

**AN EXAMINATION INTO THE PERCEPTIONS AND LEADERSHIP ACTIONS OF
SUPERINTENDENTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY TO SUPPORT TRANSGENDER
STUDENTS**

A Doctoral Research Project

Presented to

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**In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
In Educational Leadership**

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ABSTRACT

Transgender students have become more visible within school systems and are often the subject of harassment and bullying because of their gender expression. According to Kosciw et al. (2014), 55.2% of LGBT students experienced harassment because of their gender expression (p. xvii). Superintendents of school districts have the leadership power to implement policy that could ensure a safe environment for transgender students, as evidenced in Kennedy (2016). That being stated, an examination was conducted into currently state of the K-12 school system with regard to transgender students. The population for this study comprised all superintendents throughout New York State, excluding those superintendents in New York City.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the perceptions of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how their perceptions impact the implementation of policies for transgender students within the K-12 school systems in New York State. This quantitative design study examined these questions through the conceptual framework of Bolman and Deal's Four Leaderships Frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013) by utilizing a survey to assess the perceptions of superintendents and how their perceptions related to decision-making regarding the implementation of the policies that provide support to transgender students.

The findings in this study indicate that while superintendents believe they understand the needs of transgender students, there is a misunderstanding of the actual characteristics of transgender students. Findings also indicate that less than half of superintendents currently have a policy for transgender students. In addition, superintendents are those who most often initiate discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students.

Keywords: Transgender students, Superintendents, Inclusive Schools, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students, Mental health and Transgender, Harassment, and Bullying of Transgender Students

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Chapter One Introduction

Background and Overview of the Study

Educators have begun to combat harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students and to move toward inclusive practices in public schools (Talburt, 2004). Nevertheless, research shows that LGBT students face a great deal of challenges within K-12 school systems. These challenges include bullying, harassment, homophobia, and mental and physical abuse (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Correa, 2009; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2014). Homophobia can be defined as an “irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination” against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals (Homophobia, 2016). Researchers point out that physical and emotional turmoil increase the percentage of LGBT students who become disengaged from the school environment (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014). Harassment and abuse of these individuals come from all directions: from their peers as well as their educators, all of whom may contribute to the problem (Kosciw et al., 2014).

In addition to these challenges, this community of young learners also faces mental health concerns. Sometimes these concerns are a result of the challenges they experience within K-12 school systems. Mental health concerns are dramatically increased for the LGBT community because of the harassment and bullying that occur in schools. Johnson and Amella (2014) explain that LGBT students are two to seven times more likely to contemplate or attempt suicide. Due to the harassment, bullying, homophobia, and mental and physical abuse they experience, LGBT students are at risk of more mental health illnesses than their peers, based on both the increase of peer rejection as well as their victimization and harassment (Correa, 2009; Johnson &

Amella, 2014; Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2011). In addition, researchers concluded that isolation is another mental health concern for transgender students that results from prolonged harassment and bullying within the school setting (Higa, et. al, 2014).

While preliminary attention has been given to their unique needs, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students often remain invisible in the mainstream (Connolly, 2017). However, transgender students have recently been a focus in the United States. This focus is timely as it is estimated that at least one percent of the population is transsexual and approximately two to five percent of the population experience gender dysphoria and, therefore, fit under the umbrella of transgender (Peterson, 2013).

Some of the attention given to the transgender population stems from the recent controversy over the use of gender specific bathrooms (Phillips, 2016). Research shows that the conversation surrounding bathroom usage is only one visible manifestation of equity and access for transgender (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012). Some would argue that this attention is necessary to transgender students gaining equal access and opportunity (Westrick & Lower, 2016). However, bathroom use for transgender youth is only one component of a much larger and more complex problem: These students often go without appropriate support, causing them to disengage and ultimately leave school because of fear and an overall lack of inclusive supports (Westrick & Lower, 2016).

Research also shows that a school climate and culture free of bullying and harassment is the right of every student within the United States, guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012) Creating an inclusive learning environment is essential to providing transgender youth with equity and access to education (Sears, 2005). School district leaders, specifically superintendents, have the positional authority and opportunity to implement policy

which outlines the expectation that schools provide transgender students with access to safe and inclusive learning environments (Gabbard, 2012). A superintendent's ability to implement policy is one key component of progress toward a learning environment that allows all students, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identification, to have an opportunity to receive an education in a safe space where they are respected as individuals without fear of harassment or abuse (Carol, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Based on a review of the literature, it is clear that many students are currently attending schools that do not have policies addressing inclusivity in reference to transgender students (Kosciw et al., 2014). Given the current conditions and experiences transgender students face, these policies are essential to improving the quality of life for students within school districts across New York State (Kosciw et al., 2014). Students who experience lower levels of victimization are less likely to exhibit health risks; evidenced by a study which indicates that less than 25% of students who experienced bullying attempted suicide (Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2011). However, high levels of victimization were linked to high levels of health risks in a study that considered the effects of harassment and bullying on LGBT students (Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2011). Russell's study makes the case for the importance of creating an inclusive learning environment for transgender students. Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez (2011) explain that boys who were harassed based on their sexual orientation experienced greater psychological harm than those harassed due to other reasons. Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez (2011) further indicate that research shows that "rates of compromised school grades and attendance, depression, and substance use was

higher for students who had been bullied at school because of their race, sexual orientation, or ‘because someone thought they were’” (p. 224). Additionally, Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez (2011) share research that suggests that LGBT boys are at greater risk than those who do not identify as LGBT because of societal expectations of masculinity and homophobia. This research validates previous studies (Peterson, 2013) that indicate LGBT students are 5.6 times more likely to suffer from clinical depression and suicide ideations due to school victimization.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the perceptions of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how their perceptions impact the implementation of policies for transgender students within the K-12 school systems in New York State. This quantitative design study examined these questions through the conceptual framework of Bolman and Deal’s Four Leaderships Frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013) by utilizing a survey to assess the perceptions of superintendents and how their perceptions related to decision-making regarding the implementation of the policies that provide support to transgender students.

The independent variable in this research was the superintendent’s perception of transgender students, while the dependent variable was the actions taken by the superintendent to implement policy for transgender students. The unit of analysis was the superintendent, which included superintendents across New York State, except those working within New York City. The research analyzed the relationship between the two variables.

Research Questions

This study was designed to investigate the following research questions regarding the perceptions of superintendents and their action steps to implement policy related to transgender students:

1. What do superintendents in New York State know about transgender students?

- a. What are their perceptions about the definition of transgender students?
 - b. What are their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students?
2. Do superintendents in New York State implement specific policies for transgender students?
 - a. When implementing policies for transgender students, which leadership frame from Bolman and Deal's Four Frames (Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic) do superintendents operate within when taking action steps specific to transgender students.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Bolman and Deal's Four Frames to Leadership framework. Bolman and Deal (2008) outline four frames within which school leaders operate when making decisions while leading organizations. This framework is rooted in the idea that leaders navigate the complex world of leadership through a variety of avenues and perspectives. Each frame allows the leader to look at the world differently and ensures that he or she understands that each situation might require different approaches. The four frames outlined by Bolman and Deal (2008) are Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic. Each frame allows the leader to intentionally select a specific frame (or frames) through which he or she seeks to make decisions. Some leaders may focus their decision-making using only one of the frames while others use multiple frames to make strategic decisions.

Significance of the Study

Transgender youth, faculty, superintendents, policy-makers, and Boards of Education will greatly benefit from this research. There are currently no other studies that examine the perceptions of superintendents regarding transgender students and their implementation of policies related to transgender students. This study will address that gap by ascertaining those perceptions that superintendents possess regarding transgender students. In addition, it will examine the leadership frames utilized by the superintendents to make strategic decisions when implementing policy that is specific to transgender students within the K-12 system. Therefore, this research will inform school leaders and school districts how best to implement policy that will protect and ensure the rights of all transgender students.

Currently, there is a gap in the literature regarding the actions taken by superintendents to implement policy protecting transgender students' access to a safe and inclusive learning environment. More research is needed to ascertain the role of superintendents in implementing inclusive policies that address the needs of transgender students within the K-12 school system. In addition, there is a gap in the extant research that examines the perceptions of superintendents regarding transgender students and research related to identifying the supports that are available to the transgender youth within schools. Finally, there is a gap in research about the knowledge of superintendents and how that knowledge impacts the effective implementation of inclusive practices.

Definition of Terms

Transgender – This is an umbrella term that often is used to describe people who identify as the opposite gender from their assigned sex, a combination of both genders, or neither gender (Peterson, 2013).

Harassment – This is defined as repeated physical and mental attacks against a particular person (Merriam-Webster, 2016).

School Climate – School climate consists of the patterns of students', parents', and school personnel's experiences of school life, which, in turn, reflect norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Center, n.d.).

Assumptions.

Within this study several assumptions were made that impacted how the research was conducted. One assumption made was that when asked to self-select their answers, respondents would answer the questions honestly. However, because of the controversial nature of this study, respondents may have been inclined to select the “correct” answer instead of the honest one (Muijs, 2011). The researcher addressed this assumption of potential researcher bias by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality for all respondents who answered the survey. In addition, the participant notification of anonymity was included in the beginning of the survey under the terms and conditions. The research believed that respondents would take the survey once they were given assurance that their identity would be unknown.

Another assumption made by the researcher was that superintendents lacked awareness and understanding of transgender students and their needs and might find their attention drawn to other competing priorities within their respective school districts that they deemed needed more immediate attention. If superintendents do not believe that transgender students are a priority, they may not see the immediate need to facilitate the discussion regarding policy for transgender students or to implement policy to safeguard transgender students from harassment or bullying.

The researcher distributed the survey three times to provide superintendents multiple opportunities to complete it.

Limitations of the Study.

Limitations are considered the aspects of the study that may have an impact on the findings of the research (Muijs, 2011). Superintendents have the power to implement policy within a school district (Kennedy, 2016). That being stated, one limitation of this study may be superintendents' belief systems regarding transgender students and how their personal moral codes impact the implementation of policy for transgender students. This can be viewed as a limitation because superintendents maybe reluctant to implement policy if they feel being transgender is morally wrong. That belief may impact their implementation of policy. This view may limit how honestly superintendents answer the questions regarding needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students. Despite this possibility, the researcher strongly believes that superintendents would honestly answer the survey questions because of the anonymity and confidentiality that is clearly outlined in the beginning of the survey. Further research could be conducted to ascertain the moral beliefs of superintendents and how their belief system may impact the execution of their job when relating to controversial or complex issues.

Another limitation of this study is the response rate of the participants which may be related to the limitation just described. Of the 728 surveys distributed, only 16% of superintendents completed the survey in its entirety. A higher response rate may have yielded a more representative sample, impacting the results of this research.

In addition, another limitation of the student is utilization of a survey. It is difficult to gain a deeper understanding of why superintendents do what they do in relation to transgender

students. The survey that was administered allows the researcher to gain a wide understanding of perceptions of superintendents but interviewing the superintendents would have allowed the researcher to ask more probing questions to gain a better awareness of superintendents perceptions of transgender students.

Delimitations of the Study This study was conducted throughout New York State. Participants included all superintendents in New York State except those within New York City. Data was collected through surveys that were distributed to those superintendents, and each participant received the same survey. Data was collected and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics from January 2016 to May 2017. Because superintendents are the district leaders with the authority to implement policy within the K-12 school district (Kennedy, 2016), this study was limited to superintendents and does not include data from assistant superintendents.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction and the purpose of the study. The second chapter reviews the literature, outlining the current research that undergirds the research questions. The third chapter details the research methodology and the data collection process. The fourth chapter includes the analysis of the data. The fifth chapter reports the findings, details the recommendations, and concludes the study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to transgender students and the current policies created and implemented to safeguard them. In addition, the researcher reviewed literature pertaining to the climate of schools throughout New York State as well as the leadership actions taken by superintendents to implement policies that provide a safe learning environment for transgender students (Kosciw et al., 2014).

This chapter is organized into three sections that examine the historical perspective of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students. Also included is a review of litigation that has played a role in creating safe schools for LGBT students. Section one specifically examines the historical perspective of litigation and legislation relating to transgender students. Section two is a review of the literature relating to the impact of harassment and mental health on transgender students. In addition, section two reviews the current literature specific to harassment and bullying within the K-12 school system within New York State is outlined. Section three explores the Four Frames model created by Bolman and Deal (2013), in which they posit that leaders navigate through different leadership frames specific to management, power, and authority.

The purpose of this study was to examine superintendents' perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students and how those perceptions impact their actions to implement policies for transgender students within the K-12 school districts of New York State. This quantitative design study utilizes the conceptual framework of Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Leaderships Frames through the use of surveys to assess those perceptions of

superintendents and how their knowledge relates to decision-making regarding the implementation of policy to support transgender students.

Sexual Minority Youth

Students who identify as transgender face many challenges within school districts throughout New York State as well as in society at large. One of these challenges is labels or the understanding of the definition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, or gender non-conforming fit underneath the umbrella of sexual minority youth. However, some believe this term is too general to accurately depict and inclusively capture the different areas of sexual and gender expression (Peterson, 2013; Singh, Hays, & Watson, 2011; Stieglitz, 2010). Gender expression differs from gender identity in that it refers to the behaviors that an individual demonstrates to show their gender (Rands, 2009).

Transgender students identify with a gender that is different from their gender assigned at birth (Singh et al., 2011). Students who identify as gender non-conforming exercise great fluidity between male and female gender norms (California School Boards Association, 2012). Individuals who are transgendered sometimes experience gender dysphoria, meaning they feel a “misalignment between the psychological and emotional identity and their physical identity” (Yarhouse, 2015, p. 19). The term gender dysphoria was originally referred to as gender identity disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV). According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), gender dysphoria is described as “a marked difference between the individuals expressed/experienced gender and the gender others would assign him or her, and it must continue for at least six months” (p. 1). Children as young as three years old can exhibit symptoms of gender confusion, but it is not until age 10 that

children typically begin to receive treatment for gender dysphoria (Nicholson & McGuinness, 2014). These feelings can lead to confusion and, in some instances, emotional and mental instability in children (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2007).

