

**KEY LIFE EVENTS OF SUCCESSFUL
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS
IN NORTH CAROLINA**

by

Gregory Jerod Williams

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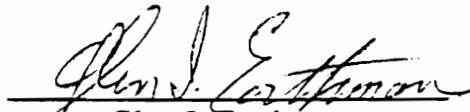
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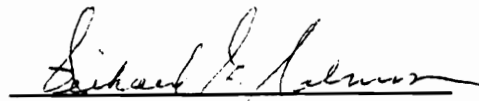
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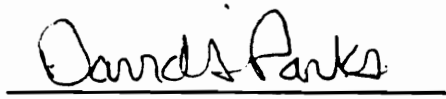
Educational Administration

APPROVED:


Glen I. Earthman


Robert R. Richards


Richard G. Salmon


David J. Parks


Robert C. McCracken

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Blacksburg, Virginia

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Committee Chairman: Glen I. Earthman
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(ABSTRACT)

The problem in this study was to identify the key life events superintendents in North Carolina feel have contributed significantly to their success. Additionally, this study sought to ascertain the people who were instrumental in their careers, the training experiences that contributed most to their careers, the personal setbacks they experienced and from which they recovered, and the practices they implemented as a result of the knowledge gained from the identified key life events.

A survey was mailed to all 122 superintendents in North Carolina during the 1994-95 school year. Each superintendent was requested to provide a personal profile and nominate five successful superintendents based on their perception of success. An analysis of the responding superintendents' nominations was done to determine the top five to be interviewed.

The data were analyzed using matrices to identify key life events and their contribution to the success of each superintendent's career. Frequencies and percentages were presented in tables to show a comparison of the demographic responses by the responding superintendents to the sample.

Key life events of superintendents included: (1) seeking out significant others; (2) being willing to be mobile; (3) nurturing good relations with the boss; (4) getting different educational experiences; (5) serving in civic, professional, and community leadership roles; (6) involvement in leadership development programs; (7) valuing hard work; (8) having a supportive family/spouse; and (9) keeping priorities in order. The data also revealed incorporating socialization theory components appear vital for entry and sustained employment as superintendent of schools. A critique of this research, as well as recommendations for further study are also included.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the end of the twentieth century approaches, the American public has shown increased interest in reforming public education.

Considerable attention has been given to teacher preparation, site-based management, principal effectiveness and involvement of parents, but the importance of the local superintendent's role seems to have been lost in the discussion of improving America's public schools.

The local superintendency is a position that has evolved since about the mid-nineteenth century. This newcomer to the professional scene does not have the centuries of tradition and long established ways of professional conduct to draw from like practitioners in the church, medicine, and law. The nature of the superintendent's work is not clearly defined in history and is still evolving as the demands of education continue to change. One thing is clear, individuals aspiring to the superintendency in the twenty-first century will need to be better prepared than their predecessors to meet the demands of local education.

The traditional way of thinking of a superintendent as an implementor of policy established by the board is very simplistic. There is a dynamic relationship between the present day superintendent and various publics, including state and federal agencies, community groups, parents, students and school personnel. The role of the superintendent changes from a coach, leader, follower, philosopher, missionary, politician, resource distributor, and evaluator depending on the situation. The present day superintendency is a high-pressured and stress-filled job that requires individuals to be prepared to live on the edge and expect the unexpected. Public demands for accountability often force superintendents to take responsibility for situations beyond their control. What makes individuals able to survive and thrive in this type of environment? It is realized that most individuals who reach the superintendency probably have certain characteristics, such as above average intelligence, but this alone does not account for successful leadership in a particular profession. Certain experiences or life events probably contribute significantly to how successful superintendents operate.

Predictions are that three-quarters of all U.S. superintendents will be eligible to retire by the end of the twentieth century. Much can be learned about successful superintendents that might be of value as efforts are made to prepare future local education chief executive officers. Experiences or life events have contributed to individuals being successful in the superintendency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify key life events of successful superintendents and to look at how this information can be used to help develop individuals aspiring to the superintendency.

Statement of the Problem

The central question which this study addressed was: What key life events or experiences have contributed significantly to the success of superintendents of schools?

Sub Question Areas

1. Have certain persons been instrumental in careers of successful superintendents and have they contributed to superintendent success and how?
2. What training experiences have had an impact on the careers of successful superintendents and how?
3. What leadership roles have been instrumental in preparing successful superintendents?
4. What personal setbacks have been experienced in which successful superintendents recovered?
5. What successful practices have been implemented based on knowledge gained from key life events or experiences of successful superintendents?

Significance of the Study

Identifying the key life events, lessons learned, and practices implemented by successful superintendents should provide implications for school systems in the identification of potential school leaders that have had similar experiences or life events, and knowledge of practices

vital to successful superintendents. The results of this study might also be helpful to students aspiring to the superintendency in planning their own career development. The study should provide assistance to individuals involved in training programs at the higher education level as they design course work and mentorships for leadership development programs. Additionally, the results of this study should be of value to local school staff development specialists as inservice activities are planned for school leaders at the elementary and secondary levels. Local education CEOs might also find the results of this study useful as decisions are made about assignments for growth and preparation of local education administrators. Finally, the findings of this study may lead to further research on the identification of key life events of successful superintendents which could be of assistance in the development of local education CEOs.

Limitations

1. The study was limited to the perceptions of five successful superintendents.

2. The study was limited to the responses given by nominated superintendents, therefore the results of this study cannot be generalized to any population.

Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into five chapters. In Chapter I an introduction to the study has been presented, the purpose of the study, the problem addressed, and the significance of the study. In Chapter II a review of the literature is presented as it relates to the present problem. In Chapter III a description of the research methods and procedures of the study is presented. In Chapter IV the results of the study are presented. In Chapter V the conclusions, recommendations, and a summary of the study are given.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The position of superintendent is entered through academic degrees and state certification. In North Carolina a bachelor's degree is required for entry into teaching, a master's degree is required for Level I assistant principal/principal certification, and an educational specialist degree for Level II superintendent certification.

Glass (1992) found that prior experience expected of superintendents has an impact on the typical age of individuals holding the position of local CEO of education. Most superintendents started their careers as classroom teachers at age 22 or 23 and followed the career track of teacher, principal, central office administrator, then superintendent. The median age in the 1992 study of superintendents was 49.4.

Glass (1992) noted that about ninety-six percent of the superintendents in the nation were white while only four percent were minority. Most minority superintendents were either black or Hispanic. There appears to be a growing number of minority superintendents

holding positions in the twenty largest school districts in the nation. Very few minorities serve as superintendents in small districts and those who do are usually found in the south and southwest sections of the country (Glass, 1992).

Glass (1992) indicated that there is a growing number of superintendents obtaining advanced degrees. In 1982 only twenty-eight percent of the superintendents sampled held a doctoral degree; whereas, in 1992, thirty-six percent held a doctoral degree. Of the superintendents in his study, about ninety-six percent held a combination of masters degrees, specialist certificate, or doctorate. Most states now require thirty hours beyond the masters for superintendent certification. Thirty-six percent of Glass's sample held a doctoral degree. Larger systems usually require the doctoral degree for the local CEO (Glass, 1992).

The highly publicized dismissal and turnover of large urban superintendents creates the perception that the superintendency is in constant turmoil. The average length of time in the superintendency has actually increased. The American Association of School Administrators 1992 study indicated the average length of time in the superintendency was eight years as compared to 5.6 years in 1982 (Glass, 1992).

The 1992 Study of the American School Superintendency indicated "almost half (forty-two percent) have multi-year contracts. Twenty-five percent have contracts of four years or more" (Glass, 1992, p. 32).

Contrary to the perception of rapid turnover and mobility of incumbents in the position, the average superintendent spends half of his/her career in one superintendency. Glass (1992) indicated that about twenty-five percent of the surveyed superintendents have had only two superintendencies and less than twelve percent have held three.

The American school superintendency is overwhelmingly dominated by males. Over ninety-three percent of the respondents in the 1992 study of the American school superintendency were males. Even though less than seven percent of the sample population was female, this was an increase over previous decades. In 1962 less than one percent of the sample superintendents was female (Glass, 1992).

Most superintendents will spend less than six years as a classroom teacher before entering administration or supervision. The first administrative position for over forty-three percent of the male superintendents in the 1992 AASA study was the principalship. The first administrative position for over thirty percent of the female sample

superintendents was a director-coordinator. The first administrative position for almost twenty-eight of the female sample in the AASA study was the assistant principal. Most superintendents will follow the teacher, principal, central office career pattern prior to moving into the superintendency (Glass, 1992).

Keys for Access to the Superintendency

In a study done by Lyons (1993) on the perceptions of search consultants of the qualities that school boards seek in superintendents, he noted despite six-figure salaries and considerable fringe benefits, large urban school systems are having difficulty employing superintendents. Lyons (1993) noted that the number one criterion of school boards in selecting a superintendent was performance during the interview. The importance of factors school boards use in selecting superintendents as perceived by search consultants (in descending order) were:

1. Performance during the interview
2. Previous experience as a superintendent
3. Knowledge of curriculum/instruction/teaching/ learning
4. Candidate's vision for education
5. Performance in previous position
6. Experience and success with school constituent groups
7. Perceived political astuteness of candidate

8. Knowledge of school finance/budgeting/business operations
9. Experience and success in working with multi-cultural racial and ethnic populations
10. Communication skills (Lyons, 1993, p. 315).

The current literature emphasized over and over again the importance of the interview in landing the top jobs in education. Grier and Trenta (1992) stressed the importance of doing homework on the school system, being on time, wearing crisp professional attire, and making a favorable first impression. But the person that gets the job will be the one who performs the best in the interview. Strategies for performing well in the interview include knowing the setting for the interview process. If the interview is a screening interview, a good strategy would be to request an early interview to prevent facing tired interviewers. If it's a second round interview, it is wise to request a late interview to be the final strong applicant all others are measured against. It's always a good idea to ask a friend who has interviewed for a similar position to do a practice interview with you. Visiting the community, the local library, and reading back issues of the local newspaper can provide invaluable insight when answering questions in the interview. Prepared portfolios with examples of the candidate's work are almost a necessity.

The importance of mastering the handshake, being positive, and ending on a strong note cannot be overstressed in the interview process (Grier & Trenta, 1992).

Davis and Brown (1992) noted the importance of the interview impression in obtaining the top position in a school district. Many qualified applicants will be in the running for most superintendent positions, but they contend that the applicants who have a plan to project the greatest confidence will be among the top contenders. Strategies carefully planned in the following areas should aid in letting that positive confidence come through:

1. Conduct homework on as many areas of the district as possible (annual performance, financial reports, improvement plans, achievement data, philosophy, and concerns of the board)
2. Dress conservatively
3. Timing is everything, arrive thirty minutes early to pick up any last minute insight
4. Pay attention to that all, important first impression
5. Listen attentively during the interview
6. Make judicious use of jargon
7. Remember that position is power, use body language and position to show interest and attention
8. Speak positively about relevant job experiences
9. Leave a good impression (Davis & Brown, 1992, pp. 22-23).

Socialization Theory and the Superintendency

The formal and informal preparation for and initiation into the superintendency are grounded in socialization theory (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990). Clausen (1968) stated that socialization is the process by which a role aspirant learns the values, norms, requisite work skills and abilities, and required behavior for the specific role. Baldwin (1969) identified the key components of socialization theory as internalization, identity, significant others, role learning, and process. An explanation and examples of each follow.

Internalization and Identity

Internalization emphasizes the importance of one identifying and internalizing the values and norms shared by those in the group to which one has joined or aspires to join and expected for a particular role (Spencer & Inkeles, 1976). This does not suggest the individual must accept all guidelines and never question them. During the identity stage of the socialization process the aspirant begins taking on the values, norms, and behavior of a superintendent and develops an identity. Internalization and identification occur simultaneously.

Nebgen (1993) noted "Getting to know the school district community, and they you, is a priority for any new superintendent" (p. 354). Strategies to learn the community culture should touch all segments of the community including the media, parents, community leaders, staff and the board.

Establishing good rapport with the media can be crucial to the success of the superintendent. Candidates considered finalists for a superintendent appointment should expect to be called by the media to address issues prevalent in the community in which they seek to be CEO of education. The CEO of education should also contact politicians and community leaders to listen to their concerns relevant to education.

Dunnerstick (1992) noted "In each community, certain people exert tremendous influence and control over the rest of the community. Get to know them, their support can affect your career" (pp. 33-34). Accepting opportunities to interact with community groups and civic clubs provides the superintendent a chance to determine the values and norms of the leadership in the community.

Significant Other

Mead (1934) called the third component of the socialization theory the "significant other." Brim and Wheeler (1968) defined the significant others as those persons "who have great influence because of the frequency of contact, their primacy, and their control over rewards and punishment" (p. 8). The significant others may be individuals or groups, and are sometimes referred to as the socializing agent. Konnert and Augenstein (1990) identified significant others as mentors and sponsors. They note that the role, behavior, attitude, and values of significant others are taken on by the one being socialized.

Wasden (1988) shed light on the value of mentoring for administrators with his definition:

The mentor is a master at providing opportunities for the growth of others, by identifying situations and events which contribute knowledge and experience to the life of the steward. Opportunities are not happenstance; they must be thoughtfully designed and organized into logical sequence. Sometimes hazards are attached to opportunity. The mentor takes great pains to help the steward recognize and negotiate dangerous situations. In doing all this, the mentor has an opportunity for growth through service, which is the highest form of leadership. (p. 3)

Levinson (1978) in analyzing socialization into professions noted that a mentor is "one defined not in terms of the formal role, but in terms

of the character of the relationship and the function it serves . . . a mixture of parent and peer. A mentor may act as host and guide welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and the protege with its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters" (p. 196). The literature revealed that mentoring will likely be a valuable part of administrator development programs in the future.

Role Learning

The fourth component of socialization theory, role learning, as described by Sarbin and Allen (1968) "In an organized set of behaviors that belongs to an identifiable position, and these behaviors are activated when the position is occupied" (pp. 545-546). Sarbin and Allen (1968) explained that the role "defines the limits or range of tolerated behavior" as well as "the rights and privileges, the dates and obligations, of (that position) in relation to other positions in the community structure" (p. 501). Modeling is another type of role learning in which "behaviors, personal styles, and specific attributes are emulated by others" (Shapiro et al, 1978, p. 52). Bandura (1977) stated that "most behavior is learned observationally through modeling" (p. 22).

The literature revealed the traditional roles and duties of the superintendent as described by Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991) such as gathering data for school board members to make policy, making recommendations on employment and dismissal, preparing and administering the budget, and curriculum and instructional program development and evaluation will change as reform efforts such as site based management become more prevalent. Kowalski and Oates (1993) noted "in the new paradigm of leaders needed for school-based management, superintendents must have: (1) instructional leadership, (2) transformational leadership, and (3) visionary leadership" (p. 383). Herman (1990) describes instructional leadership behaviors as: (1) allocating instructional personnel, (2) organizing the instructional program, (3) supporting the instructional program, (4) developing instructional personnel, and (5) planning for the instructional program.

Transformational leaders pursue three goals:

1. Helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture
2. Fostering teacher development
3. Helping staff members solve problems together more effectively (Leithwood, 1992, pp. 8-12).

In a study on school-based management by Kowalski and Oates (1993) they noted, "It would be nearly impossible to have a superintendent succeed in school-based management who did not believe in the concepts of transformational leadership . . ." (p. 384).

Superintendents attempting to put school-based management strategies in place should attempt to have a vision for their school system. Developing a vision for a system should be a collaborative effort with all the professionals in the system involved. Superintendents should serve as the leader in developing that vision (Kowalski & Oates, 1993).

Process

The fifth element of socialization is the process. The socialization process is a continuous interactional process between the socializee and the socializer(s). Socialization entails primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialization basically consist of experiences that make one a member of society. Secondary socialization "is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his/her society" (Berger & Luckman, 1967, p. 130).

Primary and secondary socialization are further divided into formal and informal. Greenfield (1985) noted that "in formal socialization . . . both the role of the learner and the material to be learned are specified . . . (whereas in) informal neither . . . are specified in an explicit, formal sense" (p. 100). Formal socialization processes are found in structured school setting such as graduate schools, medical schools and seminaries. Wilcott (1973) noted informal socialization as "conventional wisdom" passed on orally from one generation to the next.

In a study conducted by the University of Texas in Austin for the American Association of School Administrators on superintendents three key findings were noted among the group of superintendents nominated for exemplary performance:

1. The most effective superintendents had completed more graduate study than the average or less effective superintendents
2. The effective superintendent likely was involved in professional activities
3. The effective superintendent worked as a high-level central office administrator after serving as a principal and before assuming a superintendency (Burnham, 1989, p. 18).

Burnham (1989) also noted that over sixty percent of the superintendents nominated as being exemplary had completed a doctorate.

Other key predictors of exemplary superintendents included serving as a teacher, principal and high level administrator, and being active in professional activities.

