superintendent. Their comments were:

“When it comes to the final candidates, it is more of a gut check. Boards ask who are we more likely to develop a solid working relationship.”

“If the two final candidates seem to have all the traits, the articulate and personable candidate wins out over the shy and quiet candidate.”

“When it comes to the end, they use the gut.”

“I can’t stress how important it is to the board that the candidate resonates with them in an interview. They have to be able to connect with the board in the interview.”

“If a candidate makes a statement that resonates with a board member, they may connect and that person becomes their candidate and they don’t hear much else (halo effect).”

“When it comes to the final two candidates, board members may look to the board president for their gut feeling.”

“It’s gotta be that feeling of collegiality that may supersede some of the traits.”

“Boards, more than once used their gut feeling to pick one candidate over a candidate with more of the traits. They just followed their gut feelings.”

“Comes down to the perception of the board.”

Summary

Board of education members and search consultants work together to develop a search brochure that they hope will attract high quality candidates. Initially, they articulate a list of traits the board has decided represents the needs and requirements for the position. Boards disagree on whether or not they want someone like the last superintendent, whether or not they want a curriculum based superintendent or a business based superintendent, and whether or not the successful candidate should have been a principal or teacher. Boards also report that most of the candidates possess most of the traits they are looking for. In a few cases, some have

additional traits and others end up not having traits boards thought the candidate demonstrated in the interview.

Search consultants report similar processes for determining the list of desired traits and include input from stakeholders. This process almost always goes smoothly according to search consultants. Search consultants report that boards often agree that the successful candidate should have experience with building projects if a building project is being done. They also agree that successful candidates should have a sense of community, personal integrity and be visible. Search consultants reported that the traits were very similar in the searches they have done. They also seemed to agree that most often, it is impossible to find a person with all the identified traits and that the process can be complicated by individual board member attitudes and preferences.

Large districts look for different traits than small district, in part because they can afford to. Search consultants also report that there are also differences in the traits listed of low performing and high- performing districts as well as urban versus rural districts and rich versus poor districts. Search consultants add other interesting information to the search process. Consultants report that they customize the traits for the district based on district need but also report that the traits are highly similar. When it comes to how the traits are used, consultants report that either the traits are used to help recruit candidates or to help keep the board focused on the search process. One consultant reported that once the search process gets down to a few finalists, that they all have the traits and it becomes more about a personal connection that board members make with the candidates.

Even though the questions asked of the search consultants did not specifically question the existence of the “gut feeling” of board members, six out of nine referenced it in their answer

to other questions. Most reported that many board members need to make a personal connection to the candidate and sometimes cannot identify, using specific traits, why particular candidates are their first choice. This is referred to as “gut feeling.”

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Boards of education are responsible for selecting school system leaders, individuals who are ultimately responsible for the education and safety of our children for a significant part of their lives. The superintendent search process that was utilized by all districts in this study included the use of a search consultant and the development of a search brochure. This brochure, in all cases, included a list of traits that were desired by the school district. However, the process, even before it begins, is complicated by the amorphous nature of leadership.

To delineate roles and responsibilities does not fully identify the nature of leadership in terms of a school district superintendent. This research explored the perceptions the 37 board members in 13 districts and nine search consultants as they characterized the traits associated with successful leadership.

To accomplish this, the researcher explored the search process and the use of traits by boards of education and the search consultants they hired to assist them. This research is heuristic in that it was not just to find specific answers but also to raise evocative questions.

Research Question One: Literature Traits

There is a vast array of research regarding leadership traits both inside and outside the field of education. Even so, leadership is not well defined. In this study, the literature does substantiate particular leadership qualities as essential. The top ten traits that emerged were *communication, goals, community, vision, integrity, finance, culture, decision making, political* and *experience*. These ten traits represent a set of leadership competencies and a set of leadership qualities, and the top ten list has some of both of them implying that both are necessary yet varying degrees of measurement and ability to measure. Competencies included on this list are *communication, goals, [understanding of] community, finance, [understanding]*

culture, [ability to understand] *politics*, *decision making* and *experience*. Leadership qualities, which are more difficult to measure and assess, are *vision* and *integrity*.

Research Question Two: Brochure Traits

All 13 school districts in this study generated brochures as part of the search process. In each district, traits were developed and advertised. All districts involved the community in the development phase. Many districts have similar traits listed as desirable, yet most maintain specific wording to describe these traits. There is a degree of similarity in the traits found across those 13 brochures. The top ten traits that were mentioned in the brochures are *community*, *student achievement*, *collaboration*, *experience*, *business office*, *communication*, *diversity*, *approachable*, *vision*, and *decisive*. These traits, like the traits from the literature, can be grouped into leadership competencies and leadership qualities. Leadership competencies include [knowledge of] *community*, *student achievement*, *experience*, *business office*, *communication* and [understanding of] *diversity*. Leadership qualities would include *collaboration*, *approachable*, *vision*, and *decisive*.

Although much time, effort, and resources are dedicated to developing the traits for the search brochure, there is often a degree of vagueness in the identification of those traits, much like looking for a political candidate. The public identifies many of the same traits for politicians including *communicator*, *fair*, and *ethical*. During this study, these traits were not defined concretely in terms of guidance. For example, none of the brochures actually say that the candidate must be able to increase math regents scores. Raising student achievement is the primary function of a school district, which is lead by a school superintendent, so specific goals and gains should be identified. For example, a private business can measure a person's ability to be able to increase sales on the job and could use past experiences to evaluate potential success.

No specificity defining traits was found in search brochures. Since the brochures list traits that are hard to measure and there is no proof that these brochures lead to the selection of an effective leader, it appears that one of the major purposes served by the identification and use of the traits is the involvement of community in the recruitment process.

Research Question Three: Comparison of Brochure and Literature Traits

Community was mentioned as the number one trait in the search brochures and as the third most frequently appearing in the literature. Both the literature and the brochure top ten include *communication, community, vision, decision making, finance* and *experience* yet they are not prioritized in the same way.

Since there are similarities between the traits in the brochures and in the literature and there is no evidence that the literature are being used in the search process, it is possible that districts could develop these desired traits without having gone through the superintendent process, which identifies desired traits. Also, since there is no evidence that the traits are used, the process of developing traits is different than the process of selecting the superintendent. What students need to know and be able to do is what a superintendent needs to focus on, yet student achievement does not appear as high up on the literature list as it is on the brochure list.

Goals do not appear in search brochures as a top-ten trait, yet it appears in the literature top ten. Goals are concrete and are measureable. Setting and utilizing goals is a more concrete way of measuring superintendent ability and success as well as other administration. For that reason, goals are critical, yet are missing from the brochure list.

The literature focuses more on the competencies of leadership, with 80% of the traits (8/10) falling under this category and only 20% (2/10) falling under the leadership quality classification. Traits in the brochures also favor competencies over qualities, but at a lower

percentage than in the literature, accounting for only 60% (6/10). The brochures focus more on the qualities of leadership, with 40% (4/10) of the traits falling under the qualities category.

Research Question Four: Board Perspective

In this study, 37 board member interviews were conducted. Based on information from the interviews in this study, there is no evidence that board members consulted the literature when developing traits used in the superintendent search process. A high level of commitment to the traits developed was found, as well as evidence that specific language was used to make traits unique to each district. This separates the process of developing traits from the process of selecting the superintendent. The study found that board members were overwhelmingly satisfied with the search process, believed it was successful, agreed with the list of traits and the selection of the final candidate and would not change anything about the process. They also report they would do it all again. The study shows that boards are reinforcing the search process that always been done without any indication that the process is working. There is no evidence that the district is successful, that the superintendent has been successful, that student achievement has increased, or that more students went to college or were successful.