Schools within the United States are currently struggling to put supports in place as a result of the growing number of students who are coming forward as transgender and gender non-conforming (Johnson & Amella, 2014). Johnson and Amella (2014) explain that understanding the needs and rights of transgender students is essential in creating a system that will provide them with the appropriate supports to ensure that they receive a free and appropriate education. In some districts, systems are already in place to support all students, including those who exhibit all types of gender identity. In these districts, those previous efforts have alleviated the need to rapidly create systems to ensure a safe learning environment after students are exposed to harassment and bullying (Cosgrove, 2015).

Individuals who share a different gender identity often face ridicule and are susceptible to becoming victims of physical and verbal harassment (California School Boards Association, 2012; Stieglitz, 2010). According to Stieglitz (2013), "The stigma they face because of different gender identity expression places them at risk for becoming victims of discrimination, verbal harassment, and physical violence" (p. 1). In the United States, there is much misinformation and misunderstanding surrounding the transgender community, which leads to transphobia, defined as anxiety, fear, hate, expressed towards people who identify as transgender (Singh et al., 2011).

LGBT legislation. While there are currently laws in place that broadly protect students from bullying within New York State, there are no laws that address the specific challenges transgender students face from harassment and bullying. The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) (New York Education Department, 2012) mandates state protection from bullying and

harassment for all students (Cosgrove, 2015). DASA sets forth assurances that every student, irrespective of race, ethnic group, national origin, color, religion, religious practice, disability, gender, sexual orientation, sex, or weight, shall be protected from harassment and bullying within the school system (New York Education Department, 2012). Included in DASA are specific mandates that refer to the protocols and procedures for investigating and reporting incidents where harassment and bullying are confirmed (Cosgrove, 2015). Transgender students are generally included in these provisions because of their right to a safe learning environment.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has filed a lawsuit, *Nguon v. Wolf* (2007) and issued two demand letters *Laccone v. I.C Norcom High School* (2007), *Hollis F. Price Middle College High School*, on behalf of students throughout the country challenging past and current policies, practices, statutes, and laws that were discriminatory in nature toward transgender individuals. There have been several court cases specific to protecting and preserving the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community (Sun, 2008). This litigation situated the community closer to gaining rights that guarantee protection under the law. Many lawsuits, letters of demand, and complaints brought against various school districts throughout the country sought to advocate for basic rights that should be extended to all individuals as citizens within the United States. With each additional lawsuit the transgender community advanced their agenda to exercise their right to equal protection under the law.

In 2003, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit against Pulaski County Special School District in Arkansas on behalf of a student. The filed complaint resulted when a staff member disclosed the student's sexual orientation to his parents and referred to the gay student as "an abomination." The lawsuit cited that the district had violated the student's constitutional rights to free speech, liberty, equal protection, and privacy (Cianciotto & Cahill,

2012). Upon the conclusion of this litigation, the school district agreed to ensure confidentiality regarding gender orientation and identity, allow students to freely discuss issues of sexuality and gender identity, and ensure students do not face discrimination at the hands of staff members within the district based on their sexual orientation (American Civil Liberties Union, 2003).

Several other complaints, *Nguon v. Wolf* (2007), *Laccone v. I.C Norcom High School* (2007), and *Hollis F. Price Middle College High School* (2008), challenged the same principle based on the right to privacy as well as equal protection under the law. The complaints above challenged the law in relation to the rights of all LGBT students. While this research is specific to transgender students, these complaints bring attention to transgender student rights within school environments.

The ACLU also filed suit on behalf of a group of students in Kentucky, Florida, and Georgia because of the resistance in several school districts to the creation of a gay-straight alliance (American Civil Liberties Union, 2009). The outcome of this litigation was to mandate that the school districts treat all students equally, irrespective of differences, by allowing them all the right to establish student organizations within their school district (American Civil Liberties Union, 2005; American Civil Liberties Union, 2008).

In addition to litigation focused on equal rights for transgender youth, the ACLU also moved forward with a lawsuit, *Paramo v. Kern High School District* (2006), to defend the free speech of students in California who planned to publish a series of articles focused on the struggles of transgender students but were censored by their school district. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that all students have the right to free speech and expression (American Civil Liberties Union, 2006; American Civil Liberties Union, 2007; American Civil Liberties Union, 2008).

Two additional lawsuits, *McMillen v. Itawamba County School District* (American Civil Liberties Union, 2010) and *Sturgis v. Copiah County School District* (American Civil Liberties Union, 2011), also defended freedom of expression rights. In these cases, students were denied the right to wear the clothing of the opposite gender and were not permitted to attend their prom with a partner of the same sex. The courts ruled that the decisions made by the school district infringed on the rights of students and, therefore, were deemed illegal. As a result of *McMillen v. Itawamba County School District*, the school district enacted a policy that prohibited discrimination of students based on gender or sexual orientation (American Civil Liberties Union, 2010). Because of *Sturgis v. Copiah County School District*, the school district changed the policy surrounding the dress code for graduation, ultimately generalizing it a graduation robe.

Current policy guidance. Within the last two years, transgender students have become the center of the LGBT debate, which has drawn attention to the need to create appropriate supports for them within school districts throughout the country. In December 2014, the ACLU of Virginia filed a complaint with the Federal Government about a school district's policy that prohibited the use of bathrooms for transgender students. Included in this complaint was the language used by the district to require transgender students to use the bathroom of their gender assigned at birth. The ACLU argued that this new policy grossly infringed upon the rights of transgender students and interfered with them appropriately engaging in daily school activities (American Civil Liberties Union, 2014).

New York State took a forward moving approach in transgender rights in schools, in that the commissioner issued guidance to school districts across the state regarding inclusive practices for transgender students. In 2015, the New York State Department of Education released guidance regarding the treatment of transgender and gender non-conforming students

within the New York State K-12 school system (New York Education Department, 2015). This document was released to “help districts foster an educational environment safe and free from discrimination for transgender and gender nonconforming (GNC) students” (New York Education Department, 2015, p. 1). The document highlights expectations that students who are transgendered or gender non-conforming can attend schools free of bullying and harassment, as well as reaffirms those students’ right to privacy (New York Education Department, 2015).

The Department of Education and the Department of Justice issued two “Dear Colleague Letters” on Transgender Students under two different government administrations. One letter was issued under the Obama administration in 2016, and one was issued under the Trump administration in 2017. In 2016, the first “Dear Colleague Letter” from The United States Department of Education under President Obama, took a position on transgender rights by issuing guidelines to all school districts within the country. Based on numerous concerns brought forth by various agencies around the country highlighting the discrimination against transgender students, the “Dear Colleague Letter” on Transgender Students guidance document of May 2016 outlined the Federal Government’s expectations that policies and practices be inclusive (U.S Department Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Included in the guidance document was a reference to “Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and its implementing regulations prohibiting sex discrimination in educational programs and activities operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance” (U.S Department of Justice and U.S Department of Education, 2016, p.1). The Federal Government posited that transgender students were covered under the law because an individual’s gender identity is included under the term “sex.” The expectations set forth in the document explained that Title IX requires all school districts to adhere to the regulation by providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment

through taking appropriate action to stop all forms of harassment against transgender students. Under Title IX, school districts must also acknowledge students based on their identified gender regardless of what is documented in their school records.

Also included in the guidance document was the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), guaranteeing students their right to privacy under the law while allowing the dissemination of information to those parties within the school district with legitimate educational interest in the information (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This clause in the “Dear Colleague Letter” on Transgender Students allows for a school district to notify staff members of the gender identity of a student when necessary to ensure they are provided protections and supports within the school district. Additionally, school districts must permit transgender students to utilize the locker rooms, participate in sports teams, access overnight and other housing accommodations, and attend events as their identified gender (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The Federal Government’s guidance was met with additional litigation from districts across the country that did not want to adhere to the mandates set forth in the guidance document (Montgomery & Blinder, 2016). In some cases, the Alliance for Defending Freedom, a conservative non-profit organization, filed suit against school districts, citing that requiring students to adhere to the same-sex bathroom mandates infringed on the right to privacy of those students who were not transgender (Brotsky, 2016). The lawsuit further charged that Title IX supports the claims of the non-transgender students within the locker room based on their right to “bodily privacy,” hence subjecting them to harm by transgender students. Thirteen states in total took exception to the mandate and filed counter suits against the Federal Government, citing a

violation under the Administrative Procedures Act, which requires a notice and a comment period before setting the rule (Blad & Samuels, 2016).

North Carolina was one of the states that challenged the guidance provided by the government and passed a bill that was in direct conflict with mandates by the Federal Government (Lichtblau & Fausset, 2016). House Bill 2 (HB2) was signed into law in March of 2016 (Lichtblau & Fausset, 2016). The bill requires that individuals within the state use the bathroom of the gender assigned at birth and further prevents other municipalities from creating anti-discrimination policies (Lichtblau & Fausset, 2016; Phillips, 2016). This was in direct contradiction to the federal mandate issued in 2016. The state was accused of violating the civil rights of transgender students and strongly encouraged to repeal the bill in a directive issued in 2014 by Eric Holder, United States Attorney General, which directed that states include equal protection for gender identity under the civil rights law (Lichtblau & Fausset, 2016). Under the Obama administration, the Federal Government threatened to withhold federal funding from North Carolina and any other state that refused to abide by the guidelines.

During President Obama's tenure as President of the United States, *Texas v. The United States of America* (2016) was filed on behalf of those 13 states taking exception to directive from the Federal Government to "immediately allow students to use the bathrooms, locker rooms and showers of the student's choosing, or risk losing Title IX-linked funding" (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 3). Plaintiffs cited "that when Title IX was signed into law, neither Congress nor agency regulators and third parties 'believed that the law opened all bathrooms and other intimate facilities to members of both sexes'" (*Texas v. U.S.*, 2016). The court ruled in favor of Texas and a temporary injunction was granted.

In February 2017, the Department of Education and the Department of Justice under President Trump rescinded the guidance document originally issued by former President Obama in 2016 (Connolly, 2017). The new two-page “Dear Colleague Letter” document issued from the Federal Government (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2017) stated that “The prior guidance documents did not contain sufficient legal analysis or explain how the interpretation was consistent with the language of Title IX nor did they undergo any formal public process” (Connolly, 2017). The “Dear Colleague Letter” continued:

This interpretation has given rise to significant litigation regarding school restrooms and locker rooms. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit concluded that the term “sex” in the regulations is ambiguous and deferred to what the court characterized as the “novel” interpretation advanced in the guidance (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2017, p. 1).

However, transgender students are still broadly protected in New York State under the Dignity for All Students Act.

After the Department of Education and the Department of Justice, under the guidance of President Trump, rescinded the document issued under the Obama administration, the Education Commissioner in New York State affirmed New York State’s position regarding the protections in place for transgender and gender non-conforming students. This assurance came in the form of reiterating the current law in place within New York State called the Dignity for all Students Act passed in 2010 (Petro, 2017). While this act, as mentioned previously, outlines practices and procedures for investigating and addressing issues of bullying of protected groups, it does not address the issues of bathroom and locker room use, student privacy issues related to gender identity, or inclusion in school events (New York Education Department, 2012).

Conclusion. Historically, the LGBT community has been marginalized by mainstream society (Freyn, 2006). Within that context, the American Civil Liberties Union has worked on behalf of students throughout the United States to challenge school districts that violate LGBT rights. This litigation has resulted in school districts being forced to create and revise policies to be more inclusive of all students, including those who identify with a gender other than that which they were assigned at birth. In addition, the Federal Government has worked to ensure that transgender students get equal access to educational opportunities within the school setting. While the Federal Government has attempted to guide the actions of school districts around the country, some states have filed suit to counter their mandate. As mentioned above, based on the ruling in favor of Texas, coupled with the rescinded “Dear Colleague Letter,” the guidance issued in 2016 regarding bathroom and locker room usage is still being litigated in courts around the country. The recently released “Dear Colleague Letter” (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2017) has halted the movement to provide certain protections and opportunities to transgender students throughout the country (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Harassment of LGBT Students

The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students have been in the spotlight over the last ten years ((Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner, Thomas, & Neilands, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). Nevertheless, based on a review of the literature, much work still needs to be done to improve the protective supports within the school systems (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner, Thomas, & Neilands, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). LGBT students are harassed and

bullied within the K-12 school system and experience discrimination, sexual and physical harassment, bullying, and marginalization (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner et al., 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014).

The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) conducted a study that found that 74.1% of LGBT students within the United States experience verbal harassment at school because of their gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2014). In addition, over 50% of LGBT students reported hearing comments from their peers such as, “You’re a faggot, gay, dyke and that’s so gay” (Russell et al., 2011, p. 223). Russell et al. (2011) found that some students reported that they were called faggot, gay, or dyke because other students perceived they were homosexual or transgender. In some cases, research further reports that students recalled hearing approximately 25 anti-gay slurs per day while in school, but did not receive assistance from a staff member, suggesting that in some respects terms like gay or faggot have become normalized language (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014). In addition to being bullied at school, LGBT students are being bullied through social media platforms as well: “49% of students, experience harassment via Facebook, Twitter, etc.” (Kosciw et al., 2014, p. xvii).