Strategies for Success in the Superintendency

The skills necessary to be successful in the superintendency are many and varied. New superintendents encounter different phases of the superintendency that must be navigated successfully to maintain employment. Giles and Giles (1991) identified five passages that superintendents must travel through to take control of their new positions. The five passages, as proposed by Giles and Giles (1991), should take no more than three to six months each, and would involve the following stages:

1. Taking hold - A period of intense action and learning.
2. Immersion - During this stage ideas will emerge, patterns and problems will become more visible.
3. Reshaping - This stage calls for action. There must be a clear vision. Key members must be brought on board to mobilize the system.
4. Consolidation - This stage involves diagnosing and studying problems, then correcting them as needed.
5. Refinement - The refinement passage is a period of little organizational change and great calm. From now on, the

learning curve should be more incremental and routine (Giles & Giles, 1991, pp. 23-25).

Wilson (1991) noted successful superintendents must have the ability to inspire others. Superintendents must have salesmanship skills to get the system's employees, the board and the community to buy into the vision. Wilson also noted successful superintendents are self-confident, sensitive to board members, have high energy and a sense of humor.

Behrens (1989) also noted the importance of strong vision for the CEO of local education. He divides the vision into two parts. The first part being the "intuitive imagining" of the possible desired achievement. The second part is the converting of the intuitive vision into a plan of action (Behrens, 1989, p. 16). In a study done by Bennis and Nanus (1985) on 90 "trend directing" leaders in the corporate and public sector it was noted that all their subjects had a vision and the ability to move that vision into reality.

Behrens (1989) noted that mastery of communication and visionary leadership are inseparable. He noted, "If a spark of genius exists in the leadership function at all, it may lie in the ability to assemble a clearly articulate vision of the future that at once, is simple, easily understood,

clearly desirable, and energizing" (Behrens, 1989, p. 17). Trust is a must between the leader and the followers to mobilize the vision.

"Reliability, consistency and integrity are producers of trust. Followers do not take up a cause through exhortation. They adhere from example" (Behrens, 1989, p. 18).

In a study conducted by Johnson (1993) on vision in the superintendency, the importance of having a shared vision was stressed. Her observations concluded collaborative vision development is ideal when time permits. The urgency of needs in a system might not always permit superintendents to be collaborative.

In a study done by the American Association of School Administrators (1993) Commission on Standards for the Superintendency, a list of eight standards for the superintendency were developed. The standards were developed based on reviews of related research, discussions with practicing superintendents and with persons charged with preparing superintendents, and input from the society at large. The standards are considered dynamic, not static, and will probably be used in many instances to determine the preparedness and success of superintendents. Following is an overview of the standards:

1. Leadership and District Culture - Demonstrate executive leadership by developing a collective district vision; shape school culture and climate; provide purpose and direction for individuals and groups; demonstrate an understanding of international issues affecting education; formulate strategic plans, goals, and chance efforts with staff and community; set priorities in the context of community, student and staff needs; serve as an articulate spokesperson for the welfare of all students in a multicultural context.
2. Policy and Governance - Develop procedures for working with the board of education that define mutual expectation, working relationships and strategies for formulating district policy for external and internal programs; adjust local policy to state and federal requirements and constitutional provision, standards and regulatory applications; recognize and apply standards involving civil and criminal liabilities.
3. Communication and Community Relations - Articulate district purpose and priorities to the community and mass media; request and respond to community feedback; and demonstrate consensus building and conflict mediation. Identify, track, and deal with issues. Formulate and carry out plans for internal and external communications. Exhibit an understanding of school districts as political systems by applying communication skills to strengthen community support; align constituencies in support of district priorities; build coalitions to gain financial and programmatic support; formulate democratic strategies for referenda; relate political initiatives to the welfare of children.
4. Organizational Management - Exhibit an understanding of the school district as a system by defining processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision making; manage the data flow; frame and solve problems; frame, develop priorities, and formulate solutions; assist others to form reasoned opinions; reach logical conclusions and make

quality decisions to meet internal and external customer expectations; plan and schedule personal and organization work; establish procedures to regulate activities and projects; delegate and empower at appropriate organizational levels; secure and allocate human and material resources; develop and manage the district budget; maintain accurate fiscal records.

5. Curriculum Planning and Development - Design curriculum and a strategic plan that enhance teaching and learning in multiple contexts; provide planning and future methods to anticipate occupational trends and their educational implications; identify taxonomies of instructional objectives and validation procedures for curricular units, using theories of cognitive development; align and sequence curriculum; use valid and reliable performance indicators and testing procedures to measure performance outcomes; and describe the proper use of computers and other learning and information technologies.
6. Instructional Management - Exhibit knowledge of instructional management by implementing a system that includes research findings on learning and instructional strategies, instructional time, advanced electronic technologies, and resources to maximize student outcomes; describe and apply research and best practice on integrating curriculum and resources for multicultural sensitivity and assessment strategies to help all students achieve at high levels.
7. Human Resources Management - Develops a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members; select appropriate models for supervision based on adult motivation research; identify alternative employee benefits packages; and describe and apply the legal requirements for personnel selection, development, retention, and dismissal.

8. Values and Ethics of Leadership - Understand and model appropriate value systems, ethics, and moral leadership; know the role of education in a democratic society; exhibit multicultural and ethic understanding and related behavior; adapt educational programming to the needs of diverse constituencies; balance complex community demands in the best interest of the student; scan and monitor the environment for opportunities for staff and students; respond in an ethical and skillful way to the electronic and printed news media; and coordinate social agencies and human services to help each student grow and develop as a caring, informed citizen (Hoyle, 1993, pp. 6-16).

Summary

Everything else being equal, performance in the interview seems to be the key factor in moving into the position of superintendent. Finding out as much as possible about the system should help applicants display the confidence and knowledge desired to be a top contender.

Studying and using the components of socialization theory should prove helpful as superintendents prepare to move into and plan for continued success in the superintendency. Superintendents will need to constantly work at developing personal skills and gaining new knowledge to stay current with the dynamic demands of the position of CEO of local public education.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The procedures and methods of the study are described in this chapter. The chapter has three sections: (1) the population and sample, (2) the research methods used in the study, and (3) the procedures used to analyze the data.

The Population and Sample

The population consisted of all 122 public school superintendents within the state of North Carolina during the 1994-1995 school year. The names of the superintendents were obtained from the personnel office of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

The sample was the five superintendents in North Carolina who receive the most votes by their peer superintendents as being successful.

Research Methodology

Following is a step-by-step list of the research methodology:

1. All superintendents in North Carolina were surveyed to obtain a profile of the 122 superintendents in North Carolina (See Appendix A). Each survey was assigned a code for identification and follow up purposes. Eighty-four percent of the superintendent surveys were received by the stated return date which exceeded the eighty percent desired, therefore eliminating the need for follow up.
2. Each superintendent in North Carolina was asked to nominate five successful superintendents in North Carolina based on their perception of success. Each nominee was to be in their second contract or have been employed in the system at least six years.
3. A frequency count was used to determine which five superintendents' names appeared most often.
4. An extensive interview was conducted with each of the top five nominees to determine the life events they thought contributed to their success as superintendent. No attempt was made to select individuals based on race, sex or religion. Also, no attempt was made to determine which experiences or life events were more important than others, except for the importance placed upon them by the respondents.

5. The superintendents interviewed were sent the interview questions prior to the interview so they could reflect on their responses. The central questions in the interview focused around key life events that have contributed to their success. A study done by Perry (1992) on successful middle school principals and a study done on successful business executives by Lindsey, Holmes and McCall (1987) were used as a guide in developing questions and theme areas. Questions related to set-backs or hardships, significant others, role learning, success contributors, and training programs were used as probes in identifying key life events of successful superintendents (See Appendix B). The interviews were recorded with a tape player to assure accuracy of the data collected.
6. Profiles of the sample were compared to profiles of all superintendents surveyed to determine similarities and differences.

Data Analysis

Information from the interviews conducted in December 1994 was transcribed from tapes into a computer. The interview data were analyzed using matrices to identify key life events and their contribution

to the success of each superintendent's career. Frequencies and percentages were used to compare the demographic data of the five successful superintendents to all of the responding superintendents.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify key life events of successful school superintendents in North Carolina and to look at how this information can be used to help develop individuals aspiring to the superintendency. In this chapter a comparison of the demographic profiles of the responding superintendents to the five sample superintendents whose names appeared most often will be presented. An analysis of the responses given by the five superintendents during the interview sessions will also be presented in this chapter.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was the 122 superintendents of North Carolina. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided the list of superintendents in November 1994. Each superintendent was sent an initial survey designed to provide demographic data on themselves and to nominate five fellow superintendents whom they believed were the

most successful in the state. A total of 103 surveys (eighty-four percent of the total population) were returned. The five superintendents named most often were identified as the sample. The researcher goal of a seventy-five response rate was obtained by the initial return date, therefore eliminating the need for follow-up.

Description of Participating Administrators

Table 1 is a summary of the ages of respondents and provides a comparison of the five sample nominees. In 1994 nearly seventy percent of the responding superintendents were between the age of 45 to 54, while sixty percent of the sample were between the age of 40 to 40.

The race of the respondents and sample have been summarized in Table 2. In 1994 a little over ninety-one percent of the superintendents in North Carolina are white. Almost seven percent are black and not quite two percent are Native American. Of the sample one hundred percent of the superintendents are white.

Table 3 is a summary the highest degree completed by the respondents and sample. In 1994 thirty-one percent of the respondents

Table 1

Age of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Age	Total Respondents		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
40 - 44	8	7.8	1	20
45 - 49	34	33	3	60
50 - 54	36	34.9	0	0
55 - 59	19	18.4	1	20
60 or Older	5	4.99	0	0
No Age Given	1	1		
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 2

Race of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Race	Total Responding		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Black	7	6.8	0	0
Native American	2	1.9	0	0
White	94	91.3	5	100
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 3

Highest Degree Completed by Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Degree	Total Responding		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Masters	2	2	0	0
Sixth Year	30	29	1	20
Doctoral	71	69	4	80
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

indicated they did not have the doctoral degree. Of the sample superintendents eighty percent had completed the doctoral degree.

Table 4 is a summary of the length of time the respondents and the sample have been in their present positions. In 1994 sixty-five percent of the respondents had been in their present position four years or less, while thirty-five of the respondents had served in their positions for five years or more. Of the sample, three of the five had been in their present positions for five years or more.

Table 5 is a summary of the length of the present contract of the respondents and the sample. In 1994 almost seventy-seven percent of the respondents reported having a four year contract, while one hundred percent of the sample had a four year contract.

Table 6 is a summary of the number of superintendent positions held excluding the present one by the respondents and the sample. In 1994 just over sixty-one percent of the respondents are in their first superintendency, while less than eighteen percent have held two or more. Three of the five sample superintendents have held only their present superintendency.

Table 4

Length of Time in Present Positions of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Year(s)	Total Respondents		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
1 - 2	43	41.7	0	0
3 - 4	24	23.3	2	40
5 - 6	14	13.6	1	20
7 - 8	11	10.7	1	20
> 8 years	11	10.7	1	20
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 5

Length of Present Contract of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Year(s)	Total Responding		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
1	3	2.9	0	0
2	10	9.7	0	0
3	11	10.7	0	0
4	79	76.7	5	100
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 6

Number of Superintendent Positions Held by Respondents Excluding the Present Position in North Carolina 1994-1995

Position(s)	Total Respondents		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
0	63	61.2	3	60
1	22	21.4	0	0
2	10	9.7	0	0
3	6	5.8	2	40
4 or more	2	1.9	0	0
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 7 is a summary of the gender of respondents and the sample. In 1994 almost ninety percent of the respondents were male, while one hundred percent of the sample were male.

Table 8 is a summary of the levels of teaching experience of the respondents and the sample. In 1994 over twenty percent of the respondents had high school teaching experience only, while just over twenty-seven percent middle and high teaching experience. Of the sample superintendents eighty percent had teaching experience at more than one level.

Table 9 is a summary of the levels of principalship experience of the respondents and the sample. In 1994 over twenty-one of the respondents had elementary principalship experience only, while over forty-six percent had principalship experience at two or more levels. Of the sample superintendents eighty percent had principalship experience at more than one level.

Table 10 is a summary of the positions held at the central office level other than superintendent by the respondents and the sample. In 1994 almost thirty-nine percent of the respondents had assistant superintendent experience only, while almost twenty-three percent had no

Table 7

Gender of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Sex	Total Respondents		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Male	92	89.3	5	100
Female	11	10.7	0	0
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 8

Levels of Teaching Experience of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Levels	Total Respondents		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary	12	11.7	0	0
Middle	4	3.9	0	0
High	21	20.4	1	20
Elementary and Middle	14	13.6	2	40
Middle and High	28	27.1	1	20
Elementary and High	0	0	0	0
Elementary, Middle and High	10	9.7	1	20
College	14	13.6	0	0
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 9

Levels of Principalship Experience of Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Levels	Total Responding		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary	22	21.4	1	20
Middle	2	1.9	0	0
High	10	9.7	0	0
Elementary and Middle	11	10.7	2	40
Middle and High	15	14.6	1	20
Elementary and High	17	16.5	0	0
Elementary, Middle and High	16	15.5	1	20
No Principal Experience	10	9.7	0	0
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

Table 10

Positions Held at the Central Office Level By Responding Superintendents in North Carolina 1994-1995

Positions	Total Respondents		Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Supervisor	3	2.9	0	0
Director	3	2.9	0	0
Assistant Superintendent	40	38.8	4	80
Supervisor and Director	7	6.8	0	0
Director and Assistant Superintendent	12	11.7	1	20
Supervisor and Assistant Superintendent	5	4.9	0	0
Supervisor, Director and Assistant Superintendent	10	9.7	0	0
No Central Office Experience	23	22.3	0	0
TOTAL	103	100	5	100

central office experience prior to assuming the superintendency. Of the sample superintendents eighty percent also had assistant superintendent experience only.

Significant Others and Their Contributions to the Development of Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents had a significant other superintendent under whom they worked that contributed to the development of their career (See Figure 1). Significant others for two of the superintendents contributed to their careers by stressing the importance of being prepared and by providing opportunities for administrative preparation to occur. One significant other superintendent stressed preparation by making it known that aspiring administrators were expected to perform if given a leadership opportunity. Two superintendents mentioned college professors that were significant in preparing them for careers by providing knowledge that proved valuable when confronting new challenges and by being influential in helping to complete the doctoral degree.

CONTRIBUTIONS				
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	PREPARATION	VALUES LEARNED	STYLE	ADMINISTRATIVE ENCOURAGEMENT
Superintendents Worked For	<p>"The superintendent I worked for as an assistant provided me the opportunity to complete my doctoral residency." (S1)</p> <p>"I learned more than anything else, organization." (S4)</p> <p>"Expected you to swim if you got in the water." (S3)</p> <p>"Doing your homework and being prepared." (S4)</p> <p>"You can sometime be successful if you are better prepared than the other person." (S4)</p>	<p>"My superintendent taught me about decency and do your job and try to do it well." (S4)</p> <p>"I learned from him high expectation, raising the sights of an entire community." (S4)</p> <p>"Pointed out to me a strong work ethic." (S2)</p>	<p>"I don't think you can lead by commanding, you can be an administrator and not be a leader." (S4)</p> <p>"The people I've tried to emulate the most have been people that try to give direction." (S4)</p> <p>"I learned watching you can move too fast, create stress. I would do it differently." (S3)</p> <p>"Helped me create a vision and doing a good job at it." (S5)</p> <p>"I try to see how they lead." (S4)</p> <p>"I've never worked for somebody successful that leads by commanding." (S4)</p>	<p>"Administration came early with the encouragement of the superintendent that gave me my first job." (S2)</p> <p>"My first superintendent recognized me and what he thought was potential." (S1)</p> <p>"The first superintendent I worked for encouraged me to become an administrator." (S2)</p>

Figure 1

Contributions of Significant Other

Figure 1 (continued)

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	CONTRIBUTIONS			
	PREPARATION	VALUES LEARNED	STYLE	ADMINISTRATIVE ENCOURAGEMENT
College Professor	"My college advisor helped me gain the wisdom to try to deal with the kind of problems you are going to run into in the business." (S1) "My college doctoral advisor had a major influence, very nurturing person, helped me complete my EDD." (S5)		"Helped me to understand you have limited control over some situations." (S1)	"My college professor created a vision for me." (S3) "My college professor expressed confidence in me and provided good advice." (S1)
Board Member		"One of my first board members coerced the idea of excellence." (S5) "To be a good superintendent you have to distinguish yourself from the crowd." (S5)		
Spouse				"My wife has been there as a supporter." (S5)

Figure 1 (continued)

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	CONTRIBUTIONS			ADMINISTRATIVE ENCOURAGEMENT
	PREPARATION	VALUES LEARNED	STYLE	
Parent		<p>"My mother laid the framework in me that you have respect for everybody." (S4)</p> <p>"My mother has been instrumental in terms of my style or philosophy." (S5)</p>	<p>"Father-in-law has an unique skill in actively listening to people, tremendous amount of patience." (S2)</p>	

Three superintendents identified significant other superintendents that contributed to their success by instilling values. Significant others stressed values about a strong work ethic, decency and doing a job well, and having high expectations for an entire community. One superintendent identified a board member that impressed upon him the notion of striving for excellence in all he did and the need to rise above the crowd of average superintendents. Another superintendent identified a parent as contributing to his success by laying the framework that was instrumental in his style and philosophy development.