Board members report that the process worked out well and as they intended. However, if the process went so well, there should be great results, which were not evident in this study. If boards, consultants and the public were happy with the results of the superintendent search, then next study would be to examine, in these 13 districts, what the successful search process yields in terms of student achievement. With this reported perfect alignment, it should be tested.

The results of the search are somewhat circular. Boards report their satisfaction with the brochure and that the superintendent chosen through this method met the expectations they had and possessed the identified traits. These traits are the traits identified and believed to be what

stakeholders want, and the process is repeated for each successive search. There is no evidence that these 13 districts are performing so well that the process should be repeated. Board members, search consultants and the public are not questioning the search process from within the system. All involved in the process are buying into it.

There is no evidence in this study that any of the traits were measurable and that the successful candidate possessed the traits listed. Candidates were not made to demonstrate skills, only to talk about them. It is this researchers recommendation that to increase the effectiveness of school boards, board members should attend training on how to select and assess traits in superintendent candidates.

Goals, listed in the literature only but not in the brochures, is the only concrete and measureable trait. *Goals*, listed as number two on the literature top-ten, can be measurable and very specific, yet is left out of district brochures. The entire search process would go through significant revision if goals were incorporated in district-specific ways.

For example, an English department in a school could claim that they are successful because they have 80% of their students go on to college. A closer look could reveal that 70% of these students fail out in the first six months because they are not prepared for college, which does not indicate success. Goals are measurable, and a candidate should be asked how they would address them. The study shows that boards are looking for a manager and a politician. They want someone who can appease the community, sell the budget, and keep peace and safety in a district. Selecting a superintendent to make transformative positive differences in the experiences and success of students in measurable ways is becoming increasingly important, yet may result in greater controversy.

Research Question Five: Search Consultant Perspective

There is no evidence in this study that search consultants consulted the literature when developing traits used in the superintendent search process. Most search consultants reported roles as facilitators and guides to the process. Some reported they acted as wordsmiths to help boards give personal touches to traits to gain ownership. This study found that search consultants did not have a role in educating boards in how to determine leadership in potential candidates. The study also found that over 85% of the traits that are in the brochures that they guide boards to create are the same.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

During the superintendent search process, it is not known what is really being measured and what success is. This research calls into question the whole process as it is being done. There is no evidence that traits are used, and the research indicates that the process used to establish a list of traits does not do what it was designed to do. Primarily, the search process appears to be a public relations activity, which includes and appeases the community. Public perception and public relations are not more important than actual change.

Search consultants talk about guiding, appeasing and reflecting what boards and communities want. Since the traits are not serving the purpose for which they are intended, a recommendation to fix this process could be presented. However, recommendations from this researcher, instead, are to move past that to a new era of superintendent searches.

If traits were an indication of success, they would become a rubric for search and selection. Instead, the process includes “gut feeling” and the halo affect, which are as much a part of the process as traits. To measure the ability to be successful, boards of education have to measure past success. If districts are really concerned about finding a superintendent who can

lead through today's uncertain fiscal era, then traits need to be tied to performance assessments. Boards must look for proven experience, where a candidate made a difference that affected student achievement and where such an effect was measurable. The successful candidate should be able to demonstrate that they possess particular competencies. For those candidates who were new to the superintendent position, past successes, as an assistant superintendent for example, would be investigated to see where they may have developed curriculum to meet the standards and that such a curriculum had been successful in raising student achievement.

Boards and consultants should seek evidence or experience in a candidate's background demonstrating that they have successfully identified and addressed an organizational, systemic, or academic weakness in a prior position. Boards and consultants could also demonstrate faculty issues, curriculum issues, and staff development issues, to see if candidates addressed those issues and if that resulted in increased student achievement. It is important that a candidate be able to demonstrate knowledge of standards and curriculum and that they have provided relevant professional development and continually worked with staff to make sure curriculum is implemented and results are measured.

Another way to assess what traits the candidates actually possess would be to create tasks that put them in the field or on the spot, such as a situation where they could prove skills or competencies in an area defined by educators and with an accepted standard of measure.

Rather than merely using words to talk about vision, candidates should be required to demonstrate that they had a vision that transformed a system. Boards and search consultants could also give the candidates the task of examining the details about a specific situation or program and providing an explanation of what changes they could make over five years and what the necessary resources would be. Also to measure vision, boards and search consultants

could require candidates to describe what the ideal middle school looks like, what the ideal classroom looks like, where education will be in 15 years, or if you they had their way, where would education be in 15 years? The details of their answers would be revealing. Candidates must show that they have demonstrated these competencies in a previous position or give the criteria and conditions that would need to be met for a particular change to occur in a district. This study found that boards of education, the community and search consultants are identifying traits without a way to measure or assess them. This finding is similar to the finding in a study by Rammer (2007) where it was determined that superintendents were able to identify qualities and characteristics desired in school principals, but were not able to "...describe purposeful or intentional means to asses those responsibilities in candidates..." (p. 73).

Designing these measurements and assessment tools is not the role of the boards. Board members are lay people. It is an assumption that the board does not have specific educational expertise on the many facets of a school district. In that case, the absence of educational knowledge by board members, the only other person involved in the current superintendent search process that has the opportunity to provide education and knowledge to the board, is the search consultant. Boards should have performance contracts with search consultants obligating them to bring a slate of candidates forward that demonstratively match the search traits.

NYSCOSS and NYSSBA should develop a joint training for search consultants.

Training of board members before the process and guidance by trained consultants during the process can help to shape the questions and conversations, which would help boards to assess and measure potential leadership traits in candidates. In this study, consultants talked about the notion that they were just there to guide the board, but consultants need to take on a more active and educational role in helping boards to select great leaders. Search consultants must function

as the professionals who know where education and school systems of the future must be. They need to challenge and lead boards in the search process while simultaneously addressing local issues. This complex role of facilitating and leading is not one that can be performed by everyone in equally successful ways.

Boards say they want better results, so consultants need to assist in articulating what this means and how to get there. Lay people on boards view the district from their perspective, and consultants are not adequately aligning the research traits and educating the board with the skills and information they need. Board members are not familiar with educational organizations and tend to focus on who they are and what they know. Board members who talk about leadership are really talking about politics and management. Boards know the community and not education. In the end, they are looking at superintendent candidates in the same way they might look for or vote for a politician. They look to see if they possess personal qualities that are attractive to them.

The consultant's role needs to be much stronger in educating the board and determining how to assess and measure the traits. This research raises the question of what the role of the consultant is (or should be) in raising a board's competency level. Which leads to the next issue: Who are serving as consultants and are they capable of that role?

Search consultants, like candidates, should be able to prove their abilities. Can they prove that searches they have done have led to the selection of a superintendent who raises student success? In the absence of any data to prove they have made successful matches, search consultants may be primarily good at public relations.

For example, a consultant should know state test scores. They should know that math regents in a particular district shows 45% of students passing. When they meet with the board,

they need to ask how these candidates will address this area specifically and use that as a template to see how they would deal with other areas. They should also ask what experience the candidate has dealing with that.

The research indicates we should do something different with the traits. Search consultants should take the traits from the brochure and the literature, circulate them and ask stakeholders to rate them. Rubrics to evaluate candidates against the traits could be developed and used in each search. The work of the consultant would then be to inform the boards as to how these traits can be measured rather than just using the exercise as an identification process. Board training would give the boards the skills needed to work with consultants to make an informed decision to hire someone, and, based on criteria used to measure specific traits, they could develop a performance contract with the chosen candidate based on five years. If a candidate has a vision that said a particular change could happen in five years under particular conditions, districts could develop a contract that they could go back to and evaluate for renewal each year. This brings everyone back to the vision to renew the contract rather than adopting what the new fads for next year are. In addition to performance contracts for superintendents, search consultants should be held to the same standard and enter into performance contracts based on their role in the superintendent search process. For example, if the board determines that it needs a superintendent with a particular set of traits or skills, the search consultant should be held accountable for providing a slate of candidates that possesses those traits or skills.