Physical assault is another form of bullying that LGBT students experience in schools. Physical assault or harassment can be defined as “pushing, shoving, kicking, or punching” (Kosciw et al., 2014). According to Kosciw et al. (2014), and Greytak, Kosciw, and Diaz (2009), at least 28% of students report being physically assaulted at schools based on gender identity or sexual orientation. This form of physical assault results, in some cases, in the death of LGBT students (Henning-Stout, James, & Macintosh, 2000). At least 30% of LGBT students fear for their physical safety in school (Kosciw et al. (2014).

While most research examines harassment, and bullying of LGBT students within secondary school settings, harassment at the elementary level is also occurring more frequently than evidenced in previous years (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012). Research shows that students as young as those in third grade experience verbal or physical assault within school when perceived to be “gay” (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012).

Reporting of harassment and bullying. GLSEN released the School Climate Report (Kosciw et al., 2014) which stated that 56.7% of students who experience harassment do not feel comfortable reporting the incident to adults. Some students shared a belief that teachers and school staff would do nothing about the harassment that they witnessed (Kosciw et al., 2014). Most students who experience harassment and bullying do not report it because they feel that “school personnel would ineffectively address it and that the harassment would get much worse” (Kosciw et al., 2014, p. 28). Higa et al. (2014) share that “Youth discussed the inaction of school staff such as teachers and administrators who did not intervene when youth were being harassed as another negative aspect associated with school” (p. 677). Some literature supports Higa et al. by reporting examples of students experiencing harassment and not receiving assistance from teachers (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; see also Almeida et al., 2009). For example, Biegel and Kuehl (2010) cite a variety of court cases in which students were harassed but teachers and staff did nothing to help the student in distress.

Effects of harassment of bullying on LGBT students. The harassment of LGBT students and the lack of support received from students and adults, as evidenced above, influence the mental and emotional well-being of these students. Based on a review of the literature, LGBT students feel isolated by harassment and bullying and, in some regard, separate themselves from their peers to avoid ridicule while in school (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014;

Russell et al., 2008). Additionally, many students feel a need to hide their identity within the school environment. Therefore, the research discusses that one effect of harassment is that these experiences lead to LGBT students disengaging from their peers within the school system. One critical attribute that students must have in school is a safe environment. If students are not safe they are often unable to have positive experiences in school (Russell et al., 2008). GLSEN (Kosciw et al, 2014) further confirms that “a hostile school climate can impact an LGBT student’s ability to fully engage and participate with the school community” (p. 12).

According to Higa et al. (2014), “Youth reported negative factors that reflected feelings of social isolation and negative internalized feelings related to being gay” (p. 675). Johnson and Amella (2014) further discuss the link between emotional and cognitive isolation and students feeling a sense of victimization within the school community. One recent study by Johnson and Amella (2014) found that “for LGBT youth in today’s middle schools and high schools in the United States, being open about one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity can have negative effects regarding the peer-to-peer social environment of schools” (p.174). LGBT students not only feel victimized by isolation but also feel almost as unsafe in “gender segregated areas,” specifically bathroom and locker rooms (Almeida, et al., 2009; Kosciw et al., 2014). Feeling unsafe forces LGBT students to avoid extracurricular activities and some school events.

The literature describes another repercussion of this treatment: Students feel as if they are attending school in a hostile environment. According to the GLSEN report (Kosciw et al., 2014), LGBT students are often stigmatized based on their sexual orientation and gender identity and, in some cases, feel that they are in hostile environments: 55% of LGBT students feel unsafe at school due to their gender expression or sexual orientation (Kosciw et al., 2014). While LGBT

students experience harassment and bullying at high levels, transgender students experience even more (Kosciw et al., 2014).

Harassment of transgender youth. While transgender students' experiences have been captured by Kosciw et al. (2014), additional studies show that transgender students experience more harassment than lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. In addition to the experiences discussed above, more than two-thirds of transgender students reported suffering verbal harassment and 35% experienced physical assault (Almeida et al., 2009; Grant, Mollet, Tanis, Harrison, Herman, Keisling, 2011; Peterson, 2013). Rands (2009) shares that "The number of transgender people who participate in the education system is difficult to measure because the high level of societal transphobia ensures that many trans-gender individuals are not comfortable publicly acknowledging their identity" (p. 421). Research shows that students who fall outside the norm of heterosexuality can be subject to ridicule by some of their peers (Kosciw et al., 2014; Peterson, 2013). In several cases, transgender students have been murdered because of their gender expression (Singh & Burns, 2009; see also, Rands, 2009). Currently, many transgender students fear for their physical and emotional safety and disappear from the mainstream setting (Kosciw et al., 2014). While administrators of K-12 systems have worked to curb harassment and bullying, there is little information regarding their actual knowledge of transgender students' experiences within schools.

According to one study, some students recalled that after they came out and started to show their "newly identified gender, they began hearing threats toward their safety" (Grant et al., 2011, p.36).

Many transgender students have negative experiences within the school system in the United States and do not have the freedom to express their gender identity without retaliation.

“Prejudice and bias was evidenced as part of the reason for the harassment of transgender students while in school” (Russell et al., 2011, p. 224). Nearly one-third of transgender students (31%) have also experienced harassment at the hands of teachers and other staff members within the school system (Grant et al., 2011).

Absenteeism as an effect of harassment and bullying on the transgender student.

The impact of these experiences and harassment is manifested in a dropout rate of 15% among transgender students (Grant et al., 2011). In a study conducted by GLSEN (Kosciw et al., 2014), 59.7% of transgender students cited a “hostile or unsupportive school environment as one reason they do not plan to graduate” (p. 43). Transgender students leave school to avoid humiliation and isolation from their peers. It is widely known that students who feel unsafe are less likely to consistently attend school. In fact, 58.6% of all LGBT students surveyed missed classes more than once per month due to fear for their mental or physical safety (Kosciw et al., 2014). These high rates of absenteeism are the result of transgender students feeling isolated and unsupported while in the school environment (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2008; Maher, Zins, & Elias, 2006). Transgender students fear not only for their emotional safety but for their physical safety as well (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2008). However, as explained in the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), all students should feel safe at school and not have to worry about being chastised or ridiculed based on their gender identity (New York Education Department, 2012).

Mental health effects of harassment of bullying of transgender students. Transgender students also experience mental health issues which can be tied to harassment and bullying within the K-12 school system. Some effects of harassment besides high absenteeism include violent behavior, suicidal ideations, alcohol, and drug use, and deteriorating emotional health (Huebner et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2011; Zin, Elias, & Maher, 2011). A correlation was found

between transgender students who report poor health and an accompanying unsafe feeling in school due to their gender identity (Almeida et. al., 2009; Zin, Elias, & Maher, 2011). In fact, 32.7% of LGBT students stay home at least one day a week because they do not “feel well” as compared to 4.2% of heterosexual students (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010). The feelings of isolation, fear, and a general sense of existing in an unsafe environment result in transgender students dropping out of school or having high rates of absenteeism (Almeida et al., 2009).

In some cases, students exhibit anxiety and depression much later than the initial incidents of harassment. As noted earlier, 15% of students who identify as transgender drop out of school before finishing high school. Some students who are bullied in early childhood exhibit anxiety up to 10 or 15 years later (Kosciw et al., 2014; Peterson, 2013).

The rate of transgender students who attempt suicide is alarmingly high; they are 3 to 4 times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual students (Almeida et al., 2009; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Peterson, 2013). These students are identified as an at-risk population based on the percentage of students who are attempting suicide, and exhibiting depression and other mental health related illnesses based on their experiences within the K-12 school system (Almeida et al., 2009; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; D’Augelli et al., 2005; Grossman, D’Augelli, & Salter, 2006). Many transgender students are unable to withstand the harassment and resort to other activities to cope. Many of these activities include self-destructive behavior, including substance abuse, suicide, violence, and depression (D’Augelli et al., 2005). According to Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig (2005), there is a link between students who endure bullying and sexual harassment in school and an increased rate of psychosocial issues that include depression, and feeling less close to their mother and less companionship from their peers.

To conclude, there is research that links harassment to high levels of stress in transgender students. These heightened stress levels lead to emotional turmoil for many of these students (Almeida et al., 2009). Cianciotto and Cahill (2012) state that “Antigay harassment often manifests itself as sexual harassment; its victims can experience loss of appetite, loss of interest in school, nightmares, feelings of isolation from family and friends, and sadness, nervousness, and anger” (p. 2). In some cases, harassment can lead to suicide. Research indicates, “Of the transgender students who suffer harassment, assault, and/or leave school, 51% attempt suicide” (Grant et al., 2011).

Recommendations to support transgender students. Therefore, due to the gravity of the consequences if transgender students primarily experience harassment, it is essential that transgender students establish connections and receive emotional support from their peers, family, and friends. A study conducted by Lesser, Burt, and Gelnaw (2005) discusses the importance of family support in assisting LGBT students who experience harassment and bullying. In addition, Gay Straight Alliance organizations serve as a support system for LGBT students within the school system (Kosciw et al., 2014).

Almost all the transgender students who completed the GLSEN school climate survey shared that they can identify at least one supportive adult (Kosciw et al., 2014). This is important, as children, irrespective of age, understand and are aware when someone does not support them. They are aware that many staff, teachers, parents, and peers do not approve of their decisions, which results in their hesitation to share their emotions or feelings with others. Keeping their emotions hidden only makes a marginalized population more invisible in terms of what they need to feel supported within school and in their personal lives (Lesser et al., 2005). Having supportive people in their lives assists transgender students in coping with harassment.

Conclusion. From the recent research described above, LGB and transgender students within the United State are experiencing a great deal of harassment within schools. This reality creates significant implications for their academic, emotional, and physical well-being. Students who do not feel supported by staff within the school system isolate themselves from school activities. In addition, many feel unwanted by their peer groups and their families. Forced isolation causes emotional stress for students and possibly results in high levels of depression, substance abuse, and even attempted suicide. Superintendents can be change agents who are able to improve the landscapes of schools within New York State (Conley, Cooper, Bauer, Brazier, Glasman, Leach, Marinell, Orr, Peterson, Trachtman, & Pounder, 2010).

Leadership

Superintendents are charged with a variety of tasks and are challenged daily to make simple and complex decisions that impact students, parents, and staff on multiple levels. When making leadership decisions, Bolman and Deal (1997) contend that managers and leaders need to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity within organizations. In order for leaders to do so, they must understand the frames through which they make decisions. Conley et al., (2010) share that due to the ever-changing landscape of public education, superintendents are essential in moving their districts toward sustainable change. It is, therefore, critically important that superintendents are able to make strategic decisions about a variety of issues within the educational arena, implementing transformational change at various levels within their organizations (Conley, Cooper, & Bauer, 2010). For superintendents to be successful at navigating political and cultural issues, they must develop a complex decision-making skill set that they can access when making decisions while dealing with internal and external pressures (Conley, Cooper, & Bauer, 2010). Bolman and Deal's (2013) four frames describe how leaders

come to make complex decisions and the flexibility required when operating within one or more frame. Each frame focuses the leader's decision-making through a different lens when implementing initiatives or making decisions (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Bolman and Deal (1997) posit that leaders operate through four specific frames: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. A frame can be defined as the way in which a leader navigates a situation based on their values, beliefs, and assumptions (Bolman & Deal, 1997). These mental frames guide leaders' decision-making and help them navigate any situation using a specific set of tools. They further allow leaders to focus their decision-making by tackling a situation based on one or more assumptions or ideals. Each frame provides the leader with a different view of the same situation, and knowing the frames permits the leader to better understand the organization.

Bolman and Deal (1997) describe the need for great leaders to flexibly operate within one, some, or all the leadership frames to make decisions within organizations that they lead. The purpose of these mental maps is to make decision-making automatic because leaders need to process perceptual information and make important decisions quickly (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest that the quality of a leader's decision-making is based on his or her knowledge of the situation, the ability to navigate the issue, and ultimately how adeptly he or she can execute a change utilizing what is known. Leaders who are successful must make decisions that are flexible while adhering to their own strongly held principles (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest that leaders must be able to clearly articulate their vision and work toward cultivating support to move the mission and stakeholders forward. Asking "probing questions" allows the leader to understand each situation more deeply and make strategic decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Structural Frame. Structural leadership is one frame from the Four Frames Model. Structural leaders make decisions primarily on action plans that include clear structures for operation, a road map of individual responsibilities, and clear progress indicators (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The leadership characteristics of those operating within the structural frame include an ability to be organized with clear objectives, attention to detail, and an ability to examine how structure, environment, and strategy intermingle (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Structuralists are known for their ability to execute a plan. Structural leadership can be seen in the context of factories. Leadership in factories includes structure and organization and the leader is viewed as the catalyst or engineer implementing what must be done with great detail (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Structuralists are known for delegating to the right people in order to get the job done. In addition, structural leaders typically organize their workers into groups to accomplish the task at hand. Based on their style, leaders can organize these workers based on a variety of indicators, especially knowledge, skill, and time (Bolman & Deal, 2013). A structural analysis is guided by a series of questions that the leader must ask himself or herself to tackle the situation. Three questions that guide a structural analysis of any situation are:

1. What's going on? What's working or not working?
2. What's changing? (in your organization, your technology, or your environment) that creates an opportunity, a threat, or both?
3. What problem do you need to solve? What options should you consider? (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 32)

Each of the questions allows the leader to reflect on what must be done after gaining a big picture view of the organization. Furthermore, the leader strategically examines what must occur and creates an action plan to address the deficits within the organization.