All five superintendents identified significant others who were felt to contribute to their style. Three superintendents identified significant other superintendents under whom they worked that indirectly contributed to their style. Two of these superintendents learned strategies through observation that they desired to adopt and some that were felt not to be appropriate for the situation observed that they would not repeat. One superintendent observed that successful leaders give direction and don't command subordinates. Another observed moving too fast can create unnecessary stress in an organization. The third superintendent followed a vision of effectiveness and success that was created by the significant

other superintendent. A college professor contributed to the style of one superintendent by imparting knowledge that later had a bearing on how new situations were viewed and acted upon. Another superintendent also identified a parent with unique skill of actively listening that influenced his style in dealing with people.

Four superintendents identified significant others that provided encouragement to pursue administrative careers. Two superintendents mentioned superintendents under whom they worked that recognized them, providing encouragement to pursue administration, and provided opportunities to enter administration. Two superintendents identified college professors that created a vision for an administrative career and provided advice for entry into administration. One superintendent noted the encouragement provided by his spouse as contributing to his success as an administrator.

The importance of a significant other to the success of superintendents can be clearly seen. All five superintendents identified at least two significant others with one superintendent citing four significant others.

Contributions of Training Experiences to the Development of Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents identified formal training experiences that contributed to the development of their career (See Figure 2). One superintendent cited a formal training experience tied to a graduate degree program that directly influenced his life by providing opportunities, through a fellowship, for him to be exposed to premiere educational persons and places in the country. A second superintendent noted discipline that was developed because of the expectation level and performance required to advance through a degree program. Four of the five superintendents noted formal training experiences that provided practical knowledge that assisted them in their day-to-day work as a superintendent. One of these five superintendents cited a leadership program that focused on assessment, development, and analysis as having the most impact on his career in working with organizations. The leadership program helped him to understand how one can be perceived by others, and necessity to use different styles in different circumstances in attempting to be successful in an organization. Another cited the NC Superintendent's Executive Program (SEP) as providing practical

TRAINING EXPERIENCE	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	LIFE INFLUENCING	PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE	CAREER ADVANCING
Formal Experiences	<p>"East Carolina had such an influence on my life. The EDD program at NCSU was helpful to me." (S1)</p> <p>"The Rockefeller Fellowship at UNC-CH gave me an opportunity to go to the premiere places in the country and be exposed." (S5)</p> <p>"The Virginia Tech EDD program gave me a lot of discipline because of the way you had to pace yourself to get through the program." (S5)</p>	<p>"My graduate program in administration was very practical, very hands on connected. I thought the program was very realistic." (S2)</p> <p>"I did a lot with leadership assessment, leadership development, looking and analyzing your leadership style, and how these would impact on the organization." (S3)</p> <p>"I went through the typical MS, EDS, EDD programs and as you would expect some of these experiences were helpful and some not so helpful." (S4)</p> <p>"The program that has been most meaningful to me as a superintendent has been the NC Superintendent's Executive Program." (S4)</p> <p>"I continue to refer to a course called Boonology, which is programming process course which has to do with systems analysis as far as how to get things done through developing systems within organizations." (S1)</p>	

Figure 2

Contributions of Training Programs

Figure 2 (continued)

TRAINING EXPERIENCE	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	LIFE INFLUENCING	PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE	CAREER ADVANCING
Formal Experiences (continued)		<p>"The EDD program in Adult and Community College helped me learn how to work a great deal with adults, getting adults to administer and operate program for elementary and secondary education." (S1)</p> <p>"Leadership programs have helped me understand how you can be perceived by others and how you can operate within an organization and be successful, then other times be unsuccessful depending on what style you using under circumstances." (S3)</p> <p>"The Superintendent's Executive Program does some practical things you need to know like legal issues, personnel issues, and instructional methodology." (S4)</p> <p>"What I learned from the Superintendent Executive Program is the superintendency is a highly complex position, you need to have a lot of different strategies in your arsenal to deal with the things that come up and there are lots of ways to get those strategies." (S4)</p>	

Figure 2 (continued)

CONTRIBUTIONS			
TRAINING EXPERIENCE	LIFE INFLUENCING	PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE	CAREER ADVANCING
Formal Experiences (continued)		"I call people at the Institute of Government I developed contacts with to get answers to individual questions." (S4)	
Informal Experiences	"I can't help of thinking back to high school, working on weekends at the gas station. In those days you washed the windshield, put air in the tires and checked under the hood. That service type attitude I think is something I picked up on." (S2) "Opportunities to have different experiences have allowed me to test some of that leadership training." (S3)	" I worked at Hardees for three years while I went to college, and I realize that you can juggle a lot of bells at one time." (S2) "Knowing through good time management, and utilizing people to help you, you can do a lot more than you normally think you can." (S2) "You don't need to use the same style in all circumstances." (S3)	"Leaving education and working in the business sector for three years gave me a shot in the arm for becoming a superintendent." (S2) "The impact of having an opportunity to work in several districts as opposed to one gave me an opportunity to observe more leadership styles than just one." (S3) "I worked in districts where there was a high expectation there ought to be constant things being changed." (S3) "Being involved in the business sector gave me an unique opportunity to be involved in running a business from hiring, to dismissals, layoffs, and court cases." (S2)

knowledge in the areas of legal and personnel issues, and instructional methodology as being helpful. This program helped him realize the complexity of the position of superintendent and provided a team of professionals to contact when questions arise. A third superintendent noted how the EDD program in Adult and Community College helped him learn how to work with adults in getting them to administer programs for elementary and secondary students. The fourth superintendent noted the practicality of his graduate program made it very applicable.

Two superintendents also noted informal training experiences that contributed to their success as superintendent. One superintendent noted the service type attitude he developed in working with people while working at a gas station in high school. This same superintendent learned while working as a manager at Hardees and going to college that through good time management and delegation you can accomplish more than you think. He also felt leaving education after becoming a principal to work in private industry helped to propel him into the superintendency having gained experience in hiring, dismissals, layoffs, and court cases. A second superintendent noted different job opportunities allowed him not only to test his leadership skills acquired, but enabled him to observe a

variety of styles displayed by other educational leaders. These opportunities also made him realize the need to adjust your style depending on the circumstances. These opportunities also helped him realize expectations vary from district to district.

Formal and informal training experiences proved to be invaluable to all five superintendents in contributing to their development and success.

Leadership Roles and Their Contributions to the Development of Superintendent's Careers

All five superintendents identified administrative, professional, or community leadership roles that contributed significantly to their career (See Figure 3). Three of the five superintendents noted professional leadership roles that provided experience or awareness that enabled them to serve more effectively as superintendent. One superintendent noted experiences gained from serving as president of a local NCAE chapter caused him to develop empathy for teachers and their problems. This experience also gave him practice in developing win-win situations in working with teachers and administrators. A second superintendent cited

CONTRIBUTIONS				
LEADERSHIP ROLES	DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS	PROGRAM INFLUENCE
Administrative	<p>"Every rung of the ladder has been touched. I'm a firm believer that you don't understand problems of other people unless you have had some of their experiences." (S5)</p> <p>"Serving as superintendent in a small district gave me an opportunity to experience everything in the district." (S5)</p> <p>"In small systems you learn a lot about the total system. In large systems you get some exposure to a small area but you don't get exposure to a lot of areas at the school system." (S5)</p> <p>"I think those formal leadership positions that I have held have been beneficial--principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent." (S1)</p>	<p>"I've had positions as a worker, a supervisor, a manager, an administrator and a team worker. I've had an opportunity to be involved in all these." (S2)</p>	<p>"I know what it is like to be in a school with 1,000 kids. I know what it is like to deal with irate parents and challenging staff and teachers. I understand what you mean when you say you have a scheduling problem and don't have the resources and personnel to correct that." (S3)</p>	

Figure 3

Contributions of Leadership Roles

Figure 3 (continued)

LEADERSHIP ROLES	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS
Administrative	<p>"Having been a principal at all three levels for me has been very valuable. It has given me an immediate <i>esprit de corp</i> with principals because I can talk the talk and walk the walk." (S3)</p> <p>"Having worked in different settings helps you to learn some things from experiencing it. It's kind of like trying to describe the taste of a new food if you just haven't been to the table." (S3)</p> <p>"I think you build a set of experiences and the more experiences you can have in different types of things the more prepared you are to be a superintendent." (S4)</p>		

Figure 3 (continued)

CONTRIBUTIONS				
LEADERSHIP ROLES	DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS	PROGRAM INFLUENCE
<p>Professional Leadership</p>		<p>"As a result of being president of our NCAE Chapter when I was a teacher I had an opportunity to deal with a lot of teachers grievances and it helped in my empathy for teachers and the problems they perceive on a daily basis." (S5)</p> <p>"Serving as president of our local NCAE Chapter helped me understand how to talk with people-- talk with teachers and then go talk with administrators to result in a win-win situation." (S5)</p>	<p>"I just finished as Chairman of the Division of Superintendents for NCASA. I think that as much as anything put me in a position to sort of keep my hand on the pulse of the entire state in terms of the superintendency." (S4)</p> <p>"Serving as president of NCASA put me in a position to make contact with other administrators across the state and better understand their outlook." (S1)</p> <p>"I'm on the Board of NCASA now and the NC High School Athletic Association Board of Directors. We see some of the problems that occur that some of our kids are dealing with and not dealing with very well."</p>	<p>"I have served as chairman of the NC Testing Commission, which enabled me to have a bearing on the testing programs in existence in the state." (S1)</p>

Figure 3 (continued)

LEADERSHIP ROLES	CONTRIBUTIONS			
	DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS	PROGRAM INFLUENCE
Professional Leadership			"Serving as Chairman of the NC Testing Commission gave me a wider perspective of the kinds of things we are presently doing with all this emphasis on testing." (S1)	
Community		"I've served as Rotary President. In small communities there aren't a lot of people to do the jobs so you end up getting called on a lot." (S4) "Serving as chairman of the deacon board of our church I had to try to create win-win situations for people." (S5) "Serving as president of the Jaycees Chapter required me to work on organizational skills to be an effective Jaycee." (S5)	"I think school systems are so connected with their communities, and it is important for school systems to give back to the community because it takes so much from the community." (S4) "Serving on community boards keeps you attuned to the needs of the community, and how the community works and the challenges that children bring with them when they come to school." (S4)	

Figure 3 (continued)

LEADERSHIP ROLES	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS
Other		<p>"I think for example being the drum major of a large band in high school and being president of my college student body helped my administrative career." (S3)</p> <p>"As drum major of a large high school band I learned very early you have to follow policy." (S3)</p> <p>"Being president of a college student body helped me over the years to develop a perspective that people are people wherever you find them and that you are going to have some of the same challenges when you deal with the human side of an organization." (S3)</p>	

serving as president of NC Association of School Administrators and Chairman of the NC Testing Commission not only provided opportunities for him to become more aware of some of the thinking of superintendents across the state, but enabled him to have some influence on programs in the state. One third of the superintendents noted serving as chairman of one professional organization and on the board of two professional association enabled him to have a better feel for the thinking of superintendents and some of the problems occurring in dealing with students.

All five superintendents noted on-the-job administrative experience that contributed directly to their success as superintendent. Three of the five superintendents cited day-to-day experiences such as serving as a principal at every level as being extremely helpful by allowing them to have an immediate *esprit de corp* with building level administrators. It was felt by one superintendent that it is difficult to understand some of the problems of principals and teachers unless you have been in their shoes. Two of the five superintendents noted experiences gained from serving in small districts proved invaluable because of the wide range of knowledge gained as opposed to large districts where the range of

exposure would be more limited. Three superintendents noted the wider the range of experiences in general the better one is prepared to serve in the role of superintendent.

Two superintendents identified community related leadership roles that contributed directly to their success as superintendent. One superintendent noted serving as chairman of his church deacon board required him to try to create win-win situations. He also noted serving as president of his local Jaycees Chapter required him to develop more effective organizational skills. A second superintendent noted community leadership roles served in giving educators an opportunity to give back to the community as well as enables educators to develop a better understanding of some of the challenges that students bring to school with them that must be dealt with. One superintendent identified serving as a high school drum major and a college student body president as providing an early understanding of some of the responsibilities and challenges leaders must face.

Experience in leadership positions whether administrative, professional or in the community proved beneficial to all five

superintendents. The more different leadership experiences one can have the better one is to perform the duties of superintendent.

Personal Setbacks and Their Contributions to the Success of Superintendents' Careers

Three of the five superintendents noted personal setbacks that were felt to have contributed to the success of their careers (See Figure 4). Two of the five superintendents cited being disadvantaged as a youth as a factor that was felt to increase their determination to be successful. One of the two superintendents noted that he learned at an early age through public work that things were not always fair, but through perseverance one can sometimes be successful. This superintendent also noted that being disadvantaged as a youth made him develop responsibility at an early age, and made him realize your reputation is the most important thing you have. The second of the two superintendents noted he did not realize he was disadvantaged until he took a sociology course in college. In addition, the death of his father was an event that spurred him to pursue graduate studies. Both of these situations affected him by increasing his determination to succeed.

CONTRIBUTIONS			
PERSONAL SETBACKS	INCREASED DETERMINATION	DEVELOPED RESPONSIBILITY	DEVELOPED POSITIVE OUTLOOK
Disadvantaged Hearing	<p>"I guess I could say growing up we lived in a housing project. We didn't have much money. I didn't know that I was poor until I got in college and took sociology." (S2)</p> <p>"I learned by working in the public at an early age that things aren't always fair. Sometimes you suck it up and keep on going and perseverance is part of the formula of success." (S3)</p>	"In many respects I didn't come from an affluent background that taught you your reputation is the most important thing you've got. I started to work at an early age." (S3)	
Death of a Parent	"I think my father dying with a heart attack was probably a driving force for me to go beyond a four year degree." (S2)		
Sickness as a Child			<p>"When I was six years old I had polio and that was a time of the Salk vaccine and iron lungs. I got out of bed one day and fell flat on my face and could not walk. A month later I walked back in school. I use that to remind me that things aren't as bad as they seem." (S4)</p> <p>"I said to my wife about a year or two ago, I might not ever walk and here I fuss about two and a half hours a week about pushing a lawn mower." (S4)</p>

Figure 4

Contributions of Personal Setbacks

The third superintendent that cited a personal setback as being a contributing factor noted having polio as a child and then recovering within a month as contributing to his development of a positive outlook on life. Finding a personal setback or hardship seemed difficult for these successful superintendents. Most felt they had been rather fortunate during their life.

Success Contributors to the Careers of Superintendents

All five superintendents were able to identify success contributing factors that had an influence on their career as superintendent (See Figure 5). Three superintendents noted remembering the board of education that employed you has the final word will help one be successful in the superintendency. One superintendent indicated the importance of understanding the board is the employer, but most superintendents are professionals with some definite ideas about how things should happen in a school district. He noted trying to create win-win situations for boards and superintendents seemed to be a skill that could create success for all concerned. A second superintendent noted the importance of creating a positive image of the board of education for the school system to be

CONTRIBUTIONS			
SUCCESS CONTRIBUTIONS	DEVELOPING WIN-WIN SITUATIONS	CAREER ADVANCEMENT	ORGANIZATION SUCCESS
Remembering Who The Boss Is	"A Superintendent can't forget who he works for. The main role of the superintendent in that regard is to carry out the policy and direction of a board. At the same time that's a delicate situation to be in because as a professional superintendent I have definite ideas and notions about what should happen and the way that education should be delivered." (S1)		"I've tried to focus on creating a positive image of the board with the public because I think their image is perceived to be the school system's image." (S3) "In working with the board my rule of thumb is: If I'm not sure whether to let them know about something, then I need to let them know about it. I have tried to establish an atmosphere with my board members of mutual respect and nurture that atmosphere. I think as much as anything that is the key to a superintendent's success these days." (S4)
Early Responsibility		"I think working my way through school; I guess it is probably detail to some, to be able to work a job and still be able to make good grades. I think it is important; teaches responsibility." (S2)	

Figure 5

Contributions of Success Contributors

Figure 5 (continued)

CONTRIBUTIONS			
SUCCESS CONTRIBUTIONS	DEVELOPING WIN-WIN SITUATIONS	CAREER ADVANCEMENT	ORGANIZATION SUCCESS
Mobility		<p>"I think being willing to move to different districts to get a broader base of experiences than I would have gotten had I stayed in one place because I got that experience in a very short period of time." (S3)</p> <p>"I don't think there is any question that I progressed because I've been willing to move. Some people aren't, but I've been well served by that." (S4)</p> <p>"To progress in administration you must be willing to move." (S4)</p> <p>"I've been willing to move and I think that's been good for me. Moving allows you to make more contacts and get more experience." (S4)</p>	
Understanding Job Demands		<p>"One thing I would say is the understanding that the superintendency is, as all administration is, a demanding, time-consuming job. I think you have to understand the value of hard work is not over-estimated." (S4)</p>	<p>"I think I've been well served because people have seen I'm willing to put the time in. I think people see I try to meet them half way and try to do whatever it takes." (S4)</p> <p>"You must have a commitment to preparation and thoroughness trying to explore all alternatives of the issues." (S5)</p>

Figure 5 (continued)

SUCCESS CONTRIBUTIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	DEVELOPING WIN-WIN SITUATIONS	CAREER ADVANCEMENT	ORGANIZATION SUCCESS
Instilled Values		"My parents expected a lot out of me. They had high expectations." (S4)	
Interpersonal Skills	"I've been candid when people didn't do their jobs, and I've always tried to say here are some ways we can get you on target. People skills or human skills is a factor that I think has contributed to my success." (S4) "I want to treat people like I want to be treated. We are all here just a short period of time. Any help you can give to some one try to give it to them." (S4)		"From a real political/practical standpoint, I tried to keep good communication with the board of education." (S4) "Human skills--not sure if that is an acquired skill or natural skill. I've always had the ability to talk to people." (S5) "Remember who you are working for and see that as the challenge to bring them along to educate them to be able to get the things done and they have to be your support." (S4)

successful because of the perception that the board's image is the image of the school system. A third superintendent noted the importance of keeping the board informed and establishing an atmosphere of mutual respect as being key factors in the success of the organization and the superintendent's success.