There are many differences between the private sector and education. Traits are more easily defined in the private sector because there is a bottom line. With brochure traits, there is no bottom line due to generality and vagueness. What private companies and businesses need and look for in leaders is measurable. In schools, what is critical is what students need to

achieve, what they need to know and how to address the issues around them, but these are not easily measured. The federal school improvement program, *Race to The Top*, will hopefully move the educational system towards using more concrete measurements and assessments to determine the effectiveness of leaders, as it requires that student achievement data be used to evaluate teachers and administrators.

There is an interesting difference between school systems and the private sector. In private sector, if a worker has experience, that experience is considered being successful at the job. In education, experience is defined as merely knowing the job. Education talks about process, not results. We have a lot of processes that are nebulous, and consultants, if they are to lead the search process, must help boards translate these into something more concrete that can be looked at and used as templates to see if candidates are achieving what boards want.

Boards could consult the literature. The literature is abundant for boards entering a superintendent search regarding the traits for successful leaders.

What do the public and boards really want? This research indicates that the educational system appears to be in a stasis. Everyone thinks they are doing what they think they should be doing, and it has stayed that way for a long time with everything pretty much the same. Despite the intense pressure to improve and upgrade education in this country, the process is unchanged, and everyone inside of it seems very comfortable with it demonstrating a large degree of comfort.

Recommendations for Future Study

1. Find out if there are districts anywhere that are using goals as far as their search process and to evaluate success over time and study them.

2. Since the search processes of the 13 districts studied are reported to have gone just as planned with little or no change needed, a study of these 13 boards to see if they have great student success would be revealing.
3. Most of a superintendent's job is political; dealing with community, listening skills, budget, fairness etc. Evidence of how all of these traits play into raising student achievement and modernizing the organization is not discovered through this study and worth further investigation.
4. Another recommendation for follow up study would be to determine ways to measure the traits sought in superintendent searches.
5. Search consultants indicated that they guide board members to keep details of the search confidential and to present a unanimous decision at the conclusion of the process. This may have lead to reluctance on the part of board members to be fully forthcoming on their disagreement with the traits. A future quantitative study using a larger sample and an anonymous sample may be useful.

Summary

This study found that there was no evidence that these traits become the criteria in the superintendent searches and there is no evidence that boards, search consultants or communities are consulting the literature to determine traits. There is also no indication of the importance of the development of traits in the search process.

If the traits used in the superintendent search process are not used as intended and the brochures do not have value associated with the selection of a good leader, and there is no evidence that the process works as currently designed, then the process should move to one that effectively identifies school leaders. If there is no evidence that search consultants are able to

educate and assist boards select strong leaders, then use of them should be reconsidered. As this study unfolded, new questions were presented that when pursued, will lead to an improved search process and ultimately better leaders in our school systems. Further researchers will have a good foundation on which to ask new questions and build further research.

The era of opinion about school leadership has given way to a new era informed by research about leadership and its relationship to results. There is now data that describes those superintendent traits that directly relate to student achievement. The superintendent search process, which served well in the previous era, now needs to be reformed to incorporate this research.

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Appendix A
AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency

Standard 1: Leadership and District Culture

This standard stresses executive leadership, vision, shaping school culture and climate empowering others, and multicultural and ethnic understanding.

Standard 2: Policy and Governance

This standard centers on developing procedures for working with the board; formulating district policy, standards. And regulations; and describing public school governance in our democratic society

Standard 3: Communications and Community Relations

This standard emphasizes skill in articulating district vision and purpose to the community and media. Also, it stresses responding to community feedback and building consensus to strengthen community support.

Standard 4: Organizational Management

This standard calls for skills in gathering, analyzing and using data for decision making; framing and solving problems; and formulating solutions to problems. It also stresses quality management to meet internal and external customer expectations and to allocate resources.

Standard 5: Curriculum Planning and Development

This standard tests the superintendent’s skill in designing curriculum and a strategic plan to enhance teaching and learning, using theories of cognitive development, employing valid and reliable performance indicators and testing procedures, and describing the use of computers and other learning technologies.

Standard 6: Instructional Management

This standard measures knowledge and use of research findings on learning and instructional strategies and resources to maximize student achievement. It also centers on applying research and best practice to integrate curriculum for multicultural sensitivity and assessment.

Standard 7: Human Resources Management

This Standard assesses skill in developing a staff evaluation and assessment and supervisory system to improve performance. It also requires skills in describing and applying legal requirements for personnel selection, development, retention and dismissal.

Standard 8: Values and Ethics of Leadership

This standard stresses understanding and modeling of appropriate value systems, ethics, and moral leadership. It also requires the superintendent to exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding, and to coordinate social agencies and human services to help each student grow and develop as a caring, informed citizen.

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Appendix B
ISLLC Standards for School Leaders

Reprinted with permission. Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). (1996). Interstate school leaders licensure consortium: Standards for school leaders. Washington, DC: Author. For more information on the CCSSO, please visit their Web site, www.ccsso.org. For a list of states that have adopted the ISLLC standards, please go to www.ccsso.org/isllc.html.

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. learning goals in a pluralistic society
2. the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
3. systems theory
4. information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies
5. effective communication
6. effective consensus-building and negotiation skills

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

1. the educability of all
2. a school vision of high standards of learning
3. continuous school improvement
4. the inclusion of all members of the school community
5. ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults
6. a willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
7. doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

1. the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
2. the vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities
3. the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
4. the vision is developed with and among stakeholders
5. the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated
6. progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders

7. the school community is involved in school improvement efforts
8. the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
9. an implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated
10. assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals
11. relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals
12. barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed
13. needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals
14. existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals
15. the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. student growth and development
2. applied learning theories
3. applied motivational theories
4. curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
5. principles of effective instruction
6. measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
7. diversity and its meaning for educational programs
8. adult learning and professional development models
9. the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals
10. the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
11. school cultures

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

1. student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling
2. the proposition that all students can learn
3. the variety of ways in which students can learn
4. life long learning for self and others
5. professional development as an integral part of school improvement
6. the benefits that diversity brings to the school community
7. a safe and supportive learning environment
8. preparing students to be contributing members of society

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

1. all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
2. professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
3. students and staff feel valued and important
4. the responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged
5. barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed
6. diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
7. life long learning is encouraged and modeled
8. there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance
9. technologies are used in teaching and learning
10. student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
11. multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students
12. the school is organized and aligned for success
13. curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined
14. curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
15. the school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis
16. a variety of sources of information is used to make decisions
17. student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques
18. multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students
19. a variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed
20. pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families

Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development
2. operational procedures at the school and district level
3. principles and issues relating to school safety and security
4. human resources management and development
5. principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management
6. principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space
7. legal issues impacting school operations
8. current technologies that support management functions

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

1. making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
2. taking risks to improve schools
3. trusting people and their judgments
4. accepting responsibility
5. high-quality standards, expectations, and performances
6. involving stakeholders in management processes
7. a safe environment

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

1. knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions
2. operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning
3. emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate
4. operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place
5. collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed
6. the school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively
7. time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals
8. potential problems and opportunities are identified
9. problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner
10. financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of schools
11. organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed
12. stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools
13. responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability
14. effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used
15. effective conflict resolution skills are used
16. effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used
17. effective communication skills are used
18. there is effective use of technology to manage school operations
19. fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively
20. a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained
21. human resource functions support the attainment of school goals

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
2. the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
3. community resources
4. community relations and marketing strategies and processes
5. successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