Human Resources Frame. Leadership that utilizes the human resources frame attempts to create ideal working conditions that extend beyond productivity and procedures and instead nurtures high levels of achievement and fosters hard work and a higher level of dedication from its employees (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Bolman and Deal (2013) outline six principles that lead people through the human resource frame: develop a vision, include key stakeholders, gain buy-in, commit to the initiative, empower others to continue the change efforts, and be intentional about diversity (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Those who operate within the human resources frame realize the value in treating their workers with dignity and respect. Higher compensation, opportunities for employees to enhance their knowledge, and increased diversity are several ways of producing better working environments as well as building better businesses (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Developing a philosophy that adheres to a humanistic approach and exhibits belief in workers assists the leader in creating conditions that allow stakeholders to feel empowered and trusted in their roles within the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Hiring the right people is essential to creating an organization that has people who are capable of and competent to accomplish the tasks at hand and achieve the company's overall goals. Retaining good employees can be a challenge especially considering some of the demands placed on stakeholders by the organization, but retention can be enhanced. By rewarding and promoting deserving and dedicated employees, the leader can keep employees within the organization. The organization ultimately benefits from its investment by retaining these employees for long periods of time, which leads to stability and consistency (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Bolman and Deal (2013) assert that leaders operating within the human resources frame see the value in providing professional development opportunities to their workers. These opportunities ensure

that employees receive ample training to successfully and accurately carry out their job duties and help decrease errors within the organization.

The goal regarding empowering people emphasizes that, in some cases, focusing on a single agenda can be more effective than creating or implementing multiple initiatives (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Empowering people refers to the need to allow people within the organization to feel ownership in the work at hand and allows diverse thinking to permeate the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). In addition, it encourages group thinking, democracy, and collaboration. The human resources frame emphasizes the need to encourage and promote diversity within the organization, including gender and racial diversity. Diversity helps to build a foundation that brings a variety of thought and ideas to the forefront.

Political Frame. Leaders who utilize the political frame when making decisions operate from a specific standpoint as well. Those leaders recognize the political landscape when making decisions and understand the need to negotiate carefully through the issues at hand. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), each group has political overtones as they possess diverse ideals and beliefs and may not always have the necessary resources to impact the organization in the intended manner. For that reason, leaders must consider the variables involved in decision-making to come to an appropriate plan to navigate complex issues. Bolman and Deal (2013) assert that “Setting agendas, bargaining, and negotiating, mapping political terrain, and networking and forming coalitions” (p. 81) are four key skills required of leaders to successfully utilize the political frame. Setting an agenda assists the leader in focusing the work at hand and ensuring that he or she achieves the desired objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Mapping the terrain requires the leader to become familiar with the surroundings and become more knowledgeable about potential pitfalls and challenges before setting the project in motion

(Bolman & Deal, 1997). Building relationships is essential to gaining buy-in from stakeholders. Therefore, carefully selecting qualified people who can contribute to the team is a necessary component to building a coalition (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Compromise is also central to decision-making. A leader's ability to negotiate allows stakeholders to feel their needs have been met and is crucial when working in the political frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Symbolic Frame. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), symbolic leaders seek to create opportunities for stakeholders to arrive at meaningful outcomes as opposed to dictating what should occur in any situation. A leader who operates through the symbolic frame has the ability to paint a picture of the change they want to see using words and images (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The leader who works through the symbolic frame does so with great passion and faith (Bolman & Deal, 2013). This passion is evident in their decision-making and their sharing of ideas and vision for the desired initiative. Bolman and Deal (2013) posit that the symbolic leader exhibits great respect for the history of the organization and outwardly acknowledges and pays homage to this history. Symbolic leaders pride themselves on rolling up their sleeves and getting work done alongside those they are leading. Bolman and Deal (2013) state,

One powerful way in which a leader can interpret experience is by distilling and disseminating a persuasive and hopeful image of the future. A vision needs to address both the challenges of the present and the hopes and values of followers (p. 115).

While sharing their vision, they use stories to drive their point home and make connections for their constituents (Bolman & Deal, 2014). In some regard, symbolic leaders are considered the magician of the four frameworks. "Symbolic leaders infuse magic into organizations through their artistic focus on history, shared values, heroes, ritual, ceremony, and stories, and serve as icons who embody a group's values and spirit" (Bolman & Deal, 2014, p. 118).

Conclusion. The Four Frames framework (Bolman & Deal, 1997) assists leaders in making decisions by asking them to consider how to lead strategically and purposefully. Within each framework are key characteristics that require leaders to think of their intended outcome before utilizing any or all of the frames. By using key characteristics, the leader must have a clear picture of the work at hand to decide which framework will assist in implementing initiative or change within the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997). According to Bolman and Deal (2014), considering each frame is key when making leadership decisions, and so a leader must become fluid in the use of each framework. They emphasize that the influential leader can use one or more frame at any given time to implement complex change within any organization (Bolman & Deal, 2016).

Literature review conclusion

Based on a review of the literature there were many different forms of litigation filed against school districts throughout the United States. These complaints served to require school districts to address current policies, procedures, and practices that worked to marginalize the LGBT students. Additionally, this review of the literature exposes the level to which transgender student experience harassment within schools and how that harassment ultimately negatively impacts their mental well-being (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). This impact in some regard impacts the transgender student's ability to engage appropriately within the school environment. Finally, in this chapter, Bolman and Deal's (1997) serves to evidence the leader's ability to implement change utilizing a variety of perspectives. The literature indicates that the leader may make strategic decisions using one or more of the four frames to guide them.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines steps taken by the researcher and describes the research design, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data analysis, researcher bias, and data collection components of the study. The researcher conducted a study that explores a gap in the current literature regarding the implementation of policy for transgender students. According to a guidance document released by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice (2016), the current condition and state of transgender students' experiences in schools calls for policies to improve the quality of life for students in school districts across New York State.

Transgender students experience a great deal of harassment and abuse within school settings across the United States (Kosciw, Greytak, Neal, & Boesen, 2014). According to the 2013 School Climate Survey, "74.1% of LGBT students were verbally harassed in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 55.2% because of their gender expression" (Kosciw et al., 2014, p. xvii). Superintendents are in a central leadership position that may afford them opportunities to make changes that can impact transgender students within school districts. Kowalski, McCloud, Peterson, Young, and Ellerson (2010) state that superintendents, as the chief operating officers within school districts, are charged with leading reform. In turn, superintendents must be aware of the needs of the district and its students to create systemic reform (Fullen, 2006). The needs of the district inform what the superintendents should do to create opportunities for transgender students.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the perception of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how their perceptions impact the implementation

of policies for transgender students within the K-12 school systems in New York State. This quantitative design study examined these questions through the conceptual framework of Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Leaderships Frames by utilizing a survey to assess the perceptions of superintendents and how their perceptions related to decision-making regarding the implementation of the policy that provides support for transgender students.

Currently, there is a gap in research examining the perceptions of superintendents regarding transgender students and the actions they take to implement policy protecting transgender students' access to a safe learning environment.

Research Questions

1. What do Superintendents in New York State know about transgender students?
 - a. What are their perceptions about the definition of transgender students?
 - b. What are their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students?
2. Do Superintendents in New York State implement specific policies for transgender students?
 - a. When implementing policies for transgender students, which leadership frame from Bolman and Deal's Four Frames (Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic) do superintendents operate within when taking action steps specific to transgender students.

Research Design

The study was conducted utilizing a quantitative research design. Survey data was collected to test the hypothesis that there is a correlation between superintendents' perceptions of transgender students and their implementation of policy (Creswell, 2015; Muijs, 2011). Using

quantitative methods allowed the researcher to explain phenomenon by collecting and analyzing numerical data (Muijs, 2011). The phenomenon examined was the perceptions of superintendents and the relationship between their perception and ability to implement policy for transgender students.

The researcher designed and utilized a survey to capture a wide range of responses from the participants (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012). The researcher distributed the survey by email to ensure that a broad range of participants were reached, allowing for more valid results. The researcher ascertained beliefs, perceptions, and opinions of the survey participants by using a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey design provides the researcher with data that allows the researcher to describe a situation or phenomenon (Muijs, 2011). Therefore, the researcher could collect data that allowed for examination of the perceptions and beliefs of the participants (Vogt et al., 2012). The survey provided information relating to a population which would have been too large to observe directly or to interview.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population for this study comprised all superintendents (n=728) throughout New York State, excluding those superintendents in New York City. The purpose of this selection was to survey a wide array of superintendents from diverse settings to ensure a representative sample. To reduce sampling errors, the study included all superintendents within New York State, excluding NYC. The researcher chose to exclude superintendents from New York City because the superintendent as defined within this study does not fit the criteria for the superintendent defined by New York City. The major difference between the two is that superintendents within New York City do not report to a board of education. According to Carver (2006), “The governing board is as high in the formal structure as one can go. Its total authority is matched by

its total accountability for all activity” (p. 9). The researcher surveyed all superintendents because they are the leaders of school districts within New York State and ultimately have authority to implement policies approved by boards of education.

Instrumentation

The researcher created the survey tool used to conduct this study with the assistance of multiple research professors. The survey consisted of 17 questions and was created using Survey Monkey, an Internet based survey website (Survey Monkey, 2016). In addition, this tool was used to deliver the survey as well as collect data from the participants. A survey was the best method available to collect data from the large number of superintendents, irrespective of geographic location, because it provided an opportunity for them to answer the questions anonymously (Muijs, 2011).

The survey included three categories of questions (see Appendix C). The survey questions were created from the literature review which highlighted the need to ascertain superintendents’ understanding of the need for policy regarding transgender students. The first category of question asked superintendents about their perception of transgender students. The second category of question asked superintendents about their leadership decisions when implementing policy regarding transgender students. The third category asked questions to ascertain a relationship between the perceptions of superintendents and their action steps to implement policy for transgender students. The survey was constructed using Likert scale responses and multiple-choice questions to collect data on the knowledge and actions of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how this impacted the implementation of policies for transgender students. The survey included three Likert scale matrixes that include questions with answers ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree

(1), seven questions with answers choices “Yes,” “No,” or “Undecided,” and five multiple choice questions. All superintendents were notified that the survey was anonymous.

Two questions on the survey were demographic in nature and asked the participants to select their gender and race or ethnicity. Questions 4-6 asked for the participants to share their perceptions about the definition of transgender youth. Questions 10, and 12-15 asked the participants to share their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender youth. Questions 7-11, and 16 asked superintendents if they have implemented a policy for transgender students, as well as to elaborate why they did or did not do so. Questions 17 asked participants to identify which leadership frame, based on Bolman and Deal’s Four frames, they utilized to implement policy for transgender students. Included within the survey was an explanation of each of Bolman and Deal’s Four Frames to ensure understanding of each frame when making selections.

To reduce measurement error, the researcher piloted the survey with 10 professionals from the field of education on January 11, 2017. These professionals all had leadership positions in education and at least 10 years of experience in their respective fields. Then the pilot survey was distributed to 14 assistant superintendents within New York State. Each was asked to respond to the survey questions so data could be collected and analyzed for errors. Of the 14 surveys distributed, 12 were completed by the pilot participants. These participants provided feedback that was used to improve the overall accuracy of the survey instrument. One issue uncovered because of the pilot test was the construction of the logic questions. The questions were not appropriately placed within the survey, which disabled the logic question from triggering another question. The researcher corrected the issue within the survey before the initial

distribution of the survey was sent to superintendents. The survey was distributed to superintendents three times in total between January and March 2017.

Data Collection

The data was collected utilizing a survey and delivered electronically by email to the participants in January 2017. The researcher collected email addresses for all superintendents from the New York State Department of Education website. The survey data was collected and downloaded into a Software Package used for Statistical Analysis (SPSS) created by International Business Machines. All data collected was handled in a confidential manner and was stored in Survey Monkey, a password protected software system. The settings within Survey Monkey were set to anonymous and excluded all respondents' information.

Since the research study included human subjects, it required approval from the Sage College Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approval was given, the researcher administered the survey to human subjects following the guidelines outlined by the IRB. All participants agreed to the survey and provided informed consent at the beginning of the survey. Additionally, all participants were notified that there was no identifiable information gathered to guarantee their anonymity. All data that was collected will be kept for 3 years in a secure electronic file and will be erased upon completion of the three years. At the completion of the study, the researcher will purge the system of all data collected during the study.

Data Analysis

All data collected in Survey Monkey was analyzed using SPSS (2016), a statistical analysis software program. The analysis included finding the frequency for each question in the survey. As discussed above, descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to describe a situation or phenomenon and was used to uncover trends in the data (Muijs, 2011; Creswell, 2015).

The researcher collected and analyzed the data to ascertain similarities and differences in perceptions amongst the respondents. In addition, the researcher analyzed the data collected to uncover patterns in perceptions and beliefs among superintendents. The survey questions were analyzed in four groups and each group was matched to a research question. The statistical tests run on each set of questions analyzed the frequencies of responses related to specific variables. Mean, median, and mode were used to examine the frequency of responses.

The researcher ran frequency tests on all of the survey questions. To deepen the analysis, the researcher examined the measure of central tendency, specifically, mean, median, and mode was utilized to further disaggregate the data to show patterns and frequencies of responses (Muijs, 2011; Creswell, 2015). The researcher sought to understand if most respondents held any perceptions regarding transgender students.

Researcher Bias

The researcher hypothesized that there was a relationship between the perceptions of superintendents and the actions taken by superintendents to implement policy for transgender students. The researcher also hypothesized that superintendents had misperceptions regarding the vulnerability and needs of transgender students and therefore possibly neglected to include the needs of these young people in their policies on harassment. The researcher posited, based on experience as an administrator and working with students classified as at-risk, that there was a relationship between the perceptions of superintendents and their leadership actions to implement policy for transgender students. “At-risk” can be defined as students who are disengaged from the school community for a variety of reasons, including harassment or bullying. While the researcher worked diligently to ensure objectivity, bias may still be present in the study due to the knowledge of current harassment and bullying occurring within school

districts. In addition, the researcher has extensive history working within the field of education and notes that superintendents are in the position to implement needed change to the forefront based on their priorities. In addition, the researcher believed that there were significant social, community, and political barriers to creating and implementing policy for transgender students. However, to avoid bias, the survey questions created allowed the participants to self-select their answers. In addition, the questions were created and asked without bias. The survey was distributed anonymously to all participants and analyzed without bias.