One superintendent noted the early responsibility established by working while in college and going to school as being a key factor in contributing to his success as superintendent. Two superintendents noted the willingness to be mobile played a key role in their career advancement to the superintendency. One superintendent cited the broad base of experiences gained from being mobile that would not have been obtained had he not been willing to move. A second superintendent noted to move up in administration you must be willing to be mobile. Being mobile allowed him to make contacts and gain experience.

Two superintendents noted the importance of understanding the job demands as being a significant factor contributing to one's success. One superintendent noted the success his organization had experienced by people willing to put in the time to be effective. A second noted the

importance of commitment to preparation and thoroughness for the organization to be successful.

One superintendent noted the contribution of values of high expectations being instilled by his parents as being a significant factor to advancing his career. Two superintendents cited interpersonal skills as being a key in the success of their superintendency. One superintendent noted the importance in being candid with employees in a way that keeps them on track while also treating them with dignity. He also noted the importance of keeping open lines of communication with the board of education. Another superintendent noted that he was not sure whether good interpersonal skills were natural or acquired, but having the ability to talk to people in a way that made them feel good about the issues being confronted had proven to enhance his success.

All superintendents noted factors that in various ways directly contributed to their success. These success contributing factors were categorized in three different areas--developing win-win situations, providing career advancement and enhancing organization success.

Impact of Career Growth to the Success of Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents cited growth changes that occurred during their career that contributed significantly to their success (see Figure 6). Four of the five superintendents noted becoming more sensitive to the realities of life was felt to have increased their accomplishments and the success of their organization. One superintendent noted skill he had developed in becoming an active listener enabled him to make better decisions. A second superintendent noted he had become more sensitive to the political realities of every educational decision made. A third superintendent noted becoming more sensitive to the challenges in education and being selective in the ones to take on. He suggests that one should save up as much energy as possible for the major wars and let the smaller battles pass by. The fourth superintendent noted experience had taught him to become more reflective before making major decisions to increase organizational success.

One superintendent noted maturity had made him more focused during his career. Another superintendent noted developing the necessary patience to develop a plan of action increased his accomplishments. One

GROWTH CHANGES	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	MORE FOCUSED	INCREASED ACCOMPLISHMENTS	ORGANIZATION SUCCESS
Matured	<p>"I think for a lot of people that knew me back when I was in high school and elementary school--well they would think a lot of maturation took place for me to be doing what I'm doing." (S1)</p> <p>"I think as I moved into the various roles as principal, masters and doctoral programs--I think that people that saw me then saw that I had a sense of direction, had made an attempt to do things that were worthwhile in education." (S1)</p>		
More Patience		<p>"I would say I have more patience than I use to have. Years ago I wanted things right now, but I realize now you have to plan. You can't have things right this moment. But you can get what you want if you lay your ground work." (S2)</p>	

Figure 6

Contributions of Career Growth

Figure 6 (continued)

CONTRIBUTIONS			
GROWTH CHANGES	MORE FOCUSED	INCREASED ACCOMPLISHMENTS	ORGANIZATION SUCCESS
<p>More Sensitive</p>		<p>"Today I think folks would probably know that they might not always agree with what I decide, but they know I have thought through it and I've made the best decision that I can. I've tried to listen to things." (S2)</p> <p>"When you move away from the building level you now have adults that don't have children in school that want to be part of the decision making." (S3)</p> <p>"I have become much more sensitive to the political realities of the work of education." (S3)</p> <p>"I try to be a little more reflective than I use to be. When I first became a principal at 26 years old I was probably more spontaneous." (S5)</p>	<p>"I've tried to become more attuned that in every decision that is made there is a political side to it probably, and I've had to become more skillful at looking for that and analyzing that and not just thinking that everyone that I'm working with is there to work with kids or to promote what's right in education." (S3)</p> <p>"My biggest piece of advice with the people with whom I work closely with is you better know the difference between your battles and your wars, don't spend a lot of time on your battles, because you are going to need all your energy when the wars come." (S4)</p>
<p>Worry Less</p>		<p>"I worry a lot about the little things less than I use to. I'm a whole lot more concerned with the final results than how we get there." (S4)</p>	

Figure 6 (continued)

GROWTH CHANGES	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	MORE FOCUSED	INCREASED ACCOMPLISHMENTS	ORGANIZATION SUCCESS
More Knowledgeable		<p>"It use to be difficult for me to ask for help. I kind of grew up thinking that asking for help was a kind of weakness." (S4)</p> <p>"Sometimes you compromise to save the most important things about what you're doing rather than to lose all of what you are doing." (S4)</p> <p>"You have to have people to help and call for that help." (S2)</p> <p>"The superintendent has an obligation to make sure the school system operates in an ethical fashion, but within that I like to give my people a lot of flexibility." (S4)</p>	<p>"One of the things I have learned is there aren't many situations where you have to give an answer right then. I learned to buy time so I can consider the alternatives and as a result of that I think I make better decisions than I did before." (S5)</p>

superintendent noted worrying less about the little details and being more concerned about how the final results increased his accomplishments.

Two superintendents noted increased accomplishments by becoming more knowledgeable about delegation and empowering people. Another indicated growth in the success of his organization by realizing not many situations require an immediate response and taking time to consider the alternatives. All five superintendents felt considerable professional growth had occurred during their educational career. This growth in every instance was felt to have had a positive impact on their success as superintendents.

Contributions of Personal Life Experiences to the Development of Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents had a personal life experience that was felt to have contributed to the development of their career (See Figure 7).

Two superintendents noted having a supportive family as directly contributing to the success of their career. One of these two cited having a wife who was willing to accompany him to school functions and be supportive of him in everything he did was very beneficial to his career.

CONTRIBUTIONS			
PERSONAL LIFE	CAREER SUPPORT	KNOWLEDGE GAINED	CAREER SUCCESS
Supportive Family	<p>"I had one of the board members tell me several years ago, some of the school administrators' wives help them and some wives don't. She is also willing and able to accompany me to school functions." (S1)</p> <p>"My wife has been very patient over the years. There is seldom a night during the week I'm not out and there is seldom a weekend when there aren't some commitments that go with the job. Because of her support it enabled me to devote the amount of time it requires to be successful." (S5)</p>		<p>"If you don't have a spouse that is very understanding and supportive of you being an administrator it would make it very difficult to have a successful career and a successful marriage." (S5)</p> <p>"My wife has been willing to help me and be involved in those types of things. So from that point of view in my personal life it's been very beneficial to be able to count on family to be supportive on things I'm trying to do." (S1)</p> <p>"It's important that your spouse be supportive particular if you have children in your life." (S5)</p>
Early Experiences		<p>"Getting in school administration at a very early age because I had to quickly realize that even though I had the degree I had to work with my subordinates in a very collegial kind of way." (S3)</p> <p>"Probably would have to give some credit to some lessons I learned early on from the athletic side of life. Baseball." (S3)</p> <p>"I realized early on that to have real power was shared power." (S3)</p>	

Figure 7
Contributions of Personal Life Experiences

Figure 7 (continued)

PERSONAL LIFE	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	CAREER SUPPORT	KNOWLEDGE GAINED	CAREER SUCCESS
Professional Experiences			"Sometimes I've noticed administrators--particular when you're in controversial situations--there is a tendency to withdraw from events you really need to be present in and to be involved in." (S1) "I tend to listen before I speak, before jumping out there with the solution." (S3)
Parenthood		"Having your own children helps you remember the parents perspective. Most parents that we write off as bad parents, aren't bad parents, they just don't know how to be good parents." (S4) "The experience of having my own children and watching them grow up had probably much as anything, influenced me in terms of a personal event in my life as an administrator." (S4)	
Other			"I've tried to make folks that know me proud, family is important to me." (S2)

A second superintendent noted the importance of his spouse being supportive in terms of giving him the freedom to put in the necessary time to be effective on the job. He felt it would be extremely difficult to be successful on the job as superintendent and have a successful marriage and family life without an understanding and supportive spouse.

One superintendent cited knowledge gained through early experiences as a young administrator made him realize collegial relationships developed with veteran faculty members was the only way to have real power, which was actually shared power. He also cited knowledge gained from early lessons taught from involvement in baseball as being significant to his development as a superintendent. This same superintendent noted professional experiences had taught him to listen carefully before attempting to jump out with a solution. A second superintendent noted learning from professional experience the importance of not drawing away from professional or social events that a superintendent should be involved in when controversial situations occur.

One superintendent noted the parenthood experience as being beneficial in helping him understand the parent perspective much better. He felt this experience probably had as much influence on his life as an

administrator as anything. One superintendent noted the desire to make his family proud of him contributed to his drive to be successful.

It can be clearly seen from these superintendents that personal life experience in various ways played a significant part in contributing to their success.

Significant Lessons and Their Contributions to the Development of Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents were able to identify significant lessons that were felt to have contributed to their career success (See Figure 8). One superintendent noted realizing the importance of having a significant other to guide, direct, nurture and cause one to be successful. He felt this contributed just as much to one's success as all the learning in which we participate. A second superintendent cited the importance of understanding people to the point of knowing when to delegate and whom to delegate to, and understand from community members what is important. This superintendent also noted the importance of understanding life to the point of knowing what you can control and what you can't contribute to one's career success. A third superintendent

CONTRIBUTIONS	
SIGNIFICANT LESSON	PROVIDING LEADERSHIP
<p>Having a Significant Other</p>	<p>"Having someone who cares about you, someone to want you to be successful, to rejoice in your success, that seems to me to be as important as all the knowledge and all the learning that we participate in." (S1)</p> <p>"To have that person or persons back there that guided, directed, nurtured and did those kinds of things that causes one to be successful." (S1)</p>
<p>Understanding People</p>	<p>"Learn where to delegate." (S4)</p> <p>"As an adult I believe there is a lot of good in people and it is up to me to help people to grow and try to match people with experiences that they will grow from and be successful." (S2)</p> <p>"Learn your community, find out what is important." (S4)</p>
<p>Understanding Life</p>	<p>"I think the thing that's been most important to me is you need to be satisfied outside of your job as well as inside of your job. I think if you get them out of balance it can create problems for you." (S3)</p> <p>"You've got to learn where to spend your time. Don't waste it on things you can't control that aren't important as the big things." (S4)</p>
	<p>"I think as an adult I have learned a large percentage of the people want to do good, really want to be successful." (S2)</p> <p>"When you deal with people try to deal with them in a way even if some bad things have to happen, deal with them in a way that leaves them some integrity and an opportunity to walk with some dignity." (S4)</p> <p>"You don't have to beat up people even in dealing with bad situations." (S4)</p>

Figure 8

Contributions of Significant Lessons

Figure 8 (continued)

CONTRIBUTIONS	
SIGNIFICANT LESSON	PROVIDING LEADERSHIP
CAREER SUCCESS	PROVIDING LEADERSHIP
<p>Understanding Life (continued)</p>	<p>"You have got to prioritize--you have got to decide what is important to your life and you have got to make sure those things are important." (S5)</p> <p>"I think it is important to set aside priorities and make sure priorities get priority attention. Family needs to understand that your career has priorities and whenever possible we need to try to make those mesh by being flexible with family events if possible." (S5)</p> <p>"I think there is an important place in life for religious belief whatever that might be. I think that should play a major part in your life. Three prong--family, career, church." (S5)</p> <p>"Having the right situations in your personal life and having that in order, it makes the other real easy to get in order." (S3)</p> <p>"There have been times when I have been very hesitant to say to my board I can't do that because I have a family event, but I don't hesitate to do that anymore and I think my board respects that." (S5)</p>

noted learning the importance of keeping your professional life and your personal life in balance can contribute to one's success or can hurt one's success if they get out of balance. This superintendent also noted having the right situation in your personal life can make it easy to get your professional life in order. A fourth superintendent noted understanding the importance of learning about people and helping them grow to be personally successful and to make the organization successful contributed to his career success. The fifth superintendent identified lessons that created career success that focused prioritizing personal and professional goals. He believed family, career, and church all had a place in one's life and each should be given adequate attention.

Two superintendents cited significant lessons learned that had an influence on their leadership. One of the two superintendents noted learning even when bad things have to happen to people in the organization, let them leave with some dignity. A second superintendent noted realizing that most people want to do good, want to be successful.

Career Advice and Its Contribution to the Development of Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents cited career advice that they would give to aspiring superintendents that they felt would contribute to the development of their career (See Figure 9). Two superintendents cited advice that would be considered motivation. One superintendent suggested to determine what type of contribution a person wants to make and then pursue it with all your time and energy. A second superintendent noted the importance of filling your mind with positive things instead of negative.

Four of the five superintendents cited advice they would give that would advance an aspirant's career. Three of these four stressed the importance of getting a wide range of experiences which includes a variety of teaching and administrative positions. One superintendent stressed using a variety of models and being willing to go where the job is. He also stressed the importance of remembering being an administrator is like being a clergyman; you are always on duty. A second superintendent stressed not to get in a hurry. He also stressed the importance delegating and trusting people to do the job. Another

CONTRIBUTIONS	
CAREER ADVICE	CAREER ADVANCEMENT
MOTIVATION	
<p>Go For It Life</p> <p>"Go for it! Identify what you want to do. Identify what type of contribution you would like to make and then regardless of what that dream might be, be willing to work towards it and do all you can to achieve it." (S2) "Make sure you feed your mind with positive things, because it will lead to good as well as it will lead you to bad if you think negatively." (S2)</p>	<p>"Life is full of lessons. Try to learn from every experience. Regardless of what avenue you take, you have got to keep in mind there is a reason for this." (S2) "Try to use a variety of models. Try to experience a variety of administrative assignments if you can." (S3) "Don't get in a hurry. I think it is important to touch the rungs--teacher, principal." (S5)</p>
<p>Get Experience</p>	<p>"Sometimes you have to go to the job instead of expecting the job to come to you." (S3) "Be willing to be mobile. Although it has its disadvantages, in the long run, it will serve you well." (S4)</p>
<p>Be Mobile</p>	<p>"Because an administrator is like being a member of the clergy, you are always on duty and you are always on exhibit." (S3)</p>
<p>Accept Reality</p>	<p>"Superintendents have to play politics some, but whatever you do, you have to try to do things that you can live with later on." (S4)</p>
<p>Be Ethical</p>	<p>"Prepare yourself, trust those people that you employ to assist you to do the job. Developing people." (S5)</p>
<p>Learn to Delegate</p>	

Figure 9
Contributions of Career Advice

superintendent noted the advantages and disadvantages of being mobile, but suggested in the long run it will serve one well. He also touched on politics in education, but suggested for aspirants to do things they could live with later on. The last of the four noted the importance of attempting to learn from every experience, with the notion that there is a reason for me being at this place at this point in time.

All five superintendents cited career advice that, if applied, should produce positive results in one's career.

Effective Leadership and Its Contribution to Superintendents' Careers

All five superintendents cited evidence of organization success that led them to believe they had achieved a level of leadership effectiveness (See Figure 10). Three superintendents noted having successful staff members as being the key to being effective as a leader. One superintendent noted the organization becomes successful as an outgrowth of individuals in the organization being successful. A second superintendent noted he doesn't hesitate to give his people credit for the success of the organization and would prefer to turn the light on

IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	CONTRIBUTIONS
Successful Staff	<p>ORGANIZATION SUCCESS</p> <p>"Well, I think for a person to be an effective leader you have to have people around you that are successful and I think that's what the leaders job is to make people that work with the leader successful." (S1)</p> <p>"I think the organizations' goals then come along and are met by virtue of the fact that people in the organization are successful in their personal and professional goals." (S1)</p> <p>"That I listen, that I don't give up easily when the going gets tough, I'm fairly quick to give credit to others around me for success. I don't have to have the light turned on me. I prefer it to be turned on the organization." (S3)</p> <p>"I think I would rather consider myself to be a good facilitator and that I can look at resources and bring them together and cause things to happen as much as being the person that makes them happen. Even though I'm in a leadership position, I'd much rather see me as conductor of an orchestra. My staff will tell you that I am their strongest cheerleader, their strongest supporter." (S5)</p>
Personal Happiness	<p>"Yes, because I'm doing what I want to do. It fits my personality. We are making progress, people are happy, we work together well, we are setting goals, we are moving toward those goals." (S2)</p> <p>"Yes, I think so. When I was in the Superintendents' Executive Program (SEP) we had to do one of those survey kinds of things. I got pretty positive responses." (S4)</p>

Figure 10

Contributions of Effective Leadership

employee successes. The third superintendent viewed his role more as a conductor of an orchestra in his attempt to provide effective organizational leadership. He viewed his role more as one who could look at resources and bring them together to achieve effectiveness.