1. schools operating as an integral part of the larger community
2. collaboration and communication with families
3. involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes
4. the proposition that diversity enriches the school
5. families as partners in the education of their children
6. the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
7. resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students
8. an informed public

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

1. high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority
2. relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured
3. information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly
4. there is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations
5. credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict
6. the school and community serve one another as resources
7. available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals
8. partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups
9. to strengthen programs and support school goals
10. community youth family services are integrated with school programs
11. community stakeholders are treated equitably
12. diversity is recognized and valued
13. effective media relations are developed and maintained
14. a comprehensive program of community relations is established
15. public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely

16. community collaboration is modeled for staff
17. opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided

Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. the purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society
2. various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
3. the values of the diverse school community
4. professional codes of ethics
5. the philosophy and history of education

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

1. the ideal of the common good
2. the principles in the Bill of Rights
3. the right of every student to a free, quality education
4. bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process
5. subordinating one's own interest to the good of the school community
6. accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions
7. using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families
8. development of a caring school community

Performances

The administrator:

1. examines personal and professional values
2. demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics
3. demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance
4. serves as a role model
5. accepts responsibility for school operations
6. considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others
7. uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain
8. treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
9. protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
10. demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community
11. recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others
12. examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community
13. expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior

14. opens the school to public scrutiny
15. fulfills legal and contractual obligations
16. applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools
2. the role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation
3. the law as related to education and schooling
4. the political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes that impact schools
5. models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling
6. global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning
7. the dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system
8. the importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

1. education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
2. recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
3. importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
4. actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
5. using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

1. the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families
2. communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate
3. there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups
4. the school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities
5. public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students
6. lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community

Appendix C

National Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for Administrators

1. Visionary Leadership. Administrators
 - a. inspire and lead development and implementation of a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology to promote excellence and support transformation throughout the organization.
2. Educational Administrators:
 - a. inspire and facilitate among all stakeholders a shared vision of purposeful change that maximizes use of digital-age resources to meet and exceed learning goals, support effective instructional practice, and maximize performance of district/school leaders
 - b. engage in an ongoing process to develop, implement, and communicate technology-infused strategic plans aligned with a shared vision
 - c. advocate on local, state, and national levels for policies, programs, and funding to support implementation of a technology-infused vision and strategic plan
3. Digital-Age Learning Culture. Educational Administrators create, promote, and sustain a dynamic, digital-age learning culture that provides a rigorous, relevant, and engaging education for all students. Educational Administrators:
 - a. ensure instructional innovation focused on continuous improvement of digital-age learning
 - b. model and promote the frequent and effective use of technology for learning
 - c. provide learner-centered environments equipped w/ technology and learning resources to meet individual, diverse needs of all learners
 - d. ensure effective practice in the study of technology and its infusion across the curriculum
 - e. promotes and participates in local, national, and global learning communities that stimulate innovation, creativity, and digital-age collaboration
4. Excellence in Professional Practice. Educational Administrators promote an environment of professional learning and innovation that empowers educators to enhance student learning through the infusion of contemporary technologies and digital resources. Educational Administrators:
 - a. allocate time, resources, and access to ensure ongoing prof. growth in technology fluency/integration
 - b. facilitate and participate in learning communities that stimulate, nurture, and support administrators, faculty, and staff in the study and use of technology
 - c. promote/model effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders using digital-age tools
 - d. stay abreast of educational research and emerging trends regarding effective use of technology and encourage evaluation of new technologies for their potential to improve student learning
5. Systemic Improvement. Educational Administrators provide digital-age leadership and management to continuously improve the organization through the effective use of information and technology resources. Educational Administrators:
 - a. lead purposeful change to maximize the achievement of learning goals through the appropriate use of technology and media-rich resources

- b. collaborate to establish metrics, collect and analyze data, interpret results, and share findings to improve staff performance and student learning
 - c. recruit and retain highly competent personnel who use technology creatively and proficiently to advance academic and operational goals
 - d. establish and leverage strategic partnerships to support systemic improvement
 - e. establish and maintain a robust infrastructure for technology including integrated, interoperable technology systems to support management, operations, teaching, and learning
6. Digital Citizenship. Educational Administrators model and facilitate understanding of social, ethical, and legal issues and responsibilities related to an evolving digital culture.
- Educational Administrators:
- a. ensure equitable access to appropriate digital tools and resources to meet the needs of all learners
 - b. promote, model, and establish policies for safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information & technology
 - c. promote and model responsible social interactions related to the use of technology and information
 - d. model and facilitate the development of a shared cultural understanding and involvement in global issues through the use of contemporary communication and collaboration tools

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Appendix D
BOCES District Superintendent Informed Consent Form

XXXXXXX District Superintendent
XXXXX BOCES

Dear District Superintendent,

Hiring a superintendent is one of the most important and difficult jobs of a board of education. I am conducting a study on superintendent searches that I hope will inform school boards in their work. I would like to gather information that indicates which specific characteristics and traits are advertised in school superintendent searches and which characteristics and traits were actually selected in final candidates.

With an understanding of any differences between advertised profiles versus profiles that are eventually selected, search literature may be refined to contain information that helps us create closer and more meaningful matches between districts and candidates.

This study involves brief interviews with 3 board members from a total of 12 to 15 boards of education. Each member can be interviewed in person or via phone or electronic video or audio conferencing. Confidentiality is a priority and no information identifying the board member or the school district will be included at any time. All data will be kept in a locked file and destroyed after the study.

Attached is an informed consent form for you to sign if you agree to participate. I hope you will agree to help me in this research. I will provide results for any district or board member who wishes to receive a copy of them. Please sign the form and send it back either by mail or prior to the interview.

Thank you for your consideration and participation in this study.

Sally M. Sharkey
Student Researcher

Please sign here that you agree to participate in the study and provide necessary data and materials.

District Superintendent

Date

Appendix E
BOCES District Superintendent Informed Consent Form

To: District Superintendent
From: Sally M. Sharkey, Student Researcher
Re: Research Study

Dear District Superintendent,

You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled:

Factors, which influence the alignment between the identified desired characteristics of potential candidates in superintendent searches and the actual characteristics and traits of hired candidates. This research is being conducted by : Dr. Ann Myers (Associate Professor at Sage College and Sally M. Sharkey, Fahdlika Atiba-Weza, Lori Caplan, and John Wiktoro (doctoral students at Sage College).

PURPOSE: The purpose of the research is to inform the superintendent search process by providing information that assists in the development of recruitment literature that closely aligns with the profiles that boards of education desire in district leaders. A more specific profile may inform candidates' choices in where to apply. Three board members from each school district in the study, the board president and two others chosen by the BOCES district superintendent and/or by the board president will participate in an interview.

Each board of education member will be asked 10 interview questions either in person or over the phone or via electronic video communication (SKYPE). The questions will be of recruitment materials and profiles involved in superintendent searches. Each board member will answer the interview questions posed.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Strict confidentiality will be maintained. Only the student researcher will know the identity of the board member and the school district and the data will be kept in a locked file. There will be no information on the interview materials that identifies the board member or school district.

BENEFITS: This study will help boards of education develop recruitment materials that more clearly articulate the traits desired in the superintendent.

POTENTIAL RISKS: Without the safeguards in place, a district or board member may be identifiable.

The brief interviews will be audio taped. The tapes will be used by the researcher for data analysis only. The tapes will only be played in a locked office.

I give permission to the researcher to play the audio or videotape of) in the places described above. Put your initials here to indicate your permission. _____

All audiotapes will be kept in a locked file for the duration of the study and destroyed immediately after the study concludes.

In the event that I am harmed by participation in this study, I understand that compensation and/or medical treatment is not available from The Sage Colleges. However, compensation and/or medical costs might be recovered by legal action.