Reliability

Assessing reliability is key when evaluating the measurement method. The goal of evaluating reliability is to ensure that the method selected measures what it is intended to measure (Vogt et al., 2012). To reinforce reliability, 12 participants piloted the survey and answered each question to ensure that each question was clear and concise. Questions were also based on a theoretical framework from Bolman and Deal (2013). Consultations with three professors also guided the formation of the survey.

Validity

Content validity was established by ensuring the participants in the pilot survey were assistant superintendents whose positions aligned to the position of superintendent. To achieve content validity, the research extensively reviewed the literature to become knowledgeable about the topic being studied (Muijs, 2011). In addition, feedback was elicited to ensure the survey was clear and asked the questions that the researcher intended to ask (Creswell, 2015; Muijs, 2011). Face validity was established as continuous feedback was elicited and given by established researchers in the area. When using face validity, individuals looked at the survey and evaluated if the survey questions read clearly, and confirmed that survey questions looked correct (Muijs,

2011).

Conclusion

The researcher sought to uncover superintendents' perceptions about the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students in schools within New York State. This research is timely and will help inform how policy has been implemented and how supports have been created to provide safeguards for transgender students within New York State.

Chapter Three described the methodology of this research study. This chapter included the research design, sample and sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis components of the study. The researcher conducted a quantitative study that surveyed superintendents throughout New York State and explored any relationships between superintendents' knowledge of transgender students and their action steps to implement policy for them. In addition, the researcher ascertained how superintendents navigated the implementation of policy for transgender youth through Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames of Leadership. Currently, there is a gap in research regarding both the perceptions of superintendents regarding transgender students as well as the policy action steps taken by superintendents on behalf of these students within school districts throughout New York State (excluding NYC).

Chapter 4

Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the perceptions of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how these perceptions impact the implementation of policies for transgender students within the K-12 school systems in New York State. Bolman and Deal's Four Leaderships Frames were utilized to develop a survey to assess the perceptions of superintendents and how these perceptions related to decision-making regarding the implementation of the policy that provides support for transgender students.

Currently, there is a gap in the research examining the perceptions of superintendents regarding transgender students and the actions taken by superintendents to implement policy protecting transgender students' access to a safe learning environment (Gabbard, 2012). School district leaders, specifically superintendents, have the positional authority and opportunity to implement policy which outlines the expectations for access to safe and inclusive learning environments for transgender students (Gabbard, 2012). In addition, there is a gap in research examining the perceptions of superintendents regarding transgender students (Kosciw et al., 2014). Based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, many students attend schools throughout New York State that currently do not have policies specifically created for transgender students (Kosciw et al., 2014).

Chapter Four provides an analysis of the data collected to answer the research questions posed in the study. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data using measures of distribution, central tendency, and frequency.

The survey designed by the researcher and created in Survey Monkey (2016) was distributed to 728 superintendents within New York State to answer the following research questions:

1. What do Superintendents in New York State know about transgender students?
 - a. What are their perceptions about the definition of transgender students?
 - b. What are their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students?
2. Do Superintendents in New York State implement specific policies for transgender students?
 - a. When implementing policies for transgender students, which leadership frame from Bolman and Deal's Four Frames (Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic) do superintendents operate within when taking action steps specific to transgender students.

Profile of the Sample

The population surveyed was the 728 superintendents within New York State. Of the 728 surveys distributed, 414 surveys were opened, 281 were left unopened, and 20 surveys were returned as an unknown email. One hundred thirty-four superintendents attempted to complete the survey. However, when asked if they agreed to participate in the survey, only 117 responded, "Yes," and 13 responded, "No." Thirteen superintendents completely opted out of the survey once they read the disclosure. Therefore, only 114 superintendents (16% response rate) completed the survey, while 20 partially completed the survey.

The survey had 17 questions in total. The researcher asked two demographic questions regarding gender and race to create a profile. In addition, participants were asked to self-report

their perceptions regarding transgender students using a Likert scale. The participants were also asked to self-report how they make leadership decisions utilizing Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames. Specifically, which frame or frames they consider when making decisions regarding implementing policy for transgender students.

Two questions within the survey asked superintendents to self-report demographic information, specifically, gender and race. Based on the survey responses of superintendents who completed the question on race, 94.74% of the respondents were Caucasian, 2.63% were Hispanic, and 2.63% were Black or African American (Table 2). Of the survey participants 42.1% were female and 57.9% were male (Table 1).

Table 1

Question #2: Frequency Counts and Percentages of Participants Gender Demographics:

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	48	42.1%
Male	66	57.9%
Total	114	100.0%

Table 2 reports the respondents' (n=114) self-reported race and ethnicity. The majority (94.7%) of participants reported that they were Caucasian, while 2.6% were Hispanic, and 2.6% were African American.

Table 2

Question #3: Race/ Ethnicity

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
African American or Black	3	2.6%
Hispanic	3	2.6%
Caucasian	108	94.7%
Total	114	100.0%

Research Question 1: What do Superintendents in New York State know about Transgender Students?

Research Question 1a: What are their perceptions about the definition of transgender students? As mentioned above, the researcher wanted to ascertain what superintendents knew about transgender students. To answer this research question, respondents were asked to self-report their understanding of the definition of a transgender student. Three questions were asked that related to the understanding of the definitions of transgender students. Question 4 (n=114) specifically asked, “Are you familiar with the definition of transgender students?” (Table 3). Question 5 (n=113), focused on superintendents’ awareness of transgender students currently in their district, asking “Do transgender students currently attend schools within your district?” (Table 4). Question 6 (n=113) consisted of two Likert scale questions (6a and 6b) and stated, “My current understanding of a transgender individual would enable me to explain it to others within my district” (Table 5) and “Students who are transgender were born in the wrong body” (Table 6). Understanding that transgender individuals believe that they are in the wrong body is a key aspect of the definition of transgender (Grossman & D’Augelli, 2006).

In sum, 99.1% of the respondents (n=113), felt that they were familiar with the definition of a transgender students. As evidenced in Table 3, no participants disagreed or responded, “No” when asked about their familiarity with the definition, and only one participant was unsure whether they were familiar with the definition of a transgender student.

Table 3

Question #4: Are you familiar with the definition of a transgender student?

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	113	99.1
No		
Unsure	1	.9
Total	114	100.0%

Table 4 summarizes respondents' awareness of transgender students within their school district. When participants (n=114) were asked if transgender students currently attend schools within their district, 67.5% responded, "Yes." Of the 114 participants, 21.9% responded by selecting "No" and 10.5% responded "Unsure" when asked if transgender students currently attend schools within their district.

Table 4

Question #5: Do transgender students currently attend schools within your district?

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	77	67.5%
No	25	21.9%
Unsure	12	10.5%
Total	114	100.0%

In regard to the respondents' current understanding of who is a transgender individual and whether that understanding would enable them to explain transgender individuals to others within their district, the data displayed in Table 5 (n=113) is consistent with the reported responses of the participants. A total of 92% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that they could explain the definition of a transgender student to others within their district. As mentioned above in Question 4, 99.1% of respondents were familiar with the definition of transgender students. In contrast, 2.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would be able to

explain the definition to others within their district. Of those who responded, 5.6% were unsure if their current understanding would allow them to explain the definition to others within their district.

Table 5

Question #6a: My current understanding of a transgender individual would enable me to explain it to others within my district.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	1	.9%
Disagree	2	1.8%
Unsure	6	5.3%
Agree	50	44.2%
Strongly Agree	54	47.8%
Total	113	100.0%

Regarding respondents' beliefs pertaining to the transgender belief that they were born in the wrong body (Question 6b), 32.3% agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students were born in the wrong body. In contrast, 30% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that transgender students were born in the wrong body. Thirty-seven percent of respondents who answered the question were unsure if transgender students were born in the wrong body.

Table 6

Question #6b: Students who are transgender were born in the wrong body

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	14	13%
Disagree	19	17.6%
Unsure	40	37%
Agree	25	23%
Strongly Agree	10	9.3%
Total	108	100.0%

Summary. These research questions attempted to ascertain the perceptions of superintendents in relation to the definition of transgender. Based on the data presented above, 99.1% of superintendents believed that they are familiar with the definition of a transgender student and 92% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that they could explain the definition of transgender to someone, indicating that the overwhelming majority of respondents believed that they were aware of the definition of a transgender student. In contrast, when asked if transgender students are born in the wrong body, less than a third of respondents, 32.2%, agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating a discrepancy between their knowledge of transgender students and the actual definition of a transgender student.

Research Question 1b: What are their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students? The respondents were asked to self-report their perceptions regarding transgender students in seven questions that specifically focused on the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students. Five questions utilized a Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, while two questions asked them to report their answers by replying “Yes” or “No.”

Table 7 reports the respondents’ (n=114) answers when they were asked to rate their level of agreement on questions regarding the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students. Of the respondents, 80.8% agreed or strongly agreed that a student who transitions to another gender should be able to engage in the school activities as their newly assigned gender. Of those who responded, 12.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that students should be able to engage in school activities as their newly assigned gender, and 14.9% were unsure whether the

transgendered student should be able to engage in school activities as their newly assigned gender.

Table 7

Question #6b: Once a student transitions to another gender they should be able to engage in school activities including sports teams (i.e. attend functions, compete in activities) within the school district as the newly assigned gender.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	4	3.5%
Disagree	1	9%
Unsure	17	14.9%
Agree	46	40.4%
Strongly Agree	46	40.4%
Total	114	100.0%

Respondents were asked if transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct, and Table 8 details their responses. Of those who responded (n=104) to the questions, 57.6% agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct, while 32.6% participants disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining 10.6% of participants were unsure if transgender students require additional supports beyond the code of conduct.

Table 8

Question #10a: Transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	4	3.8%
Disagree	30	28.8%
Unsure	11	10.6%
Agree	41	39.4%
Strongly Agree	18	17.3%
Total	104	100.0%

In Table 9 the respondents' (n=104) answers are recorded to the statement: "Transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs, and activities related to their identified gender." Most respondents, 93.9%, agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs and activities related to their identified gender. In contrast, 4.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that transgender students have a right to participate in the activities mentioned above. Only 1.9% of respondents were unsure whether transgender students have or do not have the right to participate in the activities listed above.

Table 9

Question #10b: Transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs, and activities related to their identified gender.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
Disagree	4	3.8%
Unsure	2	1.9%
Agree	42	40.4%
Strongly Agree	55	52.9%
Total	104	100.0%

Table 10 shows the results when respondents (n=104) were asked if “Transgender students have the right to participate in sports related to their identified gender.” Of the 104 respondents to this question, 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students have a right to participate in the sports of their identified gender, while, 8.6% of respondents disagreed or strong disagreed. Of the 104 respondents, 17.3% were unsure if transgender students have or do not have a right to participate in the sports of their identified gender.

Table 10

Question #10c: Transgender students have the right to participate in sports related to their identified gender.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	4	3.8%
Disagree	5	4.8%
Unsure	18	17.3%
Agree	36	34.6%
Strongly Agree	41	39.4%
Total	104	100.0%

In Table 11, respondents (n=104) were asked if “Providing accommodations for transgender students infringes on the rights of students who are not transgender.” Of the 104 participants who answered the question, 11.6% agreed or strongly agreed that providing accommodations for transgender students infringes on the rights of students who are not transgender. In contrast, 76.7% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that providing accommodations to transgender students infringes on the fights of non-transgendered students.

About one tenth of the respondents, 11.7%, were unsure if providing accommodations to transgender students did or did not infringe on the rights of students who were not transgender.

Table 11

Question #10d: Providing accommodations for transgender students infringes on the rights of students who are not transgender.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	28	27.2%
Disagree	51	49.5%
Unsure	12	11.7%
Agree	10	9.7%
Strongly Agree	2	1.9%
Total	103	100.0%

Table 12 reports the answers given when a question was posed as to whether the respondents had any knowledge regarding current or past harassment of transgender students. Table 12 illustrates that 22.8% of respondents did have knowledge regarding harassment of transgender students. While 73.3% of respondents reported having no knowledge regarding the harassment of transgender students, 4% of respondents were unsure if they had knowledge of current or past harassment of transgender students.

Table 12

Question #12: Do you have knowledge of current or past harassment of transgender students?

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	23	22.8%
No	74	73.3%
Unsure	4	4%
Total	101	100.0%

Respondents were asked “Do transgender students have access to gender neutral bathrooms or to a bathroom specific to their reassigned gender?” and Table 13 records their answers. Of the respondents (n=99) who answered the question, 86.9% of respondents selected “Yes” when asked if transgender students have access to gender neutral bathrooms specific to their reassigned gender, while nine participants responded “No” when asked the same question. Of the 99 respondents, 4% were unsure if transgender students within their district have access to gender neutral or a bathroom that is specific to their reassigned gender.

Table 13

Question #15: Do transgender students have access to gender neutral bathrooms or to a bathroom specific to their reassigned gender?

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	86	86.9
No	9	9.1
Unsure	4	4.0
Total	99	100.0%

Summary. In summary, regarding respondents’ perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students, variation occurred across constructs. Answers recorded by respondents evidence that there is some coherence, in that 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students should have the right to participate in sports related to their identified gender, and 93.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs and activities related to their identified gender. In addition, the data indicates that 80.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that once a student transitions to another gender he or she should be able to engage in school activities including sports teams (i.e. attend functions, compete in activities)

within the school district as their newly assigned gender. However, respondents demonstrated variation when answering the question “Transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct,” as 56.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the question. Variation can be evidenced in that less than half (32.6%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct. In addition, 39.4% of respondents either disagreed or were unsure if transgender students required additional support.