Two superintendents felt they were being effective leaders because their organizations were experiencing success and they were happy. One superintendent noted being that he was happy, his people were happy and the organization was moving towards its' goals led him to believe he was being effective. A second superintendent noted the positive results he obtained from leadership surveys during training programs led him to believe he was being effective.

Effective leadership for all five superintendents was tied directly to the success of the organization. With all five superintendents, if the organization was experiencing success it was felt some degree of leadership effectiveness must be being displayed.

CHAPTER V

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify key life events of successful superintendents in North Carolina and to look at how this information can be useful to aspiring superintendents to help develop individuals for the superintendency. The superintendents were identified by surveying all superintendents in North Carolina during the 1994-95 school year. Each superintendent was requested to provide a personal profile and nominate five successful superintendents based on their perception of success. An analysis of superintendents' nominations was done to determine the top five to be interviewed. Profiles of the top five superintendents in the state were compared to the responding superintendents. The interview questions for the sample population focused around key life events or experiences superintendents felt had contributed significantly to their success (Appendix B).

Subquestion areas for the study and responses based on the sample population were:

1. Have certain persons been instrumental in the careers of successful superintendents and have they contributed to superintendent success and how?

Successful superintendents identified superintendents under whom they worked who offered modeling, mentoring, and opportunities.

Successful superintendents also identified college professors whom they believed offered wisdom and encouragement.

2. What training experiences have had an impact on the careers of successful superintendents and how?

Successful superintendents identified formal graduate programs and professional development programs that provided practical knowledge in the following areas: (1) leadership assessment and development, (2) system analysis, (3) administering public education programs, (4) legal issues, (5) personnel issues, (6) instructional methodology, and (7) situational leadership. Superintendents also identified various work experiences that proved to be excellent training experiences for success in the superintendency.

3. What leadership roles have been instrumental in preparing for the superintendency?

Successful superintendents cited such positions in education as teaching, the principalship, and the assistant superintendency as leadership roles that prepared them for the superintendency. Additionally, these superintendents cited leadership roles in professional and civic organizations, and other community service agencies as instrumental in preparing them for the superintendency.

4. What personal setbacks have been experienced in which successful superintendents recovered?

Successful superintendents had difficulty citing personal setbacks. The few setbacks that were cited included the death of a parent, being disadvantaged financially as a child, and having polio as a child. All these superintendents felt they had been rather fortunate and they experienced few professional setbacks during their lives.

5. What successful practices have been implemented based on knowledge gained from key life events or experiences of successful superintendents?

Practices implemented by successful superintendents based on key life events included: (1) nurturing good relations with their superiors; (2)

working hard to produce desired results; and (3) keeping personal and professional priorities in order.

Findings

The finding in this study reveal that the median age of superintendents in North Carolina is 50. The median age of the successful superintendents was found to be 47. In a 1992 national study of the superintendent, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) found that the median age in 1992 was 49.4. The overwhelming majority (ninety-one percent) of the superintendents in North Carolina are white. Of the five sample superintendents, all were white. In the 1992 national study done by AASA ninety-six percent of the superintendents were white.

More superintendents in North Carolina hold doctoral degrees than in the AASA national study. Sixty-nine percent of the responding superintendents in North Carolina hold doctoral degrees. Eighty percent of the successful superintendents hold doctoral degrees. In the national study done by AASA only thirty-six percent had doctoral degrees.

The profiles returned from superintendents in North Carolina revealed that forty-two percent had been in their positions one to two years. Forty percent of the successful superintendents in this study had been in their positions three to four years. The national study done by AASA found the average length of time in one superintendency had increased to eight years.

Nearly seventy-seven percent of the superintendents in North Carolina reported having a four-year contract. All five of the successful superintendents in this study had four year contracts. The study by AASA indicates forty-two percent of the responding superintendents had multi-year contracts with twenty-five percent with four years or more.

Males still dominate the superintendent positions across the country. In this study ninety percent of the superintendents in North Carolina were male. Of the five successful superintendents all were male. In the AASA 1992 national study, ninety-three percent were male.

Experience as a teacher, principal, and central office administrator prior to becoming a superintendent was viewed as helpful and almost a requirement by the sample superintendents. All superintendents in the North Carolina population had teaching experience at the elementary,

middle or high school level. The highest percentage of superintendents had teaching experience at the middle and high school levels. All North Carolina superintendents responding in this study had principalship experience. Over twenty-one percent of the total superintendent population in North Carolina had elementary principalship experience only. The profiles received from North Carolina superintendents revealed thirty-nine percent had only assistant superintendent experience at the central office level. The national study done by AASA in 1992 revealed most superintendents followed the teacher, principal, central office career pattern prior to moving into the superintendency.

Discussion

The Relationship of Socialization Theory to the School Superintendent

The findings of this study reveal that Baldwin's (1969) components of socialization theory (internalization, identity, significant others, role learning, and process) do explain to a large degree the formal and informal preparation for, initiation into, and continued success in the position of school superintendent.

Internalization and Identity

The internalization component emphasizes the importance of one identifying and internalizing the values and norms shared by those in the group one has joined or aspires to join, and expected for a particular role (Spencer & Inkeles, 1976). During the identity stage component the aspirant begins taking on the values, norms, and behaviors of the desired role and develops the superintendent identity as a superintendent. Internalization and identification occur simultaneously.

The five successful superintendents interviewed in this study identified life events that tied directly to the internalization and identification components of socialization theory. When asked about leadership roles, superintendents interviewed mentioned knowledge gained about values and norms from involvement in civic organizations, professional organizations and church made a difference in how new situations were viewed and dealt with. When asked about success contributors, superintendents mentioned developing an understanding of the demands of top-level administrative positions, accepting the probability of having to be mobile to move up the administrative ladder, remembering who you work for, and developing good communication

with your boss as being key contributors to their success. Under the career growth question, superintendents mentioned how they operated differently because of maturity and experience. Key areas under career growth included learning to take time to make decisions and using human resources more effectively.

Significant Other

Mead (1934) calls the third component of socialization the "significant other." Brim and Wheeler (1968) defined significant others as those persons "who have great influence because of the frequency of contact, their primacy, and their control over rewards and punishment" (p. 8). The significant other may be an individual or group and is sometimes referred to as the socializing agent. Konnert and Augenstein (1990) identified significant others as mentors and sponsors. They note that the roles, behaviors, attitudes, and values of significant others are taken on by the one being socialized.

The five successful superintendents identified life events that tied directly to the significant other component of socialization theory. They identified superintendents under whom they worked and college advisors

who offered encouragement and opportunities. Contributions included knowledge and skills gained in managing human resources from mentoring by significant others. Superintendents learned about day-to-day operations from watching significant others. Superintendents also had an opportunity to judge performance of significant others in deciding how they might handle similar situations. Superintendents also indicated the virtues of patience and hard work were instilled by the significant others.

Role Learning

The fourth component of socialization, role learning, as described by Sarbin and Allen (1968), "is an organized set of behaviors that belong to an identifiable position, and these behaviors are activated when the position is occupied" (pp. 545-546). Sarbin and Allen (1968) explain that the role "defines the limits or range of tolerated behavior" as well as "the rights and privileges, the duties and obligations, of that position in relation to other positions in the community structure" (p. 546).

The five successful superintendents identified life events that contributed to their success that tied to the role learning component of

socialization theory. Under the role learning question, superintendents mentioned their teaching and administrative experiences as helping them understand the demands of administrative positions and the importance of the different roles in the organizational structure. Some superintendents mentioned leadership roles such as officer of a civic organization, professional organization officer, and church officer which influenced how new situations were viewed and dealt with in which children or education were an issue. Positions as officers in professional organizations gave superintendents a broader understanding of the views of their colleagues on topics related to education.

Process

The fifth component of socialization is the process. The socialization process is a continuous interactional process between the socializee and the socializer(s). Socialization entails primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialization includes experiences that makes one a member of society and secondary socialization "is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective work of his/her society" (Berger & Luchmen,

1967, p. 130). Secondary socialization would include learning occupational roles.

Primary and secondary socialization are further divided into formal and informal. Greenfield (1985) notes that "In formal socialization . . . both the role of the learner and the material to be learned are specified . . . , whereas in informal neither . . . is specified in an explicit, formal sense" (p. 100). Formal socialization processes are found in structured school settings such as graduate schools, medical schools and seminaries. Wilcott (1973) defined informal socialization as "conventional wisdom" passed on orally from one generation to the next.

The five superintendents identified key life events that could be tied to both processes. Under the significant other question, superintendents mentioned gaining knowledge and skills about education administration and the virtue of hard work from the significant other. Under the formal training programs question, sample superintendents identified formal socialization processes experienced from coursework taken in university degree programs, district inservice programs, and job experiences that helped prepare them for their present positions. Under the personal setbacks question superintendents identified secondary socialization

processes that taught lasting life lessons which included learning life is not always fair and realizing things can always be worse.

Superintendents also mentioned learning to work through difficult times.

Under the success contributors question superintendents identified additional secondary socialization processes that contributed to their success including remembering for whom you work, understanding the demands of top administrative positions, being mobile to advance, and developing good communication with the board of education. Under the career growth question superintendents mentioned primary and secondary socialization processes that made a difference in their success that included operating differently because of maturity, experience, and knowledge gained. Learning to take time to make decisions and using human resources more effectively was also mentioned. Primary and secondary processes, and formal and informal processes mentioned under the career advice question which contributed to the success of superintendents included learning from every experience, deciding what you want to do and go for it, the importance of using different leadership models, being patient, and being willing to be mobile.

Summary

Formal and informal preparation for and initiation into the superintendency are grounded in socialization theory (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990). "Administrator preparation ideally should become a sequenced and mentored path directed toward helping prospective administrators internalize practice/theory relationships" (Carter & Lored, 1993, p. 119). Students of educational administration would benefit greatly from understanding the components of socialization theory. One aspiring to be a superintendent must realize the need to identify and internalize the values and norms expected by the public in the local system. An aspiring superintendent must also realize the need to take on the identity of the desired role.

Mead (1934) calls the third component of socialization the "significant other." Many times the aspiring superintendent must seek out mentors or sponsors. Mentors can provide aspiring educational leaders invaluable insight about successful practices. Mentors can also help place aspiring superintendents in positions.

Under the fourth component, role learning, the aspiring superintendent must take on the role expected of him by the public being

served. The superintendent must also learn the system and community to function effectively. Louis (1980) noted, "An organization . . . has an organizational culture . . . (which) conveys important assumptions and norms governing membership, values, activities, and aims" (p. 232).

The final component of socialization theory, process, occurs in several stages for the aspiring superintendent. The process component includes the formal and informal training received by aspiring superintendents. In the formal process, Glass (1992) noted that most superintendents will begin a masters program in educational administration after about three years of classroom teaching. The majority will complete both masters and doctoral programs on a part time basis while maintaining full time jobs. Most superintendents obtain their masters degrees in their late twenties or early thirties and their doctorates by their late thirties or early forties. The informal process of socialization is also very important. In this process, aspiring and practicing superintendents receive valuable information from experienced superintendents or professors of education.

Aspiring superintendents must realize socialization continues after the position has been assumed. Konnert and Augenstein (1990) note,

"That which takes place before role assumption is labeled anticipatory, and the learning that occurs after role assumption is called encounter" (p. 189).

Conclusions

This study sought to identify key life events of successful superintendents and to look at how this information can be used to help develop individuals aspiring to the superintendency. Superintendents said they felt key life events were:

1. Seeking out significant others
2. Being willing to be mobile
3. Understanding who the boss is and nurturing good relations with this person/group
4. Getting different educational experiences including teacher, principal, and central office administrator
5. Serving in civic, professional, and community leadership roles
6. Participating in leadership development programs
7. Understanding the value of hard work

8. Having a supportive spouse/family
9. Deciding what's important in life and keeping priorities in order.

An analysis of the data also revealed incorporating socialization theory appears vital for individuals aspiring to enter and sustain employment in the position of superintendent. Socialization is a continuous process for the educational leader. As elements in the components of socialization theory change, such as public beliefs and values about education, the behavior or role performance of the education leader will change.

Implications of the Study

This study has implications for the importance of aspiring superintendents to seek out mentors in the superintendent preparation process. Significant others can provide necessary mentoring, modeling, and wisdom to prepare aspiring superintendents. Significant others such as college professors, superintendents worked for, and community leaders can be instrumental in placing individuals in superintendencies.

This study has implications for individuals interested in aspiring to the superintendency in planning their own career development to obtain the necessary work and training experiences. Aspiring superintendents must realize the importance of getting training in key areas such as leadership development, educational legal issues, and instructional methodology to be adequately prepared for work as a superintendent. Aspiring superintendents must also make an attempt to get experiences that are viewed by potential employers as essential prerequisites such as positions as teaching, the principalship, and the assistant superintendency.

This study also has implications for school districts as decisions are made about assignments for growth and preparation of local education administrators in grooming top level administrators. As the supply of top level quality administrators continues to decrease, school districts must take more of an effort to groom their own. School districts must recognize the type of training that has been identified by successful administrators as valuable and attempt to provide it for potential top level administrators. School districts must also provide challenging experiences that will adequately prepare top level administrators.

Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for future research include studies which focus on:

1. The responsibilities of mentors in the educational administration development process.

The study revealed the role of a mentor appears to have such an impact on the success of superintendents. Research that identifies the role and responsibilities of mentors as identified by successful administrative mentees, would be helpful in training individuals to assist in the administrator development process.

2. A comparison of the performance of successful and unsuccessful superintendents.

Comparing the performance of identified successful and unsuccessful superintendents should provide some insight as to what aspiring administrators might do to be successful in the superintendency.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A
SUPERINTENDENT PROFILE
CODE _____

AGE _____ RACE _____ SEX _____

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR HIGHEST DEGREE COMPLETED BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE BLANK:

MA _____ SIXTH YEAR/EDS _____ EDD/PHD _____

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR PRESENT POSITION? _____

WHAT IS THE LENGTH OF YOUR PRESENT CONTRACT? _____

HOW MANY SUPERINTENDENT POSITIONS HAVE YOU HELD, EXCLUDING YOUR PRESENT POSITION? _____

PLEASE INDICATE (CHECK) THE EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE HAD:

<u>TEACHER</u>	<u>PRINCIPAL</u>	<u>CENTRAL OFFICE</u>
ELEMENTARY _____	ELEMENTARY _____	SUPERVISOR _____
MIDDLE _____	MIDDLE _____	DIRECTOR _____
HIGH _____	HIGH _____	ASSOC/ASST _____
		SUPT _____
OTHER _____	OTHER _____	OTHER _____

BASED ON YOUR PERCEPTION OF SUCCESS, PLEASE LIST THE NAMES OF FIVE SUCCESSFUL SUPERINTENDENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA, EXCLUDING YOURSELF. ALSO, PLEASE INDICATE THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEM. SUPERINTENDENTS LISTED SHOULD BE IN THEIR SECOND CONTRACT WITH THEIR PRESENT SYSTEM, OR SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONTINUOUSLY EMPLOYED IN THEIR PRESENT SYSTEM FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

OPTIONAL
NAME _____
SCHOOL SYSTEM _____

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW FORMAT

Informal Interview

Background Information

- Rearing
- Family
- Schooling-elementary, secondary, college
- Experiences
- Interest in educational administration

Structured Interview

Main Question A

What people have you encountered that you feel have been instrumental in your career as superintendent?

Thought Completion Questions - To be asked at the appropriate time during each main question to obtain a deeper understanding of the thought being expressed.

1. What happened?
2. What did you learn from it?
3. How did it make a difference in your work now?

Main Question B

What training programs have you experienced that you feel have had an impact on your success as superintendent?

Main Question C

What leadership roles have you held that you feel have contributed to your success as superintendent?

Main Question D

What personal setbacks or hardships have you experienced that you feel have contributed to your success as a superintendent?

Main Question E

What do you think has contributed to your success as a superintendent? Please try to identify at least three things or events.

General Question F

Overall, how have you changed over your career? If you ran into someone who knew you well years ago, what differences would that person notice? Why did these changes occur? How have these changes made a difference in your success as a superintendent?

General Question G

Have events in your personal life played a part in your growth as a school administrator? What happened? What did you learn from them? How have they made a difference in your success as a superintendent?

General Question H

What is the most significant thing you have learned as an adult--the one thing you would pass on to someone else if you could? How did you learn it? What impact did it have on your professional life?

General Question I

What advice would you give to a younger school administrator about managing his or her career?

General Question J

Do you consider yourself to be an effective leader? If so, why?

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO NC SUPERINTENDENTS

163 Aldersgate Road
Jacksonville, NC 28546
November 19, 1994

Dear Superintendent:

I am a principal in Onslow County and a doctoral student in the educational administration program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. In partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree, I am conducting a study to identify key life events that have contributed to the success of superintendents in North Carolina.

The enclosed questionnaire will be utilized to get a profile of superintendents in North Carolina as well as provide names of successful superintendents for further study. Your responses will remain in strict confidence. The questionnaire is coded for follow-up purposes only. No names will be identified in the study.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope on or before December 1, 1994.