I understand that I may at any time during the course of this study revoke my consent and withdraw (or withdraw _____) from the study without any penalty.

I have been given an opportunity to read and keep a copy of this Agreement and to ask questions concerning the study. Any such questions have been answered to my full and complete satisfaction.

I, _____, having full capacity to consent, do hereby agree to allow my district (board members) to participate in this research study

Signed: _____

District Superintendent

This research has received the approval of The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board, which functions to insure the protection of the rights of human subjects. If you, as a participant, have any complaints about this study, please contact:

Dr. John Tribble, Dean
Sage Graduate School
45 Ferry Street
Troy, New York 12180
(518) 244-2264
tribbj@sage.edu

Appendix F
School Superintendent Cover Letter

XXXXXXXX Superintendent
XXXXXX District

Dear School Superintendent,

Hiring a superintendent is one of the most important and difficult jobs of a board of education. I am conducting a study on superintendent searches that I hope will inform school boards in their work. I would like to gather information that indicates which specific characteristics and traits are advertised in school superintendent searches and which characteristics and traits were actually selected in final candidates.

With an understanding of any differences between advertised profiles versus profiles that are eventually selected, search literature may be refined to contain information that helps us create closer and more meaningful matches between districts and candidates.

This study involves brief interviews with 3 board members from a total of 12 to 15 boards of education. Each member can be interviewed in person or via phone or electronic video or audio conferencing. Confidentiality is a priority and no information identifying the board member or the school district will be included at any time. All data will be kept in a locked file and destroyed after the study.

Attached is an informed consent form for you to sign if you agree to participate. I hope you will agree to help me in this research. I will provide results for any district or board member who wishes to receive a copy of them. Please sign the form and send it back either by mail or prior to the interview.

Thank you for your consideration and participation in this study.

Sally M. Sharkey
Student Researcher

Please sign here that you agree to participate in the study and provide necessary data and materials.

School Superintendent

Date

Appendix G
School Superintendent Informed Consent Form

To: Superintendent of Schools
From: Sally M. Sharkey, Student Researcher
Re: Research Study

Dear Superintendent of Schools, You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled: Factors, which influence the alignment between the identified desired characteristics of potential candidates in superintendent searches and the actual characteristics and traits of hired candidates. This research is being conducted by : Dr. Ann Myers (Associate Professor at Sage College and Sally M. Sharkey, Fahdlika Atiba-Weza, Lori Caplan, and John Wiktorko (doctoral students at Sage College).

PURPOSE: The purpose of the research is to inform the superintendent search process by providing information that assists in the development of recruitment literature that closely aligns with the profiles that boards of education desire in district leaders. A more specific profile may inform candidates' choices in where to apply. Three board members from each school district in the study, the board president and two others chosen by the BOCES district superintendent and/or by the board president will participate in an interview.

Each board of education member will be asked 10 interview questions either in person or over the phone or via electronic video communication (SKYPE). The questions will be of recruitment materials and profiles involved in superintendent searches. Each board member will answer the interview questions posed.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Strict confidentiality will be maintained. Only the student researcher will know the identity of the board member and the school district and the data will be kept in a locked file. There will be no information on the interview materials that identifies the board member or school district.

BENEFITS: This study will help boards of education develop recruitment materials that more clearly articulate the traits desired in the superintendent.

POTENTIAL RISKS: Without the safeguards in place, a district or board member may be identifiable.

The brief interviews will be audio taped. The tapes will be used by the researcher for data analysis only. The tapes will only be played in a locked office.

I give permission to the researcher to play the audio or videotape of) in the places described above. Put your initials here to indicate your permission. _____

All audiotapes will be kept in a locked file for the duration of the study and destroyed immediately after the study concludes.

In the event that I am harmed by participation in this study, I understand that compensation and/or medical treatment is not available from The Sage Colleges. However, compensation and/or medical costs might be recovered by legal action.

I understand that I may at any time during the course of this study revoke my consent and withdraw (or withdraw _____) from the study without any penalty.

I have been given an opportunity to read and keep a copy of this Agreement and to ask questions concerning the study. Any such questions have been answered to my full and complete satisfaction.

I, _____, having full capacity to consent, do hereby agree to allow my district (board members) to participate in this research study

Signed: _____

School District Superintendent

This research has received the approval of The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board, which functions to insure the protection of the rights of human subjects. If you, as a participant, have any complaints about this study, please contact:

Dr. John Tribble, Dean
Sage Graduate School
45 Ferry Street
Troy, New York 12180
(518) 244-2264
tribbj@sage.edu

Appendix H
Board Member Cover Letter

Dear Board Member,

Hiring a superintendent is one of the most important and difficult jobs of a board of education. I am conducting a study on superintendent searches that I hope will inform school boards in their work. I would like to gather information that indicates which specific characteristics and traits are advertised in school superintendent searches and which characteristics and traits were actually selected in final candidates.

With an understanding of any differences between advertised profiles versus profiles that are eventually selected, search literature may be refined to contain information that helps us create closer and more meaningful matches between districts and candidates.

This study involves brief interviews with 3 board members from a total of 12 to 15 boards of education. Each member can be interviewed in person or via phone or electronic video or audio conferencing. Confidentiality is a priority and no information identifying the board member or the school district will be included at any time. All data will be kept in a locked file and destroyed after the study.

Attached is an informed consent form for you to sign if you agree to participate. I hope you will agree to help me in this research. I will provide results for any district or board member who wishes to receive a copy of them. Please sign the form and send it back either by mail or prior to the interview.

Thank you for your consideration and participation in this study.

Sally M. Sharkey
Student Researcher

Appendix I
Board Member Informed Consent Form

To: Board of Education Member
From: Sally M. Sharkey, Student Researcher
Re: Research Study

Dear Board of Education Member,

You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled:

Factors, which influence the alignment between the identified desired characteristics of potential candidates in superintendent searches and the actual characteristics and traits of hired candidates.

This research is being conducted by: Dr. Ann Myers (Associate Professor at Sage College and Sally M. Sharkey.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the research is to inform the superintendent search process by providing information that assists in the development of recruitment literature that closely aligns with the profiles that boards of education desire in district leaders. Having a more specific profile may inform candidates' choices in where to apply. Three board members from each school district in the study, the board president and two others chosen by the BOCES district superintendent and/or by the board president will participate in an interview.

Each board of education member will be asked 10 interview questions either in person or over the phone or via electronic video communication (SKYPE).

Each board member will answer the interview questions posed.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Strict confidentiality will be maintained. Only the student researcher will know the identity of the board member and the school district and the data will be kept in a locked file.

There will be no information on the interview materials that identifies the board member or the school district.

BENEFITS: This study will help boards of education develop recruitment materials that more clearly articulate the traits desired in the superintendent.

POTENTIAL RISKS: Without the safeguards in place, a district or board member may be identifiable.

The brief interviews will be audio taped. The tapes will be used by the researcher for data analysis only. The tapes will only be played in a locked office.

I give permission to the researcher to play the audio or videotape of me (or the person for whom I am consenting) in the places described above. Put your initials here to indicate your permission.

_____ All audiotapes will be kept in a locked file for the duration of the study. The tapes will be destroyed immediately after the study concludes.

In the event that I am harmed by participation in this study, I understand that compensation and/or medical treatment is not available from The Sage Colleges. However, compensation and/or medical costs might be recovered by legal action.

I understand that I may at any time during the course of this study revoke my consent and withdraw (or withdraw _____) from the study without any penalty.

I have been given an opportunity to read and keep a copy of this Agreement and to ask questions concerning the study. Any such questions have been answered to my full and complete satisfaction.