Research Question 2: Do superintendents in New York State implement specific policies for transgender students? As mentioned above, the researcher wanted to ascertain if superintendents within New York State implement specific policies for transgender students. To answer the second research question, the participants were asked to answer one logic question (Question 7) that included two additional questions that were triggered based on the participant’s answer, which included three Likert scale questions, one “Yes”, “No” or “Other” question, and a multiple-choice question related to different aspects of the need to implement policy for transgender students. Question 7 asked, “Does your district currently have a policy for transgender students within your district?” Possible answers included “Yes”, “No”, or “No, but the district is in the process of creating one.” If a participant selected, “Yes,” the participant was then presented with the question, “Who, if anyone, initiated the discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students?” The participant had an option to select from the following choices: “Board of Education (BOE),” “teachers,” “students,” “community,” “superintendents,” “no one,” or “other.” However, if a participant selected “No” to Question 7, the participant was presented with the following question: “If your district does not currently have a policy for

transgender students, please indicate the reason.” There were four possible answers provided to the participant:

1. No need, because there are no issues of harassment or bullying of transgender youth within the district;
2. Transgender students should be treated equally to all students and do not need to be provided with additional protections;
3. The community currently is not ready for this discussion;
4. Other (please specify).

The participants were then asked to answer five additional questions regarding the need for policy within the district:

1. This district ensures that when complaints are made, an appropriate investigation will occur;
2. Your district ensures that when complaints are made there will be no retaliation as a consequence of reporting harassment, intimidation, or discrimination;
3. Your district shared administrative procedures with school leaders to ensure consistent implementation to prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity and gender nonconformity across all grade levels and school;
4. Have you discussed with your school board a need to create policies to ensure that the school climate is safe and free from bullying and harassment for transgender students;
5. How did you ascertain a need to create a policy to prevent nondiscrimination and harassment of transgender students?

The first three questions (#1-3) listed above were Likert scale questions ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to the last two questions (#4-5).

Table 14 indicates the participants’ responses when asked “Does your district currently have a policy for transgender students within your district?” Of the respondents (n=114), 36.8% responded “Yes” when asked if they had a policy for transgender students within their district, 43.9% of respondents selected “No,” and 19.3% of respondents selected “No, but the district is in the process of creating one.” As indicated above, the respondents who answered “Yes” were redirected to another question to further clarify who initiated the conversation regarding the need for policy within the district. Table 15 displays the responses captured by the researcher regarding the initiators of policy. Almost two thirds of respondents (64.3%) indicated that a superintendent initiated the discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students. The second largest percent was the 26.2% who selected “Other” as the entity that initiated the discussion regarding a need for policy for transgender students.

Table 14

Question #7: Does your district currently have a policy for transgender students within your district?

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	42	36.8%
No	50	43.9%
No, but the district is in the process of creating one	22	19.3%
Total	114	100.0%

According to Table 15, superintendents (n=27) led the way in initiating the discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students. Eleven (26.2%) participants selected

“Other” as the entity that initiated the discussion regarding a need for policy for transgender students, making “Other” the second most frequent initiator of policy changes.

Table 15

Question #8: Who, if anyone, initiated the discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students?

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Board of Education (BOE)	3	7.1%
Teacher	0	0
Student	0	0
Community	0	0
Superintendent	27	64.3%
No One	1	2.4%
Other	11	26.2%
Total	42	100.0%

Eleven superintendents selected “Other” as the reason they did not implement policy within their district. Table 16 illuminates what the respondents meant by “Other.” Eleven respondents’ answers related directly to the following: principals (n=2), BOCES policy service (n=4), state mandates (n=2), Attorney/legal advice (n=2), and stakeholders (superintendent, teacher, guidance counselor, principals, board of education, and students) (n=1).

Table 16*Responses to the selection “other”*

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Attorney/Legal Advice	2	18.2%
Board of Education, Superintendent, Elementary Principal, High School Principal, Counselors, Teachers, and Students care about the needs of all students and wanted transgender students to be safe at our school	1	9%
BOCES Policy	4	36.4%
Principal	2	18.2%
State Mandates	2	18.2%
Total	11	100.0%

Participants who answered “No” to Question 7, were then rerouted to another question which asked, “If your district does not currently have a policy for transgender students, please indicate the reason.” Table 17 captures the frequency of responses from the participants. Since more than one in four superintendents indicated “Other,” further analysis was conducted to examine the range of their responses as a total 56 respondents reported that their district did not have a policy for transgender students. Table 17 captured the reasons why respondents’ respective districts did not have a policy. Of the respondents (n = 56) who answered the question, 12.5% indicated that there was no need to have a policy for transgender students because there were no issues of harassment or bullying within their district. A total of 32.1% of respondents reported that there was no policy for transgender students because transgender students should be treated equally to all students and therefore did not need to be provided with additional

protections. In addition, 9% of respondents reported they did not have a policy for transgender students because the community was not ready for the conversation. Of the 56 participants who responded, 46.4% of respondents reported that there were other reasons why they did not have a policy for transgender students within their district.

Table 17

Question #9: If your district does not currently have a policy for transgender students, please indicate the reason.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No need, because there are no issues of harassment or bullying of transgender youth within the district.	7	12.5%
Transgender students should be treated equally to all students and do not need to be provided with additional protections.	18	32.1%
The community currently is not ready for this discussion.	5	9%
Other (please specify)	26	46.4%
Total	56	100.0%

Although the reason for “Other” varies, there was some consistency in responses. Table 18 displays the “Other” reasons (n=26) why participants did not have a policy for transgender students within their district. In total, 46% of respondents indicated that there were other reasons why a policy currently did not exist within the district. Of those, 27% of respondents reported that they currently have other policies and practices in place that protect transgender students. Nearly a quarter, 23.1%, of respondents reported that they were awaiting guidance from the New York State Department of Education before creating a policy for transgender students. Of the 26

responses, 15.4% reported that they had not had the time to create a transgender policy based on their current district priorities. In addition, 11.5% of respondents disclosed that creating a policy would decrease the amount of flexibility they had when dealing with individual issues of transgender students. Of the respondents who answered the question, 7.7% of respondents shared that there was no need for a policy for transgender students because they currently have a positive school climate. In addition, 7.7% of respondents cited advice from legal counsel that objected to the creation of a policy for transgender students. A small percent, 3.8%, of respondents reported that they believed that a transgender policy was discriminatory towards students who were not transgender. Another 3.8% of respondents reported that they were unsure if they currently had a policy for transgender students.

Table 18

Participants who cited “other” reasons for not implementing a policy for transgender students

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Attorney/Legal Advice against a policy	2	7.7%
Awaiting SED Guidance	6	23.1%
Current policies and/practices in place protect transgender students	7	27%
Lack of time to create based on district priorities	4	15.4%
Prior positive school climate experience with transgender student within district – No need for policy	2	7.7%
No policy allows for greater flexibility in dealing with individual issues	3	11.5

Policy only for Transgender students is discriminatory	1	3.8%
Unsure if we have a policy	1	3.8%
Total	26	100.0%

Table 19 shows the frequency of responses made by participants (n=103) when answering the Likert scale question regarding their agreement as to whether their district ensures an appropriate investigation will occur when complaints of harassment or bullying are made. Of the 103 respondents, 73.8% reported that they strongly agreed that reports are investigated appropriately within their district, while, 22.3% respondents agreed that when complaints are made, the district ensures an appropriate investigation. In addition, 2.9% of respondents were unsure if the district ensures that an appropriate investigation is conducted when complaints are reported. No respondents disagreed that when a complaint is made an investigation will occur. In contrast, 1.0% of respondents strongly disagreed that the district ensures that complaints are investigated.

Table 19

Question #10e: This district ensures that when complaints are made, an appropriate investigation will occur.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
Disagree	0	0
Unsure	3	2.9%
Agree	23	22.3%
Strongly Agree	76	73.8%
Total	103	100.0%

Table 20 evidences the frequency of answers selected by the respondents (n=103) when asked to self-select if their district ensures that when complaints are made there will be no retaliation as a consequence of reporting harassment, intimidation, or discrimination. Of the 103 responses, 73.8% of respondents strongly agreed that their district ensures that individuals who lodge complaints do not experience retaliation. Roughly a quarter of the respondents, 23.3%, agreed that individuals who report harassment, intimidation, or discrimination are not subjected to retaliation, while 2.9% of respondents were unsure whether the district ensures that individuals who report complaints of harassment, intimidation, or discrimination do not experience retaliation. In addition, 1% of respondents strongly disagreed that the district ensures that individuals who report complaints of harassment, intimidation, or discrimination do not face retaliation.

Table 20

Question #10f: Your district ensures that when complaints are made there will be no retaliation as a consequence of reporting harassment, intimidation, or discrimination.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
Disagree	0	0
Unsure	3	2.9%
Agree	23	23.3%
Strongly Agree	76	73.8%
Total	103	100.0%

Table 21 evidences the responses (n=101) selected by the respondents when asked to self-select, using a Likert scale, if the district shared administrative procedures with school leaders to ensure consistent implementation to prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity and gender nonconformity across all grade levels and schools. Most

respondents, 91.1%, selected either agree or strongly agree. Of the respondents who answered the question, 5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of the respondents (n=101) who responded to the question, 56.4% strongly agreed that the district shared administrative procedures, while 34.7% of respondents agreed that protocols were shared with school leaders to ensure consistency of implementation to prohibit discrimination and harassment. Another 4% of respondents were unsure whether the district shared administrative protocols.

Table 21

Question #10h: Your district shared administrative procedures with school leaders to ensure consistent implementation to prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity and gender nonconformity across all grade levels and school.

<u>Participant Answer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
Disagree	4	4.0%
Unsure	4	4.0%
Agree	35	34.7%
Strongly Agree	57	56.4%
Total	101	100.0%

Summary. When examining the research question “Do superintendents in New York State implement specific policies for transgender students,” responses indicate that there is a great deal of variation in how policy is initiated and developed. A majority of the respondents, 97.1%, agreed or strongly agreed that their district ensures that when complaints are made there will be no retaliation as a consequence of reporting harassment, intimidation, or discrimination, and 96.1% of respondents agreed or strongly that the district ensures that when complaints are made, an appropriate investigation occurs. Analysis also reveals some consistency in that 64.3%

respondents selected superintendents when asked who initiated the discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students.

Research Question 2a: When implementing policies for transgender students, which leadership frame from Bolman and Deal's Four Frames, Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic, do superintendents operate within when taking action steps specific to transgender students. As mentioned above, the research sought to ascertain which leadership frame from Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames was implemented by superintendents when they took action steps specific to transgender students. As referenced in Chapter 2, Bolman and Deal (2013) discuss four frames for leadership. Structural, political, symbolic, and human resource frames are specific lenses which the leader may utilize when making strategic decisions (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Structural leaders make decisions by creating and utilizing action plans to organize and structure the school district, while delineating individual responsibilities and setting forth clear expectations for evaluating progress (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Leaders who make decisions through the lens of the political frame rely on using a coalition to move the work forward. These leaders recognize the importance of consulting and identifying various constituencies when deciding next steps for change (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The symbolic frame asks leaders to recognize tradition and lead through the lens of inspiration. The leader who makes decisions through the symbolic frame exhibits the ability to create the picture of his or her vision (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The leader who makes decisions through the lens of the human resources frame recognizes the people of the organization as key. The leader also validates the importance of the people within his or her organization and appreciates their diversity in thought (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

To answer the research question above the participants were asked to self-select the leadership frame or frames they use when making a variety of leadership decisions and action steps. Nine questions were asked in total. The nine questions asked what frames were used when introducing the need for policy surrounding transgender students to the board of education, when asking for feedback from district staff on the need for policy for transgender students, when informing parents about the need to create and implement a policy for transgender students, when placing controversial policy on the board agenda for discussion, when designing the code of conduct to improve inclusivity within the district, when implementing policy in relation to transgender youth, when allocating resources for implementing transgender policy, when allocating resources for professional development for staff related to transgender students, and when fulfilling regulatory requirements. The participants were provided the opportunity to select up to four leadership frames when selecting their choices.

Table 22 indicates the frequency of responses when participants were asked to select the leadership frame or frames they utilize to make leadership decisions. For the nine questions asked, the structural frame was selected most often by respondents, 88.9%, when making leadership decisions and the symbolic frame was selected the second most often. The human resource frame was the third most selected frame, and the political frame was utilized least often when making leadership decisions.

When respondents (n=156) were asked what leadership frame they used “When introducing the need for policy surrounding transgender students to the board of education,” 42.3% selected the structural frame to guide their decision-making. Of the 156 responses, 27% of the participants selected symbolic when introducing the need for transgender policy to the board of education. Human resources were the third most selected frame with 16% of participants

choosing it, and the political frame was selected least (14.7%) when introducing the need for transgender policy to the board of education.

When eliciting feedback from staff regarding the need for transgender policy, 32.2% of participants selected the structural frame, 26.3% selected the human resources frame, 25% selected the symbolic frame, and 16.4% selected the political frame.