I greatly appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedule to assist in this study.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Williams

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D
LETTER TO SAMPLE SUPERINTENDENTS

163 Aldersgate Road
Jacksonville, NC 28546
December 7, 1994

Dear Superintendent:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the study I'm conducting on successful superintendents in North Carolina. I have enclosed a copy of the Interview Format I plan to use.

I look forward to meeting with you on December 12, 1994 at 3:00 p.m.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Williams

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

Superintendent Interview Responses

The interview format (Appendix B) used for the five sample superintendents had two areas: the Informal Interview and the Structured Interview. The Informal Interview consisted of general background information on each sample superintendent. This part of the interview was used to develop a rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee and was not included in the results. The Structured Interview consisted of main questions and general questions. Following each main question was a set of thought completion questions used to determine the event, the lesson learned, or skills practiced. The first three of the last five general questions also had thought completion questions used to gain a deeper understanding of the thought being expressed.

Significant Other

Main Question A--Significant Other

What people have you encountered that you feel have been instrumental in your career as superintendent?

Significant Other--Event

Events under the theme significant others indicated by superintendents interviewed revealed all five superintendents had a significant other. Significant others for most superintendents included superintendents under whom they worked or college advisors. These significant others offered encouragement and opportunities.

"My college advisor is probably the one that had the greatest influence on my life. I was looking for what I was going to do as a career after my experience with business and I was looking for a spot I could make a contribution. He expressed confidence in me that I could make a contribution in educational administration. He also provided good advice during my administrative career. I remember one time when I had a problem with a coach. He provided the necessary counseling to help me resolve the problem." (S1)

"The superintendent that I worked under as an assistant superintendent provided me the opportunity to complete my doctoral residency requirement. Instead of having to resign my job he offered me a part time job and offered my wife a job as a school nurse." (S1)

"Quite frankly administration came early with the encouragement of the superintendent that gave me my first job as a principal. He talked to me several times, and encouraged me to go back and get my Masters in administration. He told me if I waited on getting my Masters I would have a family and other things and it would become more difficult." (S2)

"After being away from education for four years the superintendent I worked for as a principal asked me if I wanted to come back as

his assistant superintendent. The next year I became associate superintendent, then the next year became superintendent when the former superintendent decided to retire. My former superintendent has been a great friend and mentor." (S2)

"My undergraduate advisor created a vision for me that I could be a school administrator. My graduate advisor also envisioned his people that were in the program that they were going to be successful and his philosophy was sorta like a good coach, people enrolled in the program viewed him as a coach and we were the players. I enjoyed the mentoring that he had in the program." (S3)

"I think probably the three people who have been instrumental in what I am today in terms of my style or philosophy, if you will, and in part of the opportunities they have afforded me are my mother and the two superintendents I worked for prior to becoming a superintendent." (S4)

"My seventh grade teacher--first male teacher--tough teacher became a role model for me. He got me interested in becoming a teacher. Then in high a teacher encouraged me to apply to college and told how to get financial aid. The first superintendent I worked for as a teacher is really responsible for encouraging me to become an administrator." (S2)

"One of my first board members who was a college professor probably had as much to do with coercing the idea of excellence. She is probably responsible for some of the recognition I've gotten in recent years. She is the one that said you have to do better than just be a superintendent." (S5)

"My wife has also been there as a supporter--goes with me even if she is not interested." (S5)

Significant Other--Lesson Learned

Superintendents interviewed indicated lessons learned under the theme significant others included knowledge and skills gained from experiences with the significant others. Superintendents also indicated virtues that were instilled by the significant other.

"My college advisor helped me to understand that you have limited control over some situations. I remember him asking once could I stop the rain coming down outside and I responded no. He told me I could not stop the situation I was describing either. He advised me to write a letter to the superintendent explaining what I had done and why I had done it and inform him that I would continue to try to have the best school in North Carolina." (S1)

"My first superintendent pointed out to me a pretty strong work ethic. He always said if you have a job to do you do what ever it takes to get the job done." (S2)

"My father-in-law was a terrific role model. He was a terrific role model, one that has a unique skill in actively listening to people and putting himself in their shoes, so to speak, tremendous amount of patience." (S2)

"The first superintendent I worked under as a principal expected you to swim if you got into the water, he didn't coddle you, didn't get in your way, didn't create barriers for, he pretty much exemplified a lot of trust, I think his whole philosophy was, he selected good people and if he did that good people would do a good job. My second superintendent was much more action oriented. He was a change agent kind of person, he believed in continuous training of administrators. He exposed us as principals to a wide variety of outside experts that were nationally ranked people. He was one that encouraged you to be involved in

educational things. He made opportunities for you to travel to visit. He was kind of a cheerleader, created a lot of excitement, created a lot of controversy." (S3)

"My mother laid the frame work in me that you have respect for everybody, you need to look for good in people, and you need to try to help people deal with their needs in as positive way as you can and that there is no room for discrimination against people based on anything whether it be color, handicap, or whatever it might be." (S4)

"The first superintendent I worked for taught me about decency, you need to do your job and try to do it well. You can do it that way with our running over people or without being inconsiderate of the needs of people especially the people that work for you." (S4)

"I learned from the second superintendent I worked for more than anything else, organization. Doing your homework and being prepared, working through things, you can sometime be successful if you are better prepared than the other person. The other thing I learned from him was high expectations. He didn't really call it that so much, but that's exactly what it was. Raising the sights of an entire community, you can't be satisfied with what we got, it is not good enough for the children in this community. We have got to do better." (S4)

"I've been real interested in the concept of leadership and I try when working around people I try to see how they lead, and I've never worked for somebody successful that leads by commanding." (S4)

"One of my first school board members told me just being a superintendent is not enough, you have to be a good superintendent and you have to distinguish yourself from the crowd. You have to push for excellence in all that you do. She was my harshest critic and strongest supporter at the same time." (S5)

Significant Other--Skill Practiced

Skills practiced under the theme significant others by superintendents interviewed stemmed from lesson learned from watching and knowledge gained through mentoring from the significant other. Superintendents also had an opportunity to judge performance of significant others in deciding how they might handle similar situations.

"The first superintendent I worked for as a teacher prodded and probed and helped me create a vision of being a school administrator and doing a good job at it." (S5)

"My college advisor helped me gain the wisdom to try to deal with the kind of problems you are going to run into from time to time in this business. And even after I became superintendent he continued to perform that same role. He was like a father and confidant at the same time. He had as much influence on me as anyone in terms of philosophy and techniques in trying to get things done." (S1)

"My first superintendent recognized me and what he thought was potential and encouraged me to reach my goal and at the same time reach the goals of the school system. He was a big influence on me." (S1)

"I realized from my second superintendent that you can move too fast and create stress and things within systems. He created a lot of stress, some which was necessary, some if he could go back and do it again he might do it differently, obviously I would from my vantage point, so I learned watching him a lot of things there." (S3)

"I don't think you can lead by commanding, you can be an administrator and not be a leader, but you probably aren't going to be a successful administrator either, and the people that I've tried to emulate the most have been people that try to give direction. Give them some chance to develop themselves and try to put them back on track if they think they are going off, but not somebody that says you going to do it this way. Superintendents always have to do a little bit of that if they see somebody going to step off the cliff." (S4)

"My wife always goes with me and acts like she is interested. Help my marriage and my career out." (S5)

"My college doctoral advisor had a major influence, very nurturing person, responsible for helping me complete my EDD." (S5)

Training Programs

Main Question B--Training Programs

What training programs have you experienced that you feel have had an impact on your success as superintendent?

Training Programs--Event

Events under the theme training programs mentioned by superintendents included formal training in university settings and district inservice programs. Informal training from life experiences and previous jobs was also mentioned.

"I think I have benefited from each of the programs I have been involved in. East Carolina University had such an influence on my life. The EDD program at NCSU was helpful to me." (S1)

"I can't help of thinking back to high school, working on weekends at the gas station. You know at the gas station in those days you washed the wind shield, put air in the tires and checked under the hood. That service type attitude I think something I picked up on from that point of view." (S2)

"My graduate program in administration was very practical, very hands on connected. It connected well with what you were doing. You had text books and presentations, you felt sometime you were teaching the class. There was a lot of learning that took place. I thought the program was very realistic." (S2)

"Leaving education and working in the business sector for three years gave me a shot in the arm for becoming the superintendent. I was given supervision of people. They believed in Total Quality Management. Working with some high power people, and how they looked at things from a global standpoint." (S2)

"I think the experiences gained from the superintendent I worked under in my first principalship provided a wide base of training opportunities that did a lot with leadership assessment, leadership development, looking and analyzing your leadership style, and how those would impact on the organization, and probably part of that to was the leadership courses and training I did in the sixth year program at Appalachian State. We did an extensive assessment kind of part there and then that was followed up at UNC-G with some additional training there." (S3)

"I think the impact of having an opportunity to work in several districts as opposed to one district. I've had a great opportunity to observe more leadership styles than just watching one Superintendent or just one Assistant Superintendent I've seen several types of situations, or working in just one type of

community that had maybe a certain expectation or certain support base that it was willing to give. I worked in districts where there were variations in expectations from little to don't change anything to where there was a high expectation their ought to be constant things being changed and then from the standpoint of actual fiscal resources being non existent to where they were readily available for the asking from a cooperate base to a rural agricultural base." (S3)

"I wouldn't say that I've been involved in anything useless in terms of my training. I went through the typical MS, EDS, EDD programs and as you would expect in all of those had some experiences that were very helpful and some that were not terrifically helpful. I never experienced a graduate program that was extremely rooted in practical methodology. The program that has been the most meaningful to me as a superintendent has been the Superintendent's Executive Program." (S4)

Training Programs--Lesson Learned

Superintendent interviewed mentioned lessons learned from coursework taken in University degree programs and job experiences. These superintendents felt the lessons learned help prepare them for their present positions. Superintendents learned lessons about time management, delegating, hiring and dismissal procedures, and the general complexity of the superintendency.

"I continue to refer to a course called Boonology, which is a programming process course which has to do with systems analysis

as far as how to get things done through developing systems within organizations." (S1)

"The EDD program in Adult and Community College helped me learn how to work a great deal with adults, getting adults to administer and operate the programs for elementary and secondary education that are necessary." (S1)

"I worked at Hardees for three years while I went to college, and I realize that you can juggle a lot of bells at one time. Its a mind set, and I was working 50 hours a week and going to school and actually became the manager of Hardees while I was a full time student. But knowing through good time management, and utilizing people to help you, you can do a lot more than you normally think you can. Also at Hardees I learned a lot about how to run a business, they gave me some training also. You have to have enough profit to keep your doors open - the service concept." (S)

"Being involved in the business sector gave me an unique opportunity. I was involved in all the things involved in running a business from hiring, to dismissals, layoffs, and court cases." (S2)

"I think leadership programs have helped me understand how you can be perceived by others and how you can operate within an organization sometimes and be successful and then other times be unsuccessful depending on what style your using under those circumstances in that." (S3)

"The Superintendent's Executive Program does two or three things and blends them together in a nice way. It does some practical things that superintendents need to know like legal issues, personnel issues, and instructional methodology. Some of what you do in SEP is not technically education, but its all education and its such a nice refreshing way to expand your horizons and still get practical education knowledge, but also technical strategies for situations that might arise in a more general nature like dealing

with difficult people and then on top of that give an opportunity to understand yourself a little better with some of the things they do. I think it is a very comprehensive, well structured program. What I learned from it I guess if you want to sum it up is I learned that anybody in a position of superintendent needs to understand it is a highly complex position, you need to have a lot of different strategies in your arsenal to deal with the things that come up and there are lots of ways to get those strategies." (S4)

Training Programs--Skill Practiced

Superintendents mentioned skills in delegation and situational leadership. Superintendents also stressed the discipline developed in completing degree programs helped when new problems were being approached.

"I continue to refer to a course called Boonology. I don't go back and refer to my notes so much. I refer to the experience of how you begin small with a program or topic you want implemented in the organization and cause it to grow. Expand it by expanding it to include more people all along." (S1)

"That EDD program is the Adult and Community College Program. The same program that adult and community college Deans and Presidents attend. I thought that program was particularly helpful to me as well because a large part of what a superintendent does is work with adults." (S3)

"You don't need to use the same style in all circumstances. Now I think you need to be true to your self, because if you don't somewhere down the road you are going to run into problems in terms of you can't be what you aren't for long, I don't think. It

might get you out of the ditch, but you are going to end up right there, unless you get your wheels on and you stay where you normally are successful operating." (S3)

"I think all of the opportunities to have different experiences have allowed me to test some of that leadership training and to see that if you are going to work in a fast pace system as oppose to a status quo system that really doesn't want much change or doesn't want much changes. It has created an opportunity for me to be probably more of a leader than I would have been if I had just stayed in one primary setting." (S3)

"Practically I still go back to my notes from the Superintendent Executive Program to answer individual questions or I call people at the Institute of Government I developed contacts with to get answers to individual answers to questions. I think SEP puts the superintendency on the plane that all superintendents think it ought to be on which is you're are the CEO of the school system. You're in a high profile position and also in a job that is very important to your community and needs to be dealt with in a very serious high level manner." (S4)

"The Rockefeller Fellowship at UNC-CH gave me an opportunity to be exposed to things I probably would have never been exposed to. The Rockefeller Foundation wanted you to go to the premiere places in the country and be exposed." (S5)

"The Virginia Tech EDD program gave me a lot of discipline because of the way you had to pace yourself to even get through the program." (S5)

Leadership Roles

Main Question C--Leadership Roles

What leadership roles have you held that you feel have contributed to your success as superintendent?

Leadership Roles--Event

Events under the theme leadership roles included mainly different teaching and administrative experiences. Some superintendents mentioned leadership roles outside of education such as officer of a civic organization, professional organization officer, and church officer.

"I think those formal leadership positions that I have held have been beneficial - principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. I have served chairman of the NC Testing Commission, which enabled me to have a bearing on the testing programs in existence in the state." (S1)

"Having been a principal at all three levels for me has been very valuable. It has given me an immediate esprit de corp with principals because I can talk the talk and walk the walk." (S3)

"I think some other things to as I thought back, probably going back to some of my high school and college opportunities where I got to be in leadership roles, as simplistic as that sounds. I think for example being the drum major of a large band in high school and being president of my college student body helped my administrative career." (S3)

"Having worked in different settings helps you to learn some things from experiencing it. It's kind of like trying to describe the taste of a new food if you just haven't been to the table. Having been in eight different school districts from rural eastern North Carolina to rural western North Carolina to industrial Piedmont and down east, I think it has helped me a lot." (S3)

"I think you build a set of experiences and the more experiences you can have in different types of things the more prepared you are to be a superintendent. So I've never had a job that I don't think contributed toward preparing me to be a superintendent. There are some roles I've assumed that I think have also helped. Some of them are not strictly education roles. One that deals directly with the superintendency is I just finished as chairman of the division of superintendents for NCASA. I think that as much as anything put me in a position to sorta keep my hand on the pulse of the entire state in terms of the superintendency." (S4)

"I've served as Rotary president. In small communities there aren't a lot of people to do the jobs so you end up getting called on a lot." (S4)

"Every rung of the ladder has been touched. Classroom teaching experience helped prepare me for administration. I'm a firm believer that you don't understand problems of other people unless you have some of their experiences." (S5)

"Outside of school there are three things that come to mind. Back when I was a teacher I was president of our local NCAE chapter. As a result of president of our NCAE chapter I had an opportunity to deal with a lot of teacher grievances and it helped in my empathy for teachers and the problems they perceive on a daily basis." (S5)

"Serving as chairman of the deacon board of our church was the hardest job I've never been paid for. The church was in a growth situation. Lost a minister that year. Had to make sure the pulpit

was filled. Had to try to create win - win situations for people."
(S5)

Leadership Roles--Lesson Learned

Lessons learned mentioned by superintendents under the theme leadership roles included knowledge and skill gained from leadership roles served in. Positions such as professional organization officers gave superintendents a broader understanding of the views of their colleagues on certain topics.

"Serving as president of NCASA put me in a position to make contact with other administrators all across the state and better understand their outlook and their role in solving problems we're confronted with on a routine basis." (S1)

"I know what it is like to be in a school with 1000 kids. I know what it is like to deal with irate parents and challenging staff and teachers. I understand what you mean when you say you have a scheduling program and don't have the resources and personnel to correct that." (S3)

"As drum major of a large high school band I learned very early you have to follow policy - that policy sometime isn't fun but in order for the organization to function those rules and regulations help you get there. Also I learned how to negotiate because of the different diversities within an organization like that." (S3)

"I think being president of a college student body has helped me over the years to develop a perspective that people are people wherever you find them and that you are going to have some of the

same challenges when you deal with the human resource side of an organization." (S3)

"Some times, even though there are not so many of us we lose sight of what everybody is thinking. We don't get the opportunity to talk with each other like we ought to. Serving as chairman of the division of superintendents for NCASA put me in a position that I could keep my fingers on what superintendents were thinking." (S4)

"The other things that I've done have been more community type public service type ventures. I think school systems are so connected with their communities, and it is important for school systems to give back to the community, because it takes so much from the community. We're asking these folks for their help be it financial, time or what ever, almost every day of the year. I think it is pretty poor response on our part to think we don't owe something back to the community." (S4)

"So I suppose those would be the major things in terms of leadership roles that I would mention. I've served on a number of boards, professional organizations. I'm on the board of NCASA now and the NC High School Athletic Association Board of Directors. Although I'm not an officer, that's the work I guess I enjoy the most outside the superintendency. That group really tries to keep high school athletics on a lofty plane. But we also see there, just like we see in the superintendency, some of the problems that occur that some of our kids are dealing with and not dealing with very well." (S4)

"Serving as superintendent in a small district gave me an opportunity to experience in the district. There were only 3 of us in the central office. We wrote grants. If something went wrong with transportation I helped them fix it. We were also involved if the maintenance people needed help in getting people in to help fix the problem." (S5)

"Serving as president of our local NCAE chapter help me understand how to talk with people - talk with teachers and then go talk with administrators to result in a win - win situation." (S5)

"Serving as president of the Jaycees Chapter required me to work on organizational skills to be an effective Jaycee." (S5)

Leadership Roles--Skill Practiced

Skills practiced under the theme leadership roles mentioned by superintendents emphasized the manner in which new situations were viewed and dealt with in which children or education was an issue.