I, _____, having full capacity to consent, do hereby volunteer to participate in this research study

Signed: _____
Research participant

This research has received the approval of The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board, which functions to insure the protection of the rights of human subjects. If you, as a participant, have any complaints about this study, please contact:

Dr. John Tribble, Dean
Sage Graduate School
45 Ferry Street
Troy, New York 12180
(518) 244-2264
tribbj@sage.edu

Appendix J
Board Member Contact Information Form

Consenting Board Member's Contact Information

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this study. I hope to provide information that will help school districts when hiring a superintendent. Please provide your contact information below so I know how to contact you and how you would like to be interviewed. There are 10 short questions and I will need to show you a few documents for you to answer the questions. I can send them via email prior to the interview.

Again, confidentiality is a top priority. At the end of the interviews, as a way to thank you for your participation, you will be entered into a drawing for one of four \$25 gift cards.

Thanks again,
Sally Sharkey

Name _____

Do you have access to a computer? _____

Email address:

Best number to call to arrange interview _____

Alternate numbers to call _____

Best times to contact:

Preferred interview type:

_____ phone call

_____ SKYPE (conference call)

_____ in person

If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this study, please provide your mailing address below.

Appendix K
Recruitment Envelope Attachment

This envelope is for any **recruitment literature** that was used for the last superintendent search. Please provide a copy of any **brochures, advertisements, mailings, and letters** etc. that were used in advertising for the **current** superintendent. These documents can be sent via email (scanned) to ssharkey@XXXXXXXXXX or via fax 518-XXX-XXXX attention S. Sharkey or in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided.

Please provide the name of the person who provides this information so they can be included in a drawing (along with participating board members) for **one of four \$25 gift cards**.
THANK YOU!

Appendix L
Frequency of Traits in the Literature

Traits Mentioned 30 Times In the Literature		
Communication		
Traits Mentioned 24 Times In the Literature		
Goals		
Traits Mentioned 17 Times In the Literature		
Community		
Traits Mentioned 14 Times In the Literature		
Vision		
Traits Mentioned 13 Times In the Literature		
Integrity		
Traits Mentioned 12 Times In the Literature		
Finance	Culture	
Traits Mentioned 11 Times In the Literature		
Decision Making	Political	Experience
Traits Mentioned 10 Times In the Literature		
Learn	Diversity	
Traits Mentioned 9 Times In the Literature		
Curriculum		
Traits Mentioned 8 Times In the Literature		
Problem Solving	Collaboration	Motivates
Responsibility		
Traits Mentioned 7 Times In the Literature		
Listening	Commitment	
Traits Mentioned 6 Times In the Literature		
Fairness	Board Relations	Skills
Values	Ethics	Interpersonal Skills
Traits Mentioned 5 Times In the Literature		
Public Relations	Humility	Judgment
Personnel	Visionary	Instructional Leader

Traits Mentioned 4 Times In the Literature

Strategic Planning	Shared Vision	Knowledge
Evaluate	Visibility	Staff Development
Respect	Leadership	Management Skills
Professional Development	Credibility	Management Skills
Resources	Trustworthiness	Flexibility
Trust	Media	Understanding

Traits Mentioned 3 Times In the Literature

Student Achievement	Self Confidence	Decisiveness
Time Management	Relationships	Finances
Distributed Leadership	Social	Economic
Selecting the right people	Environment	Legal
Beliefs	Instructional	Cultural

Traits Mentioned 2 Times In the Literature

Adaptable	Open-minded	Setting
Sensitivity	Symbolic	Committed
Intelligence	Interpersonal Relationships	Organizational Structure
Collaborative Goal	Humor	Visionary Leadership
Distribution of Leadership	Structural	Adaptability
Learn	Problem Analysis	Honesty
Capacity Building	Accessible	Visible
Authenticity	Future	High Expectations
Empathy	Responding	Participation
Realistic	Initiative	Love
Understanding	Determination	Language
Ambitious	Data Driven Decision Making	Delegation
Imaginative	Courage	Human Resources
Accountability	CIA	Policy
shared	Learning	Change Agent
Expertise	Smart	Human Relations
Patience	Instructional Management	Management

Traits Mentioned 2 Times In the Literature (continued)

Labor Relations	Discipline	Proactive
School	People Skills	Organizational Systems
Good Character	Supported	Holding
Power	Organization	Curriculum and Instruction
Technology	Influence	Modesty
Compassion		

Traits Mentioned 1 Time In the Literature

Range of Interests	Purpose	Settings
Wisdom	Demanding	Capacity knowledge
Success in previous positions	Willing to Venture in New Directions	Result-Oriented
Capacity to Improvise	Good Physical health	On Purpose
Athletic Accomplishments	Symbolic Leadership	Flexible
Kind	Protects instructional time	Loyalty
Recognizes Stress	Faith	Provides direction for improvement
Guides Improvement processes	Recognize Success	Facts
Energy Drive	Use of resources	Organizational Ability
Praise Employees	Planning	Qualities
Breadth	District goals	Dignity
Conflict Resolution	Student Centered	Sense of Purpose
Commitment to Achievement	Construction	Puts People First
Systems Learn	Student Success	Climate
Manage Parental and Community Concerns	Promotes Innovation	Contributions
Healer	Legislate Outcomes	Strategies To Address Regional Needs
Systems Leadership	Character	Organizational Development
Desire to Excel	Principalship	Product Evaluation
Moral Code	Proactive	Information Collection

Traits Mentioned 1 Time In the Literature (continued)

Personable	Charisma	Disposition
Student Guidance	Individualism	Transparency Rules
Shaped by the school	Recognition	Scholarship
Beliefs and Values	Selflessness	Fosters Personal Preferences
Heterogeneous	School Relations	Honor
Data Collection/Analysis	Positive Attitude	Inspirational Leadership
Student Development	Inspiration	Strategies For Participative Design Solutions
Responds Proactively	Common Vision	Educational
Managerial Skills	Beliefs values norms	Building Trust
Turn Setbacks and Failures to Advantage	Budget	Advising the board
Synergize	Analytical Leaders	Stewardship
Persuasion	Organization	Defined autonomy
Energize	Marketing Strategies	Willful
Creativity	Social Attractiveness	Establish Vision
Enterprise	Emotiveness	Sustaining School Culture
Enable others	Collective Bargaining Skills	Educated
Interpersonal Communication	Situational Resources	Instructional change
Principles	Change Catalyst	Advocate for Education and Students
Efficacy	Relationship Skills	Intrapersonal Intelligence
Caring	Individuals	Transformational Leadership
Originality	Technical Skills	Coherence
Enhancing people	Intellectual Stimulation	Oversees transitions
Organizational Skills	Compliance	Collaborative Leadership
Values of Leadership	Foresight	Resilience
Dignified	Staff Informed	Hard Work
Accountable	Awareness	Vision and Planning
Regarding	Maintainer of status quo	Reflective Leadership
Collective negotiations	Using Data	Managerial Leadership

Traits Mentioned 1 Time In the Literature (continued)

Expertness	Contingent Rewards	Realizing change cannot be mandated
Visible but Quiet	Looking	Educational Leadership
Persistent	Organizational Management	Respond to Needs
Modest	Good Emotional Health	Team Player
Monitoring	Informed Public	Sociable
Human Skills	Understanding Leadership	Plural Leadership
Distributed Models of Leadership	Measurement Strategies	Ideals
Financial	Executive Leadership	Board Alignment
Cooperation	Support District	Accountable for decision making
Sociability	Accept blame	Relationship Building
Engage others	Creating culture	Caring
Assessment Strategies	High Expectations	Passion
Organizational Adaption	Decision Makers	Develop action plans
Dedication	Long-Range Planning	Different perspectives
Mobility	Shared future	Effacing
Oversight	Organizational Dynamics	Client/Staff Advocate
Depth	Core Values	Facilities
Negotiation Skills	Budget Skills	Moral Purpose
Administration	Model	Conscientiousness
Healthy personal core	Persistence	Directing Personnel Operations
Engaged	Teamwork	Dependability
Cooperation	Understand School History	Student Needs
Management of Resources	Human Relation Skills	Self-Management
Competition	Accepting Responsibility	Security
Achievement Goals	Diagnostic Skills	Pieces
Ability to cope with change	Delegating	Student-Centered
Look inward	Budgeting	Existential Intelligence
Understanding Needs Of Organization	Focus	Strategists