When participants were asked to select the leadership frame they used to inform parents of the need to create and implement policy relating to transgender students, 41.3% selected the symbolic frame, 31.9% selected the structural frame, 15.9% selected the political frame, and 10.9% selected the human resources frame. Of the 168 selections made by participants in relation to placing controversial policy on the board of education agenda, 33.9% of participants selected the structural frame, 28.6% selected the symbolic frame, 25.6% selected the political frame, and 11.9% selected the human resources frame. In relation to revising the code of conduct, 41.6% selected the structural frame, 24.7% selected the symbolic frame, 18.6% selected the human resources frame, and 15.1% selected the political frame. When implementing policy for transgender students, 45.5% of participants selected the structural frame, 23.5% selected the symbolic frame, 17.2% selected the human resources frame, and 13.8% selected the political frame. Of 144 selections made in total, 43.1% of participants selected structural frame, 21.5% selected symbolic frame, 20.1% selected the human resources frame, and 15.3% selected the political frame.

When participants were asked to select a leadership frame pertaining to allocating resources for professional development, 36.5% selected the structural frame, 25.7% selected the human resources frame, 21.8% selected the symbolic frame, and 16% selected the political frame. When participants were asked to select which leadership frame or frames they used when

making decisions regarding fulfilling regulatory requirements, 53% selected the structural frame, 15.9% selected the symbolic and political frame, and 15.2% human resources.

Table 22

Question 17: Superintendents Leadership Actions/Decisions

Leadership Action	Structural	Political	Symbolic	Human Resources	Total (N=)
When introducing the need for policy surrounding transgender students to board of education.	66 (42.3%)	23 (14.7%)	42 (27%)	25 (16%)	156
When asking for feedback from district staff on the need for policy for transgender students.	49 (32.2%)	25 (16.4%)	38 (25%)	40 (26.3%)	152
When informing parents about the need to create and implement a policy for transgender students.	44 (31.9%)	22 (15.9%)	57 (41.3%)	15 (10.9%)	138
When placing controversial policy on the board agenda for discussion.	57 (33.9%)	43 (25.6%)	48 (28.6%)	20 (11.9%)	168
When designing the code of conduct to	69 (41.6%)	25 (15.1%)	41 (24.7%)	31 (18.6%)	166

improve inclusivity within the district.					
When implementing policy in relation to transgender youth.	66 (45.5%)	20 (13.8%)	34 (23.5%)	25 (17.2%)	145
When allocating resources for implementing transgender policy.	62 (43.1%)	22 (15.3%)	31 (21.5%)	29 (20.1%)	144
When allocating resources for professional development for staff related to transgender students.	57 (36.5%)	25 (16%)	34 (21.8%)	40 (25.7%)	156
When fulfilling regulatory requirements.	80 (53%)	24 (15.9%)	24 (15.9%)	23 (15.2%)	151

Upon examining the responses to the question, it became clear that superintendents overwhelmingly selected the structural frame when making leadership decisions. The analysis indicates that superintendents selected the structural framework most often (88.9%) when asked to self-select a leadership frame or frames specific to nine questions relating to leadership decisions. The analysis further indicated that superintendents selected the structural frame as most often utilized for eight out of nine leadership actions taken with a variety of stakeholders. The ninth leadership action was symbolic rather than structural: Superintendents (41.3%) chose the symbolic frame when asked which leadership frame they would select when presented with

the following leadership action, “When informing parents about the need to create and implement a policy for transgender students.”

Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher analyzed the perception and actions of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how their perceptions impact the implementation of policies for transgender students within the K-12 school systems in New York State. Based on the data above, the overwhelming majority of respondents believed that they are aware of the definition of a transgender student. In contrast, 32.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Transgender students were born in the wrong body,” indicating a discrepancy between their knowledge of transgender students and the actual definition of a transgender student.

In addition, data showed that superintendents have a general belief that transgender students have a right to be included in extracurricular activities and sports. Seventy-four percent of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students should have the right to participate in sports related to their identified gender. Another 93.3% of superintendents also agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs, and activities related to their identified gender. However, a little less than half of superintendents (43.3%) did not agree or strongly disagreed that “Transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct.”

Data further indicates that 97.1% of superintendents share a belief that their district ensures that when complaints are made there will be no retaliation as a consequence of reporting

harassment, intimidation, or discrimination. Additionally, 96.1% agreed or strongly agreed that the district ensures that when complaints are made, an appropriate investigation will occur.

The data indicates that 88.9% of superintendents operate from the structural frame when making leadership decisions relating to the creation or implementation of policy for transgender students.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendations

Introduction

Within schools across New York State transgender students experience harassment (Almeida et al., 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al, 2014; Huebner, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). Much litigation has been brought on behalf of individuals who would be considered lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, challenging current policies and practices within school districts across the country. Harassment in school is linked to an increase in mental health issues in transgender students. Some transgender students feel isolated when harassed in school, resulting in an increase in disengagement, which can be defined as a student's inability to feel comfortable and included within the school system and so not engaging with the school community.

Superintendents within New York State have the authority to implement policy within their respective school districts. Therefore, superintendents can begin the conversation about the need for transgender policy with their boards of education, staff, parents, and students. Superintendents navigate everything from the initial conversation to the implementation of policy when leading a school district. To do so, superintendents utilize various leadership frameworks when taking leadership actions. According to Bolman and Deal (1997), a leader can choose to operate in one or more of the following frameworks: Structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. The structural frame emphasizes the importance of the organization, creating an action plan for implementation and outlining the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 1997). The symbolic frame emphasizes the importance of honoring tradition and acknowledging rituals, ceremony, and stories (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Leaders who operate within this frame are known for their nearly magical abilities to captivate stakeholders and motivate them to roll up their sleeves and work alongside others (Bolman and Deal, 1997). The human resources frame emphasizes the importance of creating a guiding coalition, creating a vision, gathering stakeholders, and allowing them to participate in the implementation of the initiative (Bolman and Deal, 1997). The political frame focuses the leader on the art of negotiation. The leader operating within this frame must be aware of the landscape of the issues at hand before making any decisions to move forward with a plan of action (Bolman and Deal, 1997). As discussed in chapter two, the leader approaches a situation with a specific intent in mind. A great leader can utilize one or more frames when the situation dictates them to do so.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the perception and actions of superintendents regarding the needs of transgender students and how their perceptions impact the implementation of policies for transgender students within the K-12 school systems in New York State.

This study was designed to investigate the following research questions regarding the perceptions of superintendents and their action steps to implement policy related to transgender students.

Question 1

1. What do Superintendents in New York State know about transgender students?
 - c. What are their perceptions about the definition of transgender students?
 - d. What are their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students?

2. Do Superintendents in New York State implement specific policies for transgender students?
 - a. When implementing policies for transgender students, which leadership frame from Bolman and Deal's Four Frames, Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic, do superintendents operate within when taking action steps specific to transgender students.
3. What is the relationship between superintendents' perception of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students and the actions taken by superintendents to implement policy for transgender students?

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: What do Superintendents in New York State know about transgender students?

- a. What are their perceptions about the definition of transgender students?
- b. What are their perceptions of the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students?

The first question attempts to ascertain whether superintendents can demonstrate understanding of transgender students. In addition, this research question attempts to reveal the perceptions of superintendents in relation to rights and policy creation for transgender students. These questions highlight the perceptions of the superintendents in relation to the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students.

Finding #1. While respondents believe they understand the definition of a transgender student, the data gathered indicates there is some conflict between their understanding of transgender students and their actual definition. While 99.1% of the respondents (n=113) feel

that they are familiar with the definition of transgender student, and 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they could explain the definition of a transgender students to others within their district, only 32.3% agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students were born in the wrong body. The discrepancy between respondents' perceptions of their ability to explain the definition of a transgender student to someone and their ability to accurately identify a primary belief of transgender students exhibits the misunderstanding of the definition. This finding substantiates the claim that while superintendents believe they have a clearer understanding of transgender students that there, in fact, a misalignment within their perspective. That being considered research indicates that having knowledge of transgender students provides schools leaders with valuable information to create supports that make the school environment more conducive to learning for them (Cosgrove, 2015).

Finding 2. Respondents believe that transgender students should be allowed to participate in school activities as their identified gender. Based on the data collected from the survey administered by the researcher, 80.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a student who transitions to another gender should be able to engage in school activities as their newly assigned gender. Important to note is that 19.2% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that transgender students should be able to engage in school activities as their newly assigned gender. As evidenced through literature, it is essential that superintendents understand the needs of transgender students in order to adequately create supports to provide them with equal access to school social and academic programs (Johnson & Amella, 2014).

When respondents were asked if transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs, and activities related to their identified gender, 93.9% agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular

and extracurricular clubs, and activities. When respondents were asked if transgender students have the right to participate in sports related to their identified gender, 74% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This data evidences the researcher's finding that most respondents thought transgender students should be able to participate in any extracurricular activities.

Finding 3. A significant percentage of respondents either reported that they were unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed when asked if transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct. Of the respondents surveyed, 43.2% of respondents were unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement. That statistic is significant considering that at least 50% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students experience harassment daily when in school (Kosciw et al., 2014). Of the 43.2 % or respondents who answered unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed, 32.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagree that transgender students required additional supports. This is important to note because based on the research, many transgender students feel unsafe while in school once they show their newly assigned gender (Grant et al., 2011 & Kosciw et al., 2014).

Finding 4. Many respondents believe that students require additional protections beyond the code of conduct to shield them from harassment. Of the respondents surveyed, 57.6% agreed or strongly agreed that transgender students require additional supports. As discussed in Chapter Two, over 50% of transgender students' experience harassment while at school (Kosciw et al., 2014). The data gathered from the survey aligns to previous studies that indicate that harassment and bullying of transgender students exists. This further justifies the need for additional policy creation and implementation in schools across New York State (Almeida et al., 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008).

Finding 5. A significant percentage of respondents believe that providing transgender students with accommodations infringes upon the rights of students who are not transgender. Of the respondents who were asked if providing accommodations for transgender students infringes on the rights of students who are not transgender, 25.9% of them were either unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. Students who are transgender are not treated similarly to non-transgender students in the context that they experience a significantly larger percentage of harassment and bullying while in school settings (Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). As indicated in the literature, students who fall outside what is considered “normal” are often at the receiving end of ridicule and in some cases, experience physical assault (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2008).

Research Question 2. The second research question seeks to determine if school districts within New York State currently have a policy for transgender students. Research Question 2a seeks to understand superintendents’ motivations and attitudes more deeply by determining which leadership frame superintendents operate within when making leadership decisions in relation to transgender students.

Finding 6. Less than half of the respondents’ school districts within New York State currently have a policy for transgender students in their district. Of the respondents who responded to the survey, 36.8% responded “Yes” when asked if they had a policy for transgender students within their district. However, most respondents, 43.9%, selected “No,” while 19.3% of respondents selected “No, but the district is in the process of creating one.” Of the school districts that did not have a policy, 27% of their respondents reported that they currently have other policies and practices in place that protect transgender students. Another 23.1% of respondents reported that they were awaiting guidance from the New York State Department of Education before creating a policy for transgender students. Therefore, the respondents’

responses indicate that less than half of the respondents currently have a policy in place that specifically addresses the unique needs of transgender students. This finding substantiates the notion that school district should review the effectiveness of their current policies and/or implement policies that are focused on protecting transgender students as the current literature indicates that more than 40% of transgender students experience harassment daily within the school system (Almeida et al., 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008).

Finding 7. The superintendent is the person that most often initiates discussion related to policy for transgender students within school districts in New York State, according to this study. Of the respondents who completed the survey, 64.3% reported that the superintendent initiated the discussion regarding a need for a policy for transgender students. As indicated in the literature, superintendents have the authority to implement initiatives or policy within their respective school districts. This authority also provides superintendents with the opportunity to initiate the discussion related to policy for transgender students within their school district (Kennedy, 2016).

Finding 8. The majority of school districts investigate when complaints of harassment and bullying are reported and ensure retaliation is not a consequence of reporting harassment, intimidation, and discrimination. Nearly all the respondents, 97.1%, agreed or strongly agreed that their district ensures that when complaints are made there is no retaliation as a consequence of reporting the harassment, intimidation, or discrimination. In addition, 96.1% of respondents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that the district ensures that when complaints are made, an appropriate investigation occurs. These findings indicate that while 55% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students experience harassment within school, nearly all

respondents surveyed are dedicated to investigating complaints of harassment and bullying within their school districts (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014).

Finding 9. Respondents overwhelmingly operate from Bolman and Deal's structural frame when making leadership decisions in relation to policy for transgender students. In this study, the analysis of the data clearly indicates that respondents selected the structural framework most often (88.9%) when asked to self-select a leadership frame or frames relating to nine specific leadership decisions. This finding answers Research Question 2a, which asks if leaders operate within a specific frame when making decisions. Contrary to what the data indicates, this research argues that the other three frames, political, human resources, and symbolic, tap into the personal connection between the school leader and the stakeholders, when dealing with issues, discussions, and actions related to transgender students (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This data indicates that respondents approach most decisions related to transgender students by creating a plan of action to address the issues as well as effectively organize a team to carry out the plan. This finding implies that most respondents do not utilize the other frames when making decisions in relation to transgender students. In fact, findings indicate that organization and action planning is most key to respondents when decision making is geared toward transgender students.

Recommendation for Policy

Recommendation 1. School districts across New York State that have policies for transgender students must evaluate the effectiveness of those current policies designed to protect transgender students from harassment and bullying within the K-12 school system. While the literature review did not reveal studies related to the current policies in place within school district across New York State, research does clearly document the experiences of transgender students who attend school in New York. This research clearly indicates that many transgender

students feel isolated within the current educational setting and, in some regard, disengage from school as a result (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). One policy currently in place across New York State is the Dignity for All Students Act (Cosgrove, 2015). The purpose of this policy is to prevent the harassment and bullying of 12 protected classes, including gender identity (Cosgrove, 2015). While gender is covered under the Act there is no specific language addressing or explicitly designed to protect transgender students.