"Serving as Chairman of the NC Testing Commission gave a wider perspective of the kinds of things we are presently doing with all this emphasis on testing, because I was chairman of the commission when the initiative first got started for every pupil to be involved in the open ended testing program in NC. So I was involved on the ground floor when it first got initiated." (S1)

"I've held positions as a worker, a supervisor, a manager, an administrator, and a team worker. I've had an opportunity to be involved in all these." (S2)

"I've done sorta the gamut. I've been on boards. I chaired the United Way. What that does for me in addition to promoting the school system is you need to be contributing members of your community. Its helps me also see some the problems our children have to overcome to be successful in school. It also from a practically standpoint helps you establish contacts when you need folds to help with problems that come up in the school system. But more importantly that it keeps you attuned to the needs of the

community, and how the community works and the challenges that children bring with them when they come to school." (S4)

"In small systems you learn a lot about the total system. In large systems you get some exposure to a small area but you don't get exposure to a lot of areas of the school system." (S5)

Personal Setbacks

Main Question D--Personal Setbacks

What personal setbacks or hardships have you experienced that you feel have contributed to your success as a superintendent?

Personal Setbacks--Event

Only two of the five superintendents interviewed indicated an event in their life that was felt to be a personal setback. One superintendent mentioned the difficulty he had with polio as a child. Another superintendent mentioned the impact the death of his father had on him while in college.

"I am not sure there have been any hardships or setbacks. My career has moved along very smoothly. I feel fortunate that I have people to guide and lead me along. I've been very fortunate that my wife has been willing to endure all the graduate study and the time it takes to be away. She has also been willing to sacrifice some of the niceties of life while I was going through this period of

growth and seeking degrees. I've been very fortunate to have good lay people to work with me on the boards that I've worked with. As a school principal we had advisory committees. I had a chairman of my advisory committee that was also a very forward looking kind of person that I could rely on his wisdom. When I moved into this superintendency the superintendent was one of the same kind of people that was not involved in administrative type details, but he had perspective of where things would go and what should be done. I really have been fortunate to work with a lot of good people to help me get things done. There haven't been any hardships that have hit me. I never have been fired from a job." (S1)

"I don't think I've had any setbacks or hardships. I guess I could say growing up we lived in a housing project. We didn't have much money, but I don't consider that a hardship or setback. I didn't know that I was poor until I got in college and took sociology. I can't really think of any hardships. I think my father dying with a heart attack was probably a driving force for me to go beyond a four year degree. I really wanted to be successful even more so after that. I looked at that and think I've been pretty fortunate." (S2)

"I've been blessed. Very fortunate. This is going to be a frivolous offering. In many respects I didn't come from an affluent background that taught you your reputation is the most important thing you got. I started to work at an early age. Started public work at about 14 years old. Worked at a theater and doing those types of things. At age ten I had a paper route, age 11 was mowing grass and trimming hedges on a regular basis, doing lawn work." (S3)

"I told some folks not long, when I was six years old I had polio and that was a time of the sault vaccine and iron lungs. A lot of people who had polio during those days ended up in a big round cylinder thing with their head sticking out and that's how they breathed. I was in the hospital. I got out of bed one day and fell

flat on my face and could not walk. I was in the hospital for about a week and they did a minor procedure and a month later I walked back in school. I don't mean to get corny, but sometimes I use that to remind me that things aren't as bad as they seem." (S4)

"Not many major setbacks. My senior year in college my father died. That made me get serious about things. I really wanted him to be there when I graduated from school. I also wanted to do those things that pleased him." (S2)

Personal Setbacks--Lesson Learned

Lessons learned under the theme personal setbacks indicated by superintendents included realizing at an early age life is not always fair.

Another superintendent mentioned learning that things can always be a lot worse.

"I learned if you want things you have to work for them. I learned by working in the public at an early age that things aren't always fair. Things don't always turn out the way they are suppose to. Sometimes you suck it up and keep on going and perseverance is part of the formula of success." (S3)

"I use to fuss a lot about mowing my grass because I don't have a riding lawn mower. I said to my wife about a year or two ago, I might not ever walked and here I fuss about two and a half hours a week about pushing a lawn mower. Do I like to mow the yard? No! Will I get a riding mower? Yea, I probably will! But I try to use that to try to remind me that things could be a lot worse. We will fuss about our children sometimes, then we will stop and think about somebody's else having problems and how much luckier we are." (S4)

Personal Setbacks--Skill Practiced

Only one superintendent indicated a skill practiced under the theme personal setback which was working through difficult times.

"I realize how that things can always be better, but I think I have really been blessed. Do we have stressful situations? Yea, we do. I got a couple right now, you just work through those." (S4)

Success Contributors

Main Question E--Success Contributors

What do you think has contributed to your success as a superintendent?

Success Contributors--Event

Events under the theme success contributors indicated by superintendents interviewed included remembering who you work for, having terrific parents, responsibility learned by working through school and being mobile.

"A superintendent can't forget who he works for. The superintendent in North Carolina is employed by a board. The main role of the superintendent in that regard is to carry out the

policy and direction of a board. At the same time that's a delicate situation to be in because as a professional superintendent I have definite ideas and notions about what should happen and the way that education should be delivered. And so on one hand you working for a lay board and on the other hand you are a professional and professional responsibilities and ideas about how things should be done. So it becomes an education situation in terms of a group of board members being my classroom so to speak. So it is constantly my role to educate them with the kind of information they need to have to do the job of guiding and directing me. That's a delicate balance. I think one of the things I always try to keep in mind is I work for that board. And I need to keep them on task. I need to make sure they understand what the needs are and roles of the board and superintendent are and once you do that a lot of the things that tend to be problems for the superintendent are taken care of. And again I'm saying this with the idea in mind that I've never run into a situation where I couldn't reach the board members and discuss the issues and reach some kind of agreement or compromise or consensus about what needed to be done. That is probably the thing in my mind that has enabled me to be successful for 20 years in this system. I have disagreed with the board. When I first came here they were trying to consolidate the high schools into a new high school and locate in another part of the county other than here in Edenton. And I thought that was the wrong thing to do. But they insisted that was what they wanted to do and I worked as hard as I could to bring that off. And we darn near did it but the bond issue that would have produced the money failed by public vote by 200 votes. And so then I began to turn the process around to help them to see that wasn't what we needed to do. What we really needed to do was concentrate on combining the middle grades and put that together in an organization here in this system that better meet the needs at this level and kind of got out of that area." (S1)

"I think number one is I had terrific parents." (S2)

"I think working my way through school. I guess is probably debatable to some, to be able to work a job and still be able to make good grades, I think is important. Teaches responsibility. Working through school and working in high school, working in the summers, and working in college even I wanted to have some time to do like others did. Looking back on it, was probably the best thing that could have happen to me." (S2)

"I think being an Elementary Education Major got me into administration very quickly. I think being willing to move to different districts to get a broader base of experiences that I would have gotten had I stayed in one place because I got that experience in a very short period of time in terms of the movement kind of thing. Most important thing is I have been able to establish a trust and positive working relationship with boards of education in a variety of setting. Being honest. I've been straight forward with people. I have tried to avoid being political and tried to keep boards informed as to what was going on." (S3)

"Another thing is the mobility issue. I don't think there is any question that I progressed because I've been willing to move. Some people aren't. But I've been well served by that. Has my family been well served? I don't think they have been unalterable damaged, but its been tough from time to time especially with children. I moved my oldest daughter back here when she was in between the 8th and 9th grade. That was tough on her. I left one county after six years and I really didn't know much about the school I was going to except I thought it was a pretty good school, but I thought it was time for me to make a change. And there's no question that I'm superintendent in part because I came here as high school principal. Had enough success that the board was interested in my coming back." (S4)

Success Contributors--Lesson Learned

Lessons learned by superintendents under this theme included understanding the demands of administrative positions, being willing to be mobile to move up the administrative ladder, and developing good communication with the board of education.

"One thing I would say is the understanding that the superintendency is, as all administration is, a demanding time consuming job. You have to understand that, but you also need to understand that good things will happen if you work hard and I think the value of hard work is not overestimated." (S4)

"My parents expected a lot out of me. They had high expectations. Honesty was a big part of my family. I can't remember my parents ever complaining about their job. I think that is really important, they always projected to me whatever job you have you have got to enjoy that job. You've got to make the best out of it. It's only as good as you want it to be. They have never said don't do this or don't go into education, or open up that gas station. They also said do what ever you want to do and do the best you can." (S4)

"But in general terms to progress in administration you must be willing to move. Those who aren't willing to move, they may not shut the door for themselves, but they may really make it harder to open, delay their chance to get in. There is usually a job out there, it may not always be where you want it to be. Had I stayed in one county would I have gotten to be a superintendent, I don't know. Might not have ever wanted to." (S4)

"From a real political/practical standpoint I tried to keep good communication with the board of education. I think that's almost a skill you have to develop." (S4)

"Human skills - not sure if that is an acquired skill or natural skill. I've always had the ability to talk to people. People tend to thing I care about them and care about them and want resolve their problems." (S5)

Success Contributors--Skills Practiced

Skills practiced under the theme success contributors indicated by superintendents included treating people with respect, putting in the time to do a good job, being mobile to advance, and keeping your boss informed.

"I've been candid when people didn't do their jobs and I've always tried to say here are some ways we can get you on target. People skills or human skills is a factor that I think has contributed to my success." (S4)

"I want to treat people like I want to be treated. We are all here just a short period of time. Any help you can give to some one, try to give it to them. That's kind of an appreciated type trait today. I'm seeing more and more people come around to that kind of philosophy today." (S4)

"Remember who you are working for and see that as the challenge to bring them along to educate them to be able to get the things done and they have to be your support." (S4)

"I've tried to focus on creating a positive image of the board with the public, because I think their image is perceived to be the school system's image and again I think that being the superintendent or being the principal of a school or whatever comes with it a great deal of responsibility to be a fairly straight kind of guy or gal. I

have held that I have high duty to protect the integrity of the office through my personal behavior, through my relationship with the community, my relationship with the staffs, and in some situations that may be viewed as being remote, removed, or whatever, I have always tried to keep a very professional relationship with my board, my staffs, and with my communities. I have never tried to be viewed as one who just enjoyed a good time and was out for the party side of life. I just think that is what has worked for me. Probably more because that is the kind of person I am than trying to behave different I think it would be very difficult for me to be the center piece at a party, be the guy on top of the table telling jokes and getting everybody whip up into a lather. That's just not who I am and so I have tried I guess to be who I am and not only in the job, but outside the job. And seemingly that has worked. And I would not prescribe that for any body else unless that is who they are or how they would react to situations." (S3)

"I think I've been well served because people have seen I'm willing to put the time in. I met last night at 8:00 a.m. with parents about an issue and basically because one of the parents is handicapped and confined to a wheelchair and his wife couldn't come at any other time because she had to attend to him. Turned out he came to. I could have said I work from 7:30 to 4:30 and can't do it at night and it does take away from your family. I think people see I'm willing to put time in and try to meet them half way and try to do what ever it takes." (S4)

"I've been willing to move and I think that that's been good for me. Moving allows you to make more contacts and get more experiences. Would I have jumped from the high school principal here to the superintendency here if I had not gone and worked as an assistant superintendent for three years, I don't know, but I kinda doubt it. You just take some personal sacrifice, but I think that has played a major factor in being where I am today in terms of my being where I am today in terms of how I have been able to move up the administrative ladder." (S4)

"In working with the board my rule of thumb is: If I'm not sure whether to let them know about something, then I need to let them know about it. It is a lot worse to let them know about something they don't feel like they need to know, than just to not let them know about something they need to know about. So I have tried to establish an atmosphere with my board members of mutual respect, and nurture that atmosphere. I think as much as anything that is the key to a superintendent's success these days. That you can develop a relationship with the board that you can agree to disagree agreeably if you need to, and that you keep them informed about what you are thinking and it makes it a lot easier for them to support what you're doing later on." (S4)

"Grew up on a farm - long hard hours - an expectation of working hard. The driving force was if you work harder and longer than anybody else you'll end up ahead in the long run. This is something that was instilled in me early on and I suspect if you talk to anybody with whom I've worked they will tell you that nobody will out prepare me and if it is a matter of devoting a certain amount of time I will do it. Work ethic." (S5)

"Commitment to preparation and thoroughness - trying to explore all alternatives of the issues." (S5)

Career Growth

General Question F--Career Growth

Overall, how have you changed over your career?

Career Growth--If you ran into someone who knew you well years ago, what differences would that person notice?

"I have a lady in the community here that taught me when I was in the seventh grade. She comes by to see me every now and then and gives me some advice on what I need to be doing. It's funny because, when she heard I was a principal her response was I ever would have thought it. And I think that's probably about right. At that age I was pretty care free and didn't have much sense of direction. I think for a lot of people that would have known me back when I was in high and elementary school - well they would think a lot of maturation took place for me to be doing what I'm doing." (S1)

"All the way up, I was pretty competitive about things, probably people would say I have more patience than I use to have. Years ago I wanted things right now, but I realize now you have to plan. You can't have things right this moment. But you can get what you want if you lay your ground work and you plan, but I think having patience and realizing I can't do everything by myself." (S2)

"I don't think I have changed a whole lot from who I started out to be. Certainly I think the outward person is pretty much the same person I've been all along. The inward person which I don't know that many people would see or could access I think I have become much more sensitive to the political realities of the work of education and these changes really did start occurring when I moved out of the principal and got further away from the school level." (S3)

"I worry a lot about the little things less than I use to. I'm a whole lot more concerned with the final results than how we got there." (S4)

"Some of the little things that use to bother me about what kids did, about what parents did; whatever, I just don't linger on it very much." (S4)

"I probably perceive I have changed more than the people around me perceive that I have changed. I tend to think I am a little more reserved now than I use to be. I try to be a little more reflective than I use to be. When I first became a principal at 26 years old I was probably more spontaneous." (S5)

Career Growth--Why did these changes occur?

Superintendents interviewed indicated changes occurred through maturation, experience, and knowledge gained.

"It use to be difficult for me to ask for help. I kinda grew up thinking that asking for help was a kind of weakness. I changed over the years and realized that that's not a weakness." (S4)

"I've had to become more attuned that in every decision that is made there is a political side to it probably and I've had to become more skillful at looking for that and analyzing that and not just thinking that everyone that I'm working with is there to work with kids or to promote what's right in education. That's been a challenge for me and it has been one of my most difficult things to come to grips with in terms of that has made the job less satisfying in many respects." (S3)

"Sometimes you compromise to save the most important things about what you're doing rather than to loose all of what you are doing." (S4)

Career Growth--How have they made a difference in your success as a superintendent?

Superintendents interviewed mentioned how they operated differently because of maturity and experience. Superintendents mentioned learning to take time to make decisions and using human resources more effectively.

"I think as I moved into the various roles as principal, masters and doctoral programs - I think that people that saw me then saw that I had a sense of direction, had made an attempt to do things that were worthwhile in education. I think that was kind of witnessed by my acceptance into graduate school. One of the questions of my written examination for my Doctoral program was to consider that I was superintendent of Wake Co. Schools and to solve a problem. I think these people thought that I could be successful in this line of work." (S1)

"You have to have people to help and call for that help." (S2)

"Today I think folks would probably know that they might not always agree with what I decide, but they know I have thought through it and I've made the best decision that I can. It may not be overall the best, but I have thought through it and I've tried to listen to things. Those changes are probably the differences in success, being able to listen more." (S2)

"When you move away from the building level you now have adults that don't have children in school that want to be part of the decision making. You have a broader base of players, the corporate, a senior citizens community, a political community, deal with the funders of education. The people that actually provide the dollars as opposed to at the building your just at a point where the resources are distributed." (S3)

"Superintendent certainly has an obligation to make sure that business in the school system is not done in any illegal fashion or

any kind of fashion that would be categorized as unethical, but within that I like to give my people a lot of flexibility." (S4)

"We have had lots of conversations about rules for kids at school. What they ought to be able to do, what they shouldn't be able to do. My position on that is let the schools figure those out. My biggest piece of advice with the people with whom I work closely with is you better know the difference between your battles and your wars, don't spend a lot of time on your battles, because you are going to need all your energy when the wars come. Know when you need to get out of the fight and know when you need to keep fighting. For superintendents that's a hard call sometime, because as superintendent you walk a real fine line sometime, because you have John Q. Public over here who is badgering you to do something, then you have your teachers over here who you don't want them to think you have deserted them." (S4)

"People came to me with issues and wanted me to give them an answer right then. One of the things I have learned is there aren't many situations where you have to give an answer right then. If it's a life or death situation you may, but other than that there aren't many situations where you have to give a spontaneous answer and so I think I have learned to buy time so I can consider the alternatives and as a result of that I think I make better decisions than I did then. That's probably the one big change I see in me in the last twenty years. Personality wise I don't think I have changed that much. One of the things I have grown to accept - I knew eight years ago, but I am not sure I believe it as strongly then as I do now - that early on you have to identify those people who are quote your friends or those people who are the superintendent's friends. Those people who pretend they like you because they want to have access to the person who is in your position and in the beginning it was hard to separate those people who like me for who I am as oppose to the people who like me because I am the superintendent of schools. But it is easy for me to see those people who are associating because they think they have access to the superintendent as oppose to those people who are associating

because they like you. That was a hard lesson to learn. I went through that when every time people would extend friendships I would wonder why - what are you looking for. It became a trust thing. But it is easy because I can see whether it is personal friendship or professional access they're looking for." (S5)

Personal Life

Question G--Personal Life

Have events in your personal life played a part in your growth as a school administrator?

Personal Life Growth Events--What happened?

Three of the five superintendents mentioned having a supportive spouse and the importance of the spouse's role in the success of the superintendency. Others mentioned experience gained from prior experiences and athletics.

"Having a supportive family. I had one of the board members tell me several years ago, some of the school administrators' wives help them and some wives don't. I'm fortunate that I have one that does. She is willing to allow me the time it takes to be away from home doing things that are necessary. She is also willing and able to accompany me to school functions or events. It is not uncommon when I go to a school meeting outside of this community some where for her to go with me or even when I'm

attending meetings in the community occasionally she will go with me where that's an appropriate thing to do." (S1)

"Getting in school administration at a very early age because I had to quickly realize that even though I had the degree I didn't have the knowledge or the wisdom and learned very early that if I was going to be successful I had to work with my subordinates in a very collegial kind of way." (S3)

"Probably would have to give some credit to some lessons I learned early on from the athletic side of life. Baseball." (S3)

"My wife has been very patient over the years. There is seldom a night during the week I'm not out and there is seldom a weekend when there aren't some commitments that go with the job. She understands that and accepts and shares that with me. Because of her support it enabled me to devote the amount of time it requires to be successful. Always tried to block time together on Sundays." (S5)

Personal Life Growth Events--What did you learn from them?

Superintendents mentioned a variety of lessons learned under the theme personal life growth events. Superintendents mentioned the importance of remaining visible during difficult times and the concern for lack of time to spend with family because of job demands. Other superintendents mentioned learning to listen, having children, and the death of a parent as teaching lasting personal life growth events.

"Sometimes I've noticed administrators - particular when you're in controversial situations - there is a tendency to withdraw from events you really need to be present in and to be involved in." (S1)

"I tend to listen before I speak. Before jumping out there with the solution." (S3)

"Having your own children helps you remember the parents perspective. Most parents that we write off as bad parents, aren't bad parents, they just don't know how to be good parents." (S4)

"Death of my father made me realize that life is not as permanent as we would like to think it is. Life is temporary." (S2)

"Marriage, can't stress how important it is to have a supportive spouse. Building level principal, particularly a high school principal, and central office administrator is very time consuming as far as your personal time. If you don't have a spouse that is very understanding and supportive of that it would make it very difficult to have a successful career and a successful marriage." (S5)

Personal Life Growth Events--How have they made a difference in your success as a superintendent?

Superintendents interviewed in this area also gave a variety of areas where they felt events made a difference in their success. Areas varied from the support of a spouse, to rearing children, to lessons from experience.

"My wife has been willing to help me and be involved in those types of things. So from that point of view in my personal life that's been very beneficial to be able to count on family to be supportive on things I'm trying to do. In turn I've tried to support them as well." (S1)

"I've tried to make folks that know me proud, family is important to me. I've accepted my responsibility as superintendent as a 7 day a week, 24 hours a day job. My responsibility as a role model." (S2)

"I realized early on that to have real power was shared power and that if I was going to exercise any I had to go ask for it in terms of here I was at 24 years old a principal. I couldn't tell that teacher with 30 years of experience a whole lot in terms of that. I could watch and observe and emulate from that person a lot of things and too I developed some very good listening skills early on that had bode well throughout the process." (S3)

"I think that the experience of having my own children and watching them grow up is probably much as anything, influenced me in terms of a personal event in my life as an administrator plus they keep me honest. The whole experience of having children has been really healthy for me as a school administrator. Influence of parents on me now. The family life I have experienced and the family life I have probably have influenced me philosophically and practically as much as anything as a school administrator." (S4)

"Always tried to go to church together and tried to let the children plan activities for Sunday afternoon, day trips, boating. Tough on the spouse. It's important that your spouse be supportive particular if you have children in your life." (S5)

Significant Lesson

General Question H--Significant Lesson

What is the most significant thing you have learned as an adult--the one thing you would pass on to someone else if you could?

All superintendents stressed skills, values, and virtues that had been learned over the course of their lives. Some of the things learned included the importance of setting priorities and learning how to delegate.

"Helping one another. Someone who cares about you, someone to want you to be successful, to rejoice in your success to encourage you success. I think if there is one thing that all of us need is that person or persons back there behind you that are constantly encouraging you to achieve. That seems to me to be as important as all the knowledge and all the learning that we participate in going through a career. Having that person that believes in you who is sure you can do it and is always there to help you pursue it when the times get rough, when the going gets tough, and it happens to everybody." (S1)

"I think really as an adult I have learned a large percentage of the people want to do good, really want to be successful. They really want to do the right thing and sometimes they don't because it may be the process. It may be the people they're working with. It may be something wrong in their life." (S2)

"I think the thing that's been most important to me is you need to be satisfied outside of your job as well as inside of your job. My family is very important, is very important to me and if things are right there things are right here. I think if you get them out of balance it can play problems with you." (S3)

"When you deal with people try to deal with them in a way even if some bad things have to happen. You deal with them in a way that leaves them some integrity and an opportunity to walk away with some dignity." (S4)

"You've got to learn where to spend your time. Don't waste it on things you can't control that aren't important as the big things." (S4)

"Learn where to delegate." (S4)

"You have got to prioritize - you have got to decide what is important to your life and you have got to make sure those things are important. I am a highly career oriented person, yet the most important thing in my life is family, and there has never been a time when a significant event was happening in my family's life when I wasn't there." (S5)

"So I think that it is important to set aside priorities and make sure priorities get priority attention. I think the other side of that coin is, especially if family is involved is, they have to understand that your career has priorities and whenever possible we need to try to make those mesh by being flexible with family events if possible to. Establish some priorities, establish time for some things outside of school based on what is important. I think there is an important place in life for religious belief what ever that might be. I think that should play a major part in your life. Three prong - family, career, church. You have to balance those and you have to decide how much time you want to devote to each." (S5)

Significant Lesson--How did you learn it?

One superintendent shared the lesson learned from the experience of a divorce.

"I went through a divorce and look back on that and I don't know that it was job interference, but outward judgments and assessments were I was a successful person, successful school administrator. But I do know that I see a big difference now in terms of my professional life. Having the right situation in your personal life and having that in order makes the other real easy to get in order."
(S3)

Significant Lesson--What impact did it have on your professional life?

Superintendents in this area shared the benefits of a rewarding personal life to one's professional life. Superintendents also mentioned making an extra effort to help people be successful.

"But to have that person or persons back there, that's the one thing that is the most important for all of us. So most people I find can identify that person that stood behind them. Guided them, directed them, nurtured them, and done those kinds of things that cause that person to believe they can be successful. So if I had one thing that I could contribute I would like to do that as part of my method of operation, that is to help those others who work with me to be successful in achieving their goals." (S1)

"When something goes wrong I feel like it is important that I recognize that something has gone wrong and see what I can do to match their skills with the correct environment. When I have been able to do that it has been very rewarding. As an adult I believe there is a lot of good in people and it is up to me to help people grow and try to match people with experiences that they will grow from and be successful." (S2)

"You don't have to beat up people even in dealing with bad situations and if we have a difficult personnel situation I will

always try to move to the side that allows somebody to get out gracefully rather than us trying to take some public action against even when it is pretty obvious the person got to be disciplined or got to go wherever it might be." (S4)

"Learn your community, find out what is important." (S4)

"Even if it means some compromises have to be made professionally. And I think the board respects that. There have been times when I have been very hesitant to say to my board I can't do that because I have a family event, but I don't hesitate to do that anymore and I think my board respects that because they know that superintendents have family lives outside of being a superintendent and if I didn't care about my family I think it says something about how I care about other people's family." (S5)

Career Advice

General Question I--Career Advice

What advice would you give to a younger school administrator about managing his or her career?

Each superintendent interviewed gave advice for managing one's career from "Identify what you want to do, then go for it," to "Try to learn from every experience." Superintendents also mentioned the importance of using different leadership models. Other comments focused on being mobile and not getting in a hurry.

"Go for it! Identify what you want to do. Identify what type of contribution you would like to make and then regardless of what that dream might be, be willing to work towards it and do all you can to achieve it. I don't think there is a secret to it. I think it is a matter of identifying what you want out of life and working toward getting that and devote your energy to it. I can be done." (S1)

"Life is full of lessons. Try to learn from every experience. Try to make the best of each experience. Regardless of what avenue you take, you have got to keep in mind there is a reason for this. Try to make the best of it. Every thing has it's place. Don't fight it. Look at it as a learning experience. I'm a firm believer that you program your mind. You put things in, your mind will take you to where you want to go. Make sure you feed your mind positive things, because it will lead to good as well as it will lead you to bad if you think negatively. Why did this happen to me. Pretty soon that is what you will be surrounded with. Take hold, look at the positive and make the best of everything. Are you doing what you really want to do. If you come to the point that you can't view things positively, then you need to make a decision whether you are going to find something else to do. If you're not happy, if you can't have fun, you need to try something else." (S2)

"Try to use a variety of models. Do not just establish your career by zeroing in on one person or one position. Try to experience a variety of administrative assignments if you can. Be flexible early if you want to move. Some time you have to go to the job instead of expecting the job to come to you. I would say to be cautious about your choices in terms of personal kinds of things you do. Because an administrator is like being a member of the clergy. You are always on duty and you are always on exhibit. I think that again is a personal belief that it is awfully hard to have a non public life. To understand that going in and it is something you have to work on constantly. You can't take that insignificantly." (S3)

"Be willing to be mobile. Although it has its disadvantages, in the long run, it will serve you well. Be ethical. I don't like the political part of my job. I don't like to play politics, if you will, and that's a detriment, because superintendents have to play politics some, and I'm not as good at it as a lot of people and I don't care for it. But what ever you do you have to try to do things that you can live with later on. And if somebody says to you I don't think you did this well or that well you can at least say, this is why I did it, and that gets back to the issue of True North Principles. And these are things that, basically if you treat people like you want to be treated yourself, you will come out all right. Don't sneak around other people's back and plot with other people about this that and the other. Get a hold of a lot of Larry Lazotte stuff on effective schools and read it. If you can't believe it then find yourself something else to do. Its so simple and makes so much sense. Children will come to school and for the most part do well if they think you want them to be there and they think the same thing is there for them as the superintendent's daughter, the principal's son or whoever it might be. We lost kids a lot of time because we don't give them that message." (S4)

"My advice would be - Don't get in a hurry. I think it is important to touch the rungs - teacher, principal. You have to hire good people and then trust them to do the job. Nurture them, help prepare them, but when you give them something to do, you have to let them do it, and even if they stumble from time to time they will learn from that. Prepare yourself, trust those people that you employ to assist you to do the job. Developing people." (S5)

Effective Leadership

General Question J--Effective Leadership

Do you consider yourself to be an effective leader? If so, why?

All superintendents interviewed gave reasons why they felt they were successful to some degree. The general feeling by all was it is difficult to remain in a position for several years and not obtain some degree of success.

"Well I think for a person to be an effective leader you have to have people around you that are successful and I think that's what the leaders job is to make people that work with the leader successful. I think in order to be a successful leader, the people around you have to be successful and feel they are being successful. That is the chief thing I do as an administrator. We have had traditionally a very successful program at that school. I would like to think I had something to do with the success of the people that worked there, the people who have administered that school to make it effective. We have a number of people who have come through the system and been successful in their own right. I feel like helping them to grow and develop has also been a part of what I have tried to do. From that point of view I think I have been successful as long as I'm helping other people grow and develop. I think the organizations' goals then come along and are met by virtue of the fact that people in the organization are successful in their personal and professional goals. Therefore the organization is more successful as result of that. So its working through all that group of people that brings back the success that I have had. The strength is in the other people." (S1)

"Yes, because I'm doing what I want to do. It fits my personality. We are making progress, people are happy, we work together well, we are setting goals, we are moving toward those goals. Seeing kids grow, seeing adults, seeing people happy in their jobs. Helping people as much as possible." (S2)

"Trying to become an effective leader. It depends on whose measuring. I would say this. I'm effective in some ways and not

as effective as I would like to be in others. I may be more effective than some individuals and not as effective as others. I think a lot of it is situational. I think at this point in time I think I am exhibiting some effective leadership marks at this point. That can change and a lot of that has to do with the environment and the circumstances that are sometimes out of your control. The political side of things. I've seen some very effective people become very ineffective sometimes with seemingly little change in the individual. It was circumstance that changed. If I am effective I think I would have to go back to I have learned a lot from a variety of experiences that I have had that I can get along with a variety of people that are diverse. That I listen, that I don't give up easily, when the going gets tough, I'm fairly quick to give credit to others around me for success. I don't from my standpoint seek to have the light turned on me. I prefer it to be turned on the organization." (S3)

"I think there are moments when we all have doubts. One board member said about two weeks ago, is it just me, or are things awfully quiet out there. Well they seem to right now, and now two weeks later we have a couple buzzing out there, and there those kinds of things no matter what you do somebody going to be unhappy. Somebody is going to be happy and somebody is going to hurt in a lot of cases. Yea, I think so. When I was in SEP we had to do one of those survey kind of things. I got pretty positive responses. Not many superintendents make nine years in a job anymore, even 5 or 6 is pretty long term. that's not all bad. I don't think that you can stay in a superintendency over eight years and have not been effective to some degree. I'm sure there're always things you could handled better, there still are. You still make mistakes, I think if you really try to keep children in your mind first, that you will come out all right most times." (S4)

"Don't know if I consider myself to be a successful leader or an effective facilitator. Leaders tend to be the point person. Superintendents have to be the point person, but I think I would rather consider myself to be a good facilitator and that I can look at

resources and bring them together and cause things to happen as much as being the person that makes them happen. I take just as much pleasure in the success of my assistant superintendents as I do for me. When they are successful I feel like I'm successful. I'm sure I want to be leader. Even though I'm in a leadership position. I'd much rather see me as conductor of an orchestra. And it has 100 pieces and in order for that orchestra to make good music every one in that orchestra has to do their part and they have to do it well. And that's how I want to be perceived. I want to be perceived as that person that waves the wand and causes the music to happen. And I consider that facilitating as opposed to leadership. I don't see me doing it, I see me helping other people get it done. If you talked to other people that have worked with me the one thing that this person does is he believes in his people. He challenges, he pushes them, he encourages, he promotes them he does whatever he can do to cause them to do a lot of work. They will tell you that I am their strongest cheerleader, their strongest supporter. I think if there has been any success in my career it has been because of my belief in people I have worked with and their belief in me. I think we are a team. With 2600 people in this system in order for things to happen everyone is going to have to do their job. I try to build that type of climate." (S5)

VITA

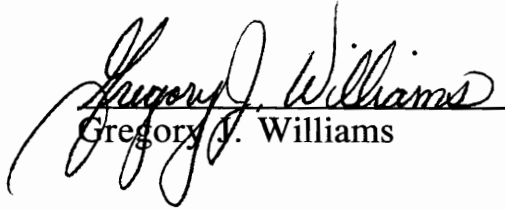
GREGORY J. WILLIAMS

Gregory J. Williams was born September 12, 1957, in Jacksonville, North Carolina. He attended schools in Jacksonville and graduated from Jacksonville Senior High School in 1975. Mr. Williams attended North Carolina Central University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in intermediate education in 1978. From 1978 to 1981 Mr. Williams taught math, science, and language arts at Neal Junior High School in Durham, NC. While teaching in Durham, NC he began graduate work at North Carolina Central University. In 1981 he earned a Masters of Arts degree in Education Administration from North Carolina Central University. Upon completing the Masters of Arts degree he moved to Onslow County to begin an administrative career.

Mr. Williams served as an administrative intern at Swansboro High School during the 1981-1982 school year. In July of 1982 he was appointed to the assistant principalship at Thompson Elementary School. In June of 1984, Mr. Williams was appointed to the principalship at Thompson Elementary School and he served in that capacity until

September of 1994 when he was appointed principal of Bell Fork Elementary School.

Mr. Williams is married to the former Sonja Z. McLean and they have two children, Anthony and Stephen.



Gregory J. Williams