Traits Mentioned 1 Time In the Literature (continued)

Political	Endurance	Willingness to Experiment
Belief System	Supervising Staff	Risk Taking
Team Building	Perseverance	Programs
Needs	Respond to Aspirations	Emotional Intelligence
Coordinated Distribution	Positive Working Climate	Create shared meaning
Affirmation	Selecting Staff	Techniques
Outreach	Restraint	Assertive Behavior
Understanding Change	Praises	Child Development
Reflect on Potential	Justice	Self Awareness
Shared Purpose	Rules	Honestly
Caring and Supportive	Developing Others	Centered on Students and Family
Sense of Belonging	Involvement	Powerful
Support Leadership	Personal Motivation	Make decisions
Organizational Awareness	Ability	Makes Hard Decisions
Prevails	Data Analysis	Working Relationship
Serving	Leadership for change	Student Orientated
Delegator	Instruction/Learning	Social Awareness
Capacity	Personal Evaluation	Safe Learning Environment
Instinct	Versatile Leadership	Big Picture Leadership Plus
PLCs	Perspectives	Avoid promoting people out of their are as of strength
Humanitarianism	Experienced	Input
Collectivism	Implementation	Self-reflective
Systems Theory	Interpersonal Intelligence	Problem Solver/Reactor
Statesmanship	Shapes School	Educational Values
Good Fit	Organizational	Delegating Authority
Accessing outside resources	Developing Relationships with Diverse People	Seeing problems as opportunities
Improvises	Personal Accountability	Protect staff from distractions
Situational Leadership	Embrace change	Empowerment

Traits Mentioned 1 Time In the Literature (continued)

Service Orientation	Stable Expectations	Compassionate
Human Resource	Instruction	Adaptive Capacity
Willing to Learn	Alertness	Compromise
Bond Issues	Shared Power	Self-Effacing
Data	Works well With Other People	High standards
Facility Development	Promote Morale	Employee Collaboration
Strong Moral Compass	Witty	Commitment to enacting justice
Adapt	Positive Direction	Motivates
Collective Distribution	Reflect	Focus training on Building Identified Strengths
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	Activity	Improving Social Justice
Stress Tolerance	Board Advisor	Need for Achievement
Situational Awareness	Awareness of School Laws	Relates
Service with Humility	Reward Success	Competitiveness
Board Relationships	Relationship Management	Tenacity
Popularity	Future Leader	Mentoring
Attitude	Change conditions	Organizational Politics
Productive	Respects Authority of Others	Surrounding themselves with the right people
Expectational Results	Self-Motivation	Conversation
Cognitive Skills	Healing	Humble
Self	Collaboration	Increase Student Achievement
Sustainable Leadership	Move Patiently	Encourage the Heart
Writes well	Hiring	Willing to Seize New Opportunities
Data Driven	Challenge the Process	Versatility
Together	Interpersonal Sensitivity	Instructional Goals
Evaluation	Make a Difference	Aggressiveness
Resource Management	Equity	Transactional Leadership

Traits Mentioned 1 Time In the Literature (continued)

High Standards	Social Architects	Advocacy for Staff and Students
Personal Commitment	Succession Plan	Establishing Routines and Operating Procedures
Comfort with Issues of Race	Take action	Assessment
Shared Leadership	Academic Accountability	Collaborative Distribution
Mobilizes Community Resources	Building Manager	Informed
Collective	Oral and Nonverbal Expression	Spirit
Process Evaluation	Puts organization before themselves	Resourcefulness
Conceptualization	Accept Feedback	Personal
Building Construction	Achievement	Fearless
Quiet	Sense of Calling	Mold Organization
Optimizer	Students	Deliberate Action
Imagination	Information Brokers	Licensure
Shared Decision Making	Shape Mission	Order
Symbol	Vision	Optimism
Willing to Listen	Aspirations	Assertiveness
Presenting Data	Role Model	Oversees change
Governance	Establish standards	Change System
Clarity of Vision	Conflict	Public Speaking
Experiment	Understanding District	Relational Leadership
Measurement and Evaluation	Consensus Building	

Appendix M
Traits From the Brochures (Clustered)**

Accountability-
Advocate- for district
Approachable
Approachable
Approachable
Approachable
Approachable- easily connects
Approachable-open door policy
Approachable-accessible
Approachable-personable
Board of education- keep informed
Board- understands relations
Board-capacity to build trust
Budget- ability
Budget- knowledge of
Budget- manage long-term/ short-term
Budget- Understands
Business office -
Business office- ability to grow
Business office- ability
Business office- experience in
Business office- experience in
Business office- knowledge of
Business office- ability
Business office- recognizes value of
Business office- knowledge of
Business office- understanding
Business office- working knowledge
Business office-mgmt
Certified-
Certified-
Certified-
Certified-
Certified-
Certified-
Certified-
Climate- supportive
Collaboration
Collaboration - good team leader
Collaboration leadership style
Collaboration-team leader-
Collaboration-team work-
Collaboration-teamwork
Collaboration-teamwork-
Collaboration-teamwork-
Collaboration-teamwork- innovative partnerships

Collaboration-teamwork-consensus building
Collaborative
Comfortable superintendency
Commitment- long term
Commitment-loyalty
Committed to involvement of others
Communication- communicates well
Communication- dynamic communicator
Communication- effective communicator
Communication- effective communicator
Communication-articulate
Communication- collaborative leadership style
Communication- articulate
Community- involve and influence
Community- appreciation of
Community- appreciation of
Community- appreciation for
Community- school as center of
Community- compassionate to the views of
Community- active in school events
Community- fit into culture of
Community- dedicated
Community- show interest in
Community- have respect
Community- informs and engages
Community- interest in
Community- engage and energize
Community- positively engages and unifies
Community- unifies
Community- strong commitment to
Community- values
Community- values the qualities of
Community- visible in
Community- diverse needs
Community-commitment to
Confident
Conscientiousness
Consistency
Contract negotiations- ability
Contract negotiations- strength
Contract negotiations- knowledge and skill in
Contract negotiations-knowledgeable about
Creative
Creative thinker
Creative-innovative
Critical thinking- create opportunities
Curriculum- understanding of ,
Curriculum- demonstrated ability in
Curriculum- strong skills

Curriculum- Understanding of
Curriculum- Understanding of
Curriculum-21st century- Understanding of skills
Decisive
Decisive-ability to delegate
Decisive-ability to identify problems
Decisive-ability to make decisions
Decisive- ability
Decisive-proactive
Decisive-problem solver
Decisive-problem solving-
Delegates authority
Diversity- appreciates and champions
Diversity- be sensitive to
Diversity- foster
Diversity- values
Empathy
Engaging
Enthusiasm- about achievements
Enthusiastic
Expectations- values diversity, accountability, high expectations and creative problem solving
Experience leading and organization according to its mission and strategic plan
Experience motivating and inspiring staff and students to assume leadership roles
Experience- administrative experience with building responsibilities and or experience appropriate to central office duties
Experience- at least 5 years of successful teaching experience
Experience- demonstrated success in urban education
Experience- experience in administration
Experience- experience in the classroom
Experience- have building level and or central office admin experience,
Experience- have significant leadership experience in a complex educational setting
Experience-proven record of accomplishments
Extracurricular- recognize the importance of extracurricular programs including interschool sports
Fairness
Goals- possess outstanding interpersonal skills that will inspire support for district goals
Good health
Honest
Honest-straightforward
Honesty
Inspirational- instills confidence and inspires faculty, staff and students to succeed
Inspirational- provide inspirational leadership
Inspires-instills confidence- instills confidence and inspires faculty, staff and students to succeed
Integrity
Integrity
Integrity
Integrity
Integrity-ethics- possess the highest standards of ethics and integrity