Recommendation 2. Superintendents should create policy to ensure the mental and emotional safety of all transgender students within New York State. Based on a review of the literature in Chapter 2, transgender students are at risk for experiencing harassment and bullying within school ((Kosciw et al., 2014). As evidenced in Chapter 4, 43.9% of superintendents currently do not have policies in place to protect transgender students within their school district. That being stated, it is essential that school districts assess the current policies and practices in place and move toward having critical conversations regarding the need for transgender policy. At least 70% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students experience harassment and bullying within the school system (Kosciw et al., 2014), which highlights that current policies are not enough to ensure the safety of transgender students within the K-12 school system.

Recommendation for Practice

Recommendation 1. Since the issues of transgender students are becoming more widely understood, and hopefully appreciated, it is to be expected that these conversations will also become more public. However, these rights will also compete with the many other priorities facing superintendents. Therefore, it is essential that superintendents work to create systems to ensure inclusivity of transgender students within K-12 school districts throughout New York State. To keep safeguards for transgender students in the forefront districts must work

collectively to make systemic change to their protocols and procedures to ensure that rights for these students withstand ever changing political landscapes. Based on a review of the literature transgender students experience many challenges within school across New York State include harassment, physical violence, emotional abuse, and bullying (Almeida et al., 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). It is essential to the mental and physical well-being of students that superintendents continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that transgender students feel more included within the K-12 school system. Part of the work for school districts will be to administer school culture surveys to transgender students to assess the current state of the school environment. Based on the results of that survey, school districts could create a culture and climate committee to discuss key issues uncovered in the survey and create an action plan that addresses all current systems and structures in place relating to transgender students. In addition, the committee could conduct a needs assessment and root cause analysis pertaining to the issues revealed by the survey.

Recommendation 2. Superintendents need to provide intentional professional development opportunities to all stakeholders to deepen knowledge and build consistency within systems to standardize the understanding of transgender students. All stakeholders who work within school districts must become familiar with the needs of transgender students. To appropriately provide knowledge to stakeholders within the district, superintendents must create systems to provide a framework to deliver consistent professional development that builds awareness about the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students. This recommendation relates to the data analyzed in Chapter 4, which indicates there is a misalignment of superintendent's beliefs regarding transgender students and their own understanding of them and the actual definition of a transgender student (See Tables 3, 5, and 6). Staff within school

districts will likely be better prepared to address issues specific to transgender students when they receive appropriate guidance regarding the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students.

Recommendation 3. Superintendents must clearly define and evaluate the appropriate practices and protocols regarding transgender students, and ensure faithful compliance by school staff to those practices and protocols across the district. For school districts to ensure consistency in implementing policy and procedures, superintendents should work with district senior staff to create an action plan to review all current procedures and practices within the district with regard to transgender students. As noted in Tables 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, more than 50% of superintendents believe that transgender students should be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities and supports based on their identified gender. Therefore, superintendents must be willing to share their expectations with all stakeholders within the district.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendation 1. It is recommended that further research assess the perceptions and practices of staff and school building leaders in reference to creating an inclusive environment for transgender students and whether there are any correlations between the perceptions of school building leaders and the perceptions of superintendents. The research did not collect or compare data related to the perceptions of school building leaders in relation to transgender students within the K-12 system. This research would be beneficial to the educational community as it would clarify if there are current practices or procedures that are created and implemented at the school building and if those practices and procedures are consistent or in conflict to those of the respective school district. This future research would also allow analysis of the differences in practices and procedures between building and district level leadership. As

noted in Table 21, 91.1% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that “Your district shared administrative procedures with school leaders to ensure consistent implementation to prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity and gender nonconformity across all grade levels and school.” However, no analysis was conducted on the current alignment of building and district procedure.

Recommendation 2. The field of research would benefit from a study further analyzing the perceptions of superintendents and how their perceptions impact the creation or implementation of policy for transgender students, based on their respective geographical location throughout the United States of America. This research did not factor in geographic locations outside of New York State when investigating the needs and vulnerabilities relative to transgender students. Research conducted to extend the study to the entire United States would greatly benefit the educational community. This research would ascertain current policies and procedures utilized on a national level that ensure the mental and emotional safety of transgender students. Furthermore, the similarities and differences of policies based on geographic location could be evaluated.

Recommendation 3. The field of research would benefit from a qualitative study examining the impact of varying types of policies that safeguard transgender students currently within schools across New York State. Some superintendents within New York State currently have policies implemented within their districts. This research evaluated which school districts currently have policies in place, however, it did not evaluate the impact of the current policies on transgender students. While the policies currently in place may decrease the incidents of harassment and bullying, there is no literature in the field to report such outcomes. Future research could uncover how, if at all, school districts document the efficacy of each policy. A

qualitative study would ensure that superintendents would share their current evaluation of the policy in depth and help to indicate if review or revisions must be made to have a greater impact on positive outcomes for transgender students.

In addition, it would be beneficial to examine the role of the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in supporting superintendents to implement such policy. NYSCOSS and AASA serve as supports to superintendents across New York State regarding technical assistance as well as literature resources for school and district leaders. Future research could further evaluate the effectiveness of their level of support.

Recommendation 4. The field of research would benefit from a qualitative study examining the frames used by superintendents who have successfully navigated discussions and implemented policy in relation to transgender students. In addition, the research could examine what frames should be used based on successfully implemented policy, as well as ascertain how superintendents may move flexibly within the frames to solve complex issues related to transgender students. Superintendents operate within different frameworks when addressing issues relating to transgender students (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Further research could also evaluate which framework superintendents utilized when they began discussions with school community stakeholders, created policies and procedures, and implemented policies for transgender students. Additionally, if one frame was accessed more frequently or proved to be most useful at a specific time during the process, superintendents could potentially successfully tackle such controversial issues more effectively by knowing which frames were previously successful. The research could be conducted by interviewing superintendents to identify the key

frames that were employed and examining the extent to which each frame assisted them in creating safeguards for transgender student.

Summary and Conclusion

Transgender students often experience harassment and bullying while attending school within the K-12 system, which in turn has been linked to mental and emotional health concerns (Almeida et al., 2009; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2012; Higa et al., 2014; Huebner, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2008). These negative experiences occur far too often within school districts across New York State. District leaders are ultimately responsible for a safe and inclusive learning environment that supports all students within their purview. Considering that superintendents are the individuals who can implement policy on a district level, the research sought to understand their perceptions regarding the needs and vulnerabilities of transgender students.

The findings in this study indicate that while superintendents believe they understand the needs of transgender students, there is a misunderstanding of the actual characteristics of transgender students. In addition, Table 8 evidences that superintendents believe that transgender students have a right to participate in extracurricular activities, while also indicating that only 56.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree that transgender students require additional support to safeguard them from harassment and bullying from other students. This data indicates that 45.3% of respondents do not believe that transgender students require additional supports. This data may evidence why less than 50% of respondents currently have a policy for transgender students within their respective school districts.

Findings also indicate that less than half of superintendents currently have a policy for transgender students. In addition, superintendents are those who most often initiate discussion

regarding the need for a policy for transgender students. That being the case, they have the authority within a school district to implement change (Kennedy, 2016). Bolman and Deal (1997) assert that superintendents must be able to utilize all four frames to make decisions and implement change. However, findings from this research study indicate that superintendents most often utilize the structural frame when having difficult conversations, explaining the need for policy, and implementing policy regarding transgender students.

As transgender students continue to attend schools within New York State, districts must continue to improve their ability to support these students. In addition, creating an inclusive environment in which transgender students feel emotionally and physically safe is tantamount to ensuring their ability to engage in the academic environment without interruption or distractions. While transgender students are currently a topic of discussion, providing opportunities for adults to become familiarized with their needs would benefit the educational community. All students have a right to learn in a safe environment that reflects their needs, and it is the job of the school districts to provide such an opportunity.

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Appendix A: International Review Board Approval Letter



Sage College of Albany

140 New Scotland Avenue
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December 19, 2016

Ebony Green
Doctoral Student, The Sage Colleges

IRB PROPOSAL #534-2016-2017
Reviewer: Francesca Durand, IRB Chair

Dear Researchers:

The Institutional Review Board has renewed your application and has approved your project entitled "An examination into the perceptions and leadership actions of superintendents to implement policy to support transgender students" for one year. Good luck with your research.

Please refer to your IRB Proposal number whenever corresponding with us whether by mail or in person.

When you have completed collecting your data you will need to submit to the IRB Committee a final report indicating any problems you may have encountered regarding the treatment of human subjects. If the project goes longer than one year, please submit a continuation form

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Francesca Durand, PhD
Chair, IRB

FD/nan

CC: Deb Shea



Appendix B: Superintendent introduction letter

Date:

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Ebony Green and I am a doctoral candidate with the Esteves School of Education at Sage College in Albany, New York. I am currently examining the current policies and procedures in place for transgender students throughout New York State. Because you are currently a superintendent, and have the authority to implement such policy set forth by your board of education, I am writing to invite you to participate in this research study.

The following survey will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, no identifiable information will be requested before, during, or after taking the survey. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me conducting this research. The data collected will provide very useful information regarding the current policies and practices in place for transgender students throughout New York State. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided below. You may also contact Dr. Deborah Shea at SheaD@sage.edu if you would like to speak to a representative of Sage College.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ebony Green
Greene4@sage.edu
(646)260-5756

Appendix C: Survey

Superintendents Perceptions of Transgender Students

You are being asked to take this survey as part of a research study to understand the needs of transgender students and the current policies implemented within school districts across New York State. Your responses will provide the researcher with valuable information that will assist in ascertaining what policies and supports are currently available for transgender students throughout New York State. Additionally, this research aims to learn about actions taken by superintendents to implement policies for transgender students. For this reason, all superintendents are invited to complete this survey.

*Participation in this survey is voluntary and greatly appreciated.

* As you respond to each item, please focus on your thoughts and feelings based on your own personal experiences as a superintendent as well as the current policies within your school district.

* All your responses are completely anonymous. No identifiable information will be collected or stored as a result of this survey.

* Please read the directions carefully.

* This survey is expected to take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

1. I have read the above statement and understand that I am volunteering to participate in this anonymous survey and may opt-out at any time. By clicking yes below, you are agreeing to your participation in this study.

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian / Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ White / Caucasian
- ☐ Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

4. Are you familiar with the definition of a transgender student?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

5. Do transgender students currently attend the schools within your district?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

6. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about your perceptions about transgender students.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
My current understanding of a transgender individual would enable me to explain it to others within my district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Once a student transitions to another gender they should be able to engage in school activities including sports teams (i.e. attend functions, compete in activities) within the school district as the newly assigned gender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff within your district have adequate knowledge on how to support transgender students within your school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students who are transgender were born in the wrong body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Does your district currently have a policy for transgender students within your district?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No, but the district is in the process of creating one.

8. Who, if anyone, initiated the discussion regarding the need for a policy for transgender students?

☐ Board of Education (BOE) ☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Community ☐ Superintendent ☐ No one

☐ Other (please specify)

9. If your district does not currently have a policy for transgender students, please indicate the reason.

- ☐ No need, because there are no issues of harassment or bullying of transgender youth within the district.
- ☐ Transgender students should be treated equally to all students and do not need to be provided with additional protections.
- ☐ The community currently is not ready for this discussion.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Rate your level of agreement on the following statements regarding **policy and/or procedure**.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Transgender students require additional supports to shield them from harassment beyond what is described in the code of conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transgender students have the right to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular clubs, and activities related to their identified gender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transgender students have the right to participate in sports related to their identified gender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing accommodations for transgender students infringes on the rights of students who are not transgender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This district ensures that when complaints are made, an appropriate investigation will occur.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your district ensures that when complaints are made there will be no retaliation as a consequence of reporting harassment, intimidation, or discrimination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your district determined the professional development needs of all staff in relation to guidance and board expectations regarding nondiscrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your district shared administrative procedures with school leaders to ensure consistent implementation to prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity and gender nonconformity across all grade levels and school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Have you discussed with your school board a need to create policies to ensure that the school climate is safe and free from bullying and harassment for transgender students?

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Other (please specify)

12. Do you have knowledge of current or past harassment of transgender students?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

13. My district is aware of supports that are necessary to provide a free and appropriate education to transgender students.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

14. Check the supports that your district is currently providing in order to support transgender students. (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Gay-straight alliance
- ☐ Professional development for faculty and staff
- ☐ Guidance department led support group
- ☐ Opportunities for staff and students to become more knowledgeable about LGBT students
- ☐ School-wide building expectations regarding harassment and bullying.
- ☐ None of the Above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

15. Do transgender students have access to gender neutral bathrooms or to a bathroom specific to their reassigned gender?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

16. How did you ascertain a need to create a policy to prevent nondiscrimination and harassment of transgender students? (check all that apply):

- ☐ Survey data ☐ Incident reports ☐ Student social media ☐ Referral Data ☐ Guidance staff logs ☐ Attendance data
- ☐ Principal self-reporting
- ☐ Other (please specify)

17. Please select your primary leadership approach when answering the following questions.

	I consider <u>structural systems</u> such as policies, procedures, rules and responsibilities.	I consider <u>political aspects</u> of bargaining, negotiating, compromise and building coalitions.	I consider how our school <u>community</u> takes into account rituals, stories, and building culture.	I consider staff as <u>human resources</u> and focus on their learning and the need to defend old beliefs.
When introducing the need for policy surrounding transgender students to board of education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When asking for feedback from district staff on the need for policy for transgender students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When informing parents about the need to create and implement a policy for transgender students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When placing controversial policy on the board agenda for discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When designing the code of conduct to improve inclusivity within the district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When implementing policy in relation to transgender youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When allocating resources for implementing transgender policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When allocating resources for professional development for staff related to transgender students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When fulfilling regulatory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>