Integrity-possess highest standards of ethics and integrity

Intellectual curiosity

Interpersonal skills- excellent interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills- outstanding interpersonal skills that engage and energize the school community in support of district goals

Interpersonal- excellent interpersonal skills

Interpersonal- possess outstanding interpersonal skills that will inspire support for district goals

Interpersonal-excellent interpersonal and motivational skills

Knowledge-possess a strong understanding of the teaching learning process k-12

Knowledgeable/exp educator-able to provide leadership for change continued excel in education while respecting culture

Knowledgeable

Knowledgeable

Knowledgeable about instructional support services, enrichment and remedial programs and sped

Knowledgeable- best practices- working knowledge of best practice, NYS standards and State education laws

Knowledgeable-program evaluation- Understanding of standards, curriculum renewal, instruction of 21st century skills, program evaluation and student assessment

Listening skills- good listener

Long term planning- provide continuity, stability, and longevity in carry forth strategic plan and master site plan

Long term planning- take the lead in developing a long-term educational plan to prioritize and achieve these goals at a realistic pace

Makes well-reasoned and informed decisions and stands behind them

Motivate staff, students, parents and guardians and community members.

Resources- able to manage district resources while ensuring all basic educational needs of students are met

Resources- manage long-term/ short-term budget planning to protect & grow educational program & guard assets of the community

Resources- use of resources- improve the appearance and educational usefulness of our school building

Staff development- committed to staff development, evaluation and instructional improvement

Staff evaluation- committed to staff development, evaluation and instructional improvement

Staff evaluation- record of strength in personnel functions- mgmt and supervision- recruitment, retention, evaluation, collective bargaining

Staff evaluation- Teacher evaluation- have proven experience in evaluation process to promote professional growth and performance

Staff management and supervision- record of strength in personnel functions- mgmt and supervision- recruitment, retention, evaluation, collective bargaining

Staff recruitment- record of strength in personnel functions- mgmt and supervision- recruitment, retention, evaluation, collective bargaining

Staff recruitment- effective practices for hiring the most qualified candidates

Staff recruitment- teacher recruitment- attract and retain a strong and committed teaching and administrative team

Staff retention- record of strength in personnel functions- mgmt and supervision- recruitment, retention, evaluation, collective bargaining

Staff retention- teacher retention- attract and retain a strong and committed teaching and administrative team

Standards- broad understanding of the curriculum process, NYS standards, experience in

curriculum development,
 Standards- Understanding of standards, curriculum renewal, instruction of 21st century skills, program evaluation and student assessment
 Standards- working knowledge of best practices, NYS standards and State education laws
 State education laws- working knowledge of best practice, NYS standards and State education laws
 Strategic thinking
 Strong commitment to outreach
 Strong educational leader capable of standing up for his or her beliefs and convictions
 Student achievement- commit to maintain quality programs that challenge students w/ diverse abilities& interests to meet standards
 Student achievement- ability to lead and motivate staff and students to higher level of achievement
 Student achievement- able to balance student achievement with educating the whole child
 Student achievement- advocate for the learner
 Student achievement- committed for fostering new partnerships to support student achievement
 Student achievement- demonstrated record of success in improvement of student performance
 Student achievement- demonstrated experience closing the achievement gap and using data to drive decisions
 Student achievement- increase emphasis on engaging students in their education
 Student achievement- instruction- committed to staff development, evaluation and instructional improvement
 Student achievement- proven experience in leading data-driven analysis of student performance to guide professional development
 Student achievement- puts students first
 Student achievement- Understanding of
 Student achievement-commitment to
 Student achievement-committed to
 Student achievement-expand I opportunities
 Student achievement committed to
 Student achievement- emphasizes
 Student achievement- child centered
 Student achievement- puts students first
 Successful relations
 Technology- familiar with
 Technology- and literacy
 Technology- strengthen and expand
 Technology- understand use of
 Technology- understanding benefits of
 Technology- can strengthen
 Trust
 Trust-credibility
 Trust-credible
 Trustworthy
 Understanding of crisis management
 Understanding of human resources
 Visible
 Visible
 Visible- in the schools and community

Vision for the future

Vision- and a plan

Vision- ability to construct and share

Vision- forward thinking

Vision- informs all

Vision- clear vision

Visionary

** These traits were modified from original wording

Appendix N
Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board Approval

<p>Subject : IRB Approval 09 10 052 Date : Tue, Dec 01, 2009 09:41 PM EST From : Institutional Review Board Email To : Sage IRB, Sally Sharkey, Ann Myers</p>

Your IRB project has been approved. You may begin now. A letter will follow.

You must complete the study following the procedures that have been approved. Any changes in procedures must be approved by the IRB in writing before you carry them out.

Be sure you follow all procedures required at the completion of the project. Notify the IRB if you discontinue the project. Notify the IRB if any human subject issues arise during the study. If the letter of approval indicates that you must file a final report or an annual report, please do so following our instructions in our document: How to Apply for a Project Review. The form for those reports is on our website.

Good Luck

Appendix O
 Traits From the Search Brochures Prioritized by Board Members

Traits	Number of Board Members Who Rated the Trait as:											Total
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th +	
Communication	8	8	6	5	5	2	1	2	3			40
Advocacy	1				1							2
Business office	2	1	2	3		3					2	13
Certified	1				2	1	2			1	7	14
Collaboration	3	1	2				1					7
Community	1	1	3	2	3	1	3				2	16
Credibility	2	1										3
Delegates	1						2	1			1	5
Diversity	1				1	2	2	3			1	10
Environment	1											1
Experience	1	2	1	1	1							6
Inspirational	1		1									2
Instructional support services	1											1
Integrity	8	3	1	3	2							17
Knowledgeable	3					1						4
Leadership	1	1	1	2	1						1	7
Mission	1				1		1					3
Planning	1			1		1	1	1		1		6
Recruitment	1		1			1				2	1	6
Students	3	5	6	2	1	1	1	2	1	2		24
Vision	3		4	1	1							9
21st century		2	1	1								9
Assessment		1										1
Critical thinking		1										1
Curriculum		4	3	2	1		1					11
Decision making		4	1	1			1		3			10
Evaluation		1	1	1								3
Goals		4										4
Instills confidence		1			1				2			4
Standards		2	1	1			1					5

Traits	Number of Board Members Who Rated the Trait as:											Total
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th +	
Board			1	1			1				1	4
Budget			1	3		4	2				1	11
Climate			2									2
Creative thinking			1							1		2
Crisis management			1	1			1					3
Education law			2									2
Empathy			1									2
Human resources			1	1			1					3
Problem solver			1								1	2
Professional development	1	2	1	2	1	1						8
Programs			2	1	1							4
Team			1	1	2		2					6
Visible			4	1		3	2			2		12
Committed				1		1	1	2				5
Facilities				1		1						2
Motivates				3			1	2			1	7
Priority for success				1	3							4
Values rural				1	3							4
Health				1								1
Innovative				1								1
Outside partnerships				1								1
Technology					2	1	1		1			5
Contract negotiation						1						1
Management						1			1			2
Strategic						1						1
Unify						1		2	1			4
Culture							1					1
Improvement- district								1				1
Accountability											1	1
Data											1	1
TOTAL	46	45	54	47	33	28	30	16	12	8	